

July Week #1 Devotionals & Consideration



Psalms 121:1-8

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; He that keepeth thee will not slumber.

The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.

We are required to look upward; keep our eyes on Jesus!

David knew the importance of keeping one's eyes on the Lord. Several times in the Psalms he reminds us to keep our eyes on the Lord God. He tells us that keeping our eyes on God is a form of trust.

Psalms 25:12-20 What man is he that feareth the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose. His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged; oh bring Thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. Oh keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in Thee.

Psalms 141:8 But mine eyes are unto Thee, O God the Lord; in Thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

Psalms 145:10-20 All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee. They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their cry, and will save them. The Lord preserveth all them that love Him.

Isaiah said it this way:

Isaiah 40:26, 28-31 **Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth... Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.**

Paul told us:

Hebrews 12:1-3 **Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

Keep your eyes on Jesus. That sounds simple and easy enough. Then, life seems to cloud your focus. Personal hopes, desires and goals chip away a little more on your focus and concentration. Then the trials of life set in and you have an even harder time keeping your eyes where they need to be: on Jesus.

Lehi and Nephi both had the same vision of a Rod of Iron that follows a straight and narrow path to a beautiful, exceedingly white fruit tree. In this vision they mention a mist of darkness that keeps the people from their goal of reaching the tree and partaking of its fruit.

We can learn many things from this vision, but what stands out to me is that in times of trials and difficulty, discouragement, stress and grief, when darkness may surround us, if we can keep our eyes on Jesus by clinging to the Rod of Iron, and stay on the pathway that leads to the tree, then we will be alright and eventually we will have joy again.

The tree represents the wonderful love of God that is shed abroad in the hearts of the children of men, wherefore it is most desirable above all things and brings us great joy!

Nephi was told that the Rod of Iron is the Word of God. We can keep our eyes on Jesus by keeping our eyes on His Word—the Rod of Iron.

1 Nephi 2:65-69 **And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood. And it came to pass that they did come forth and commence in the path which led to the tree.**



And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceeding great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that

they wandered off and were lost. And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the Rod of Iron; And they did press forward through the mist of darkness, clinging to the Rod of Iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree.

In the 40th verse of Psalms, David again makes a point of telling what happens to us when we do not look upward and keep our eyes on Jesus. Our very hearts may fail us:

Psalms 40:12-13, 16-17 **For innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me.** Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me; O Lord, make haste to help me.... Let all those that seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; let such as love Thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified. But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me; Thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

I have found the easiest way to keep my focus on Christ is to use the tools He has given us: **scriptures, hymns and testimonies.**

Psalms 5:3 **My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up.**

If I pray every morning, read my scriptures daily and praise and honor Him, then my heart, mind, soul, and life seem to focus on Him with peace and joy in my heart. That spreads to everyone I come in contact with.

His name is written on my heart for everyone to see. My eyes are focused where they need to be: on Jesus.

There were several years in my life that were full of loss and trial after trial. My heart ached and I felt so separated from the Lord. The joy I once had was gone and everything I tried was not bringing it back.

I finally figured out the Lord was trying to draw me nearer and teaching me to trust in Him. During this process I asked the Lord to protect my already shattered and healing heart.

Every time I have said, "Lord I will trust you," He has protected my heart from further heartbreak.

Since I have started to focus on Christ, trusting Him is easier and joy is returning.

- My hand has a firm hold on the Rod of Iron.
- My feet stay on the straight and narrow path.
- My eyes are focused on the beautiful and exceedingly white fruit tree.

In closing, let me call your attention to a wonderful hymn found in the tan hymnal [The Gift of Song] on page 101, a hymn of assurance, titled Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus.

II Corinthians 3:16 **Nevertheless, when their heart shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.**

(See the next page for all three verses and the refrain of this hymn.)

TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

1.

*O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!*

2.

*Thru death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion,
For more than conquerors we are!*

3.

*His word shall not fail you, He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well.
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!*

REFRAIN:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.*