

ONLY 3 DAYS (PART 2)

BY GUY HAMMOND

In our last devotional we discussed how there are only three days we need to concern ourselves with. Yesterday, tomorrow, and today.

Today

You have in front of you the next 24 hours, whatever you do with them, whatever fills them, whatever comes your way that is unexpected, God only asks you to do your best. And He is happy with that.

I've given up on perfection. I know the scriptures teach *"be perfect, therefore, even as your heavenly father is perfect."* I get that. But I need to just do my best, and trust in God's grace. What God wants is my *heart* everyday. What God wants is for me to try, and when I fail, He'll forgive me. What I do need to do is wake up and be alert for what is about to come my way.

1 Thessalonians 5:5-6: *"You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled."*

What happens when we are not alert? What occurs when we walk around in a spiritual daze, unprepared for the attacks of Satan? Fortunately, the scriptures are full of examples to warn us. Notice the following passage of Scripture in Genesis 13:8-13, and see if you can spot the links in this developing "accident chain."

"So Abram said to Lot: "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and mine, for we are brothers. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." Lot looked up and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, toward Zoar. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD."

Read what happens next in Genesis 14:8-9 and 11-12. Here we find what happened to poor ole' Lot. *"They also carried off Abrams nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom."*

If Lot had removed just one link, he could have avoided the crash. What if Lot had broken chain link number one, or even number two? These are the links that I saw in the story of Lot:

Lot and Abraham quarrel and separate--chapter 13:8-11. What if Lot and Abraham had worked out their differences instead of separating? Unresolved situations where there are hard feelings and no reconciliation always leads to more sin. That is a fast and slippery slope downward. If only they had talked to work things out. If only they had reasoned with each other, apologized and stayed together.

Lot *"looked up and saw"* the valley of Sodom. Lot *"set out toward"* Sodom--chapter 13 verse 11. We need to be careful of the general direction of our life. Lot knew that the great evil city of Sodom was in this direction, yet he went towards it anyway.

Lot "*pitched his tent near*" Sodom--chapter 13 verse 12. Lot could have broken the "chain" even after he separated from Abraham - after he saw and set out toward Sodom, had he simply refused to pitch his tent so close to the filth and wretchedness of Sodom.

Pitch your tent as far away from sinful traps as you can. We still must influence the world, but we have to watch ourselves. We must be discretionary. We must use wisdom, and common sense, as to how close we should get. Lot "*was living in*" Sodom--chapter 14 verse 12. The goal as a Christian is not to see how close you can get to the line, without crossing over it! It is to stay as far away from the line as possible.

Notice the progression. Lot separated from Abraham, he saw Sodom, he set out toward Sodom, he pitched his tent near Sodom, then he lived in Sodom, finally, we read of him being taken captive in battle.

This can be our steps to destruction as well. We separate from fellowship, we see something sinful, we focus on it, we set out toward it, we pitch our tent near it, we live in it, and we are taken captive by it. We need to break the chain! What are the links that lead to sin for *today*? I know my chain of progression that will get me into trouble if I don't break that chain. I get tired, and think I deserve a rest; I miss prayer time and a Bible study, because I am so "busy". I feel overwhelmed with responsibility, or I look at an area of my life that I feel like I am failing at, and I start feeling sorry for myself and get into self-pity. I want to be left alone; I pull back emotionally or physically, I start feeling discouraged or lonely or disappointed and....I'm in trouble.

However, thankfully for Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross, our greatest glory is not in never failing, but rising up every time we fail. For all the negative things we have to say to ourselves, God has a positive answer for it:

You say: "It's impossible"

God says: All things are possible (Luke 18:27)

You say: "I'm too tired"

God says: I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28-30)

You say: "Nobody really loves me"

God says: I love you (John 3:16 & John 13:34)

You say: "I can't go on"

God says: My grace is sufficient (II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm91:15)

You say: "I can't figure things out"

God says: I will direct your steps (Proverbs 3:5-6)

You say: "I'm not able"

God says: I am able (II Corinthians 9:8)

You say: "It's not worth it"

God says: It will be worth it (Roman 8:28)

You say: "I can't forgive myself"

God says: I FORGIVE YOU (I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)

You say: "I'm afraid"

God says: I have not given you a spirit of fear (II Timothy1:7)

You say: "I'm always worried and frustrated"

God says: Cast all your cares on ME

You say: "I'm not smart enough"

God says: I give you wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30)

You say: "I feel all alone"

God says: I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews13:5)¹

Tucked away in our subconscious is an idyllic vision; a dream that we keep playing over, and over again, in our mind's eye. In it, we are traveling by train - out the windows we drink in the passing scenes of the beautiful countryside. But uppermost in our minds, as we take this mental journey, is the final destination. We dream of that certain day when we will finally pull into the station.

We believe that once we get there, our dreams will come true and the pieces of our lives will fit together like a completed jigsaw puzzle. Restlessly we pace the aisles of the train, hating the minutes - waiting, waiting, waiting for us to arrive at the station.

"When we reach the station that will be it!" We cry "when I'm 18," "when I find a wife," "when we have kids," "when I get that great job," "when I put the last kid through college," "when I have paid off the mortgage," "when I get out of debt," "when I get a promotion," "when I reach retirement, I shall live happily ever after!" And what of our same gender attractions? We think "when the temptations are gone," then I will finally be happy.

Sooner or later, we realize there is no station, and there is no one place to arrive. The true joy of life is the trip. The station is only a dream. It constantly outdistances us. It constantly evades us.² It's not that some of these things won't successfully occur in our lives, some most surely will, but we need to learn how to "Relish the moment". Especially when coupled with Psalm 118:24: *"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."*

It isn't the burdens of today that drive men mad. It is the regrets over yesterday and the fear of tomorrow.

Regret and fear are twin thieves who rob us of today. So stop pacing the aisles, and counting the miles. Instead, rise each morning knowing that this new day is a gift, and that it will be like no other. Yesterday is gone, and should be forgotten. Tomorrow has yet to come. Stop to love your life along the way. Tell those around you how much you love them, forgive more, listen more, hug more, appreciate more, thank more. Our struggles, our jobs, our difficulties, our temptations, our pains, our joys, our laughs, our loves, our friends, our spouses, our children, they are all gifts for today. Life must be lived as we go along. Don't worry, the station will come soon enough; it's called Heaven.

¹ Compiler unknown

² Author unknown

Thoughts presented in this devotional are taken from the book *MESSED UP: Proof That You're More to God Than Your Mistakes* by Guy Hammond and published by Illumination Publishers. The book is a companion to the documentary movie *FINDING GUY* by One Compass Media.

Copyright © 2017 by Guy Hammond.
All rights are reserved.