

MONDAY

JOHN 12:34 Voices from the crowd answered, "We heard from God's Law that the Messiah lasts forever. How can it be necessary, as you put it, that the Son of Man 'be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"

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The doctor there took down her medical history and general information. He was stunned that she had ten children. She said, "That's why I want the hearing aid."

"I don't understand," the doctor said. "What does a hearing aid have to do with having babies?"

"In my case, everything. Every night, I make my husband dinner and then we sit down to watch television. After the eleven-o'clock news, he always asks, "Do you want to watch more television or what? I can't hear him, so I say, 'What?'. And that's why we have ten kids!"

Humor Digest

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You gave me words of kindness tied with a ribbon of gold, hearing them was important to heal my heart and soul.

Your gift of words made a difference when I was down and blue, questioning why I bother, doing what I do.

Life can be a challenge sometimes it seems unfair, but when I was tired and struggling it helped that you were there.

What can I give you in return your friendship is so dear, please know if you ever need me I will always be here.

Kind words and time are needed by people everywhere, when wrapped with a smile or a hug they're a gift that says I CARE! *Cybersalt Digest, author unknown*

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Anger (not rage, hostility or bitterness) is a God-given emotion. Its purpose is to fight evil and right wrongs. This is how Florence Nightingale used her anger. She was angry at the way wounded soldiers were being badly mistreated, so she did something about it – started nursing them back to health. We, too, are meant to use our anger in creative ways.

Everybody gets angry at some time or another. Some people bury and deny theirs, while others lash out and hurt others. Neither of these is healthy nor Christian.

When expressing anger we need to own it as our own, and remember that the biblical principle is to speak the truth in love. One way to do this is to say something like, "I know my feelings are my responsibility, but I feel upset and need to talk to you about such and such." Never say to a person, "You make me angry." This is because nobody can make us angry without our permission. All they do is trigger our anger but the anger is always ours.

Unfortunately, when we have a lot of bottled up anger or anger from the past that has never been resolved, our anger button can get triggered real easy and we overreact. What the other person does to

me is their issue. How I feel and react is always my responsibility. To the degree that I overreact is totally my problem.

As the Bible teaches, "If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry--get over it quickly, for when you are angry [and don't resolve it] you give a mighty foothold to the devil." *Daily Encounter*

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Finishing up our work at a trade show in San Diego, coworker Maureen and I decided to go sightseeing across the border in Tijuana, Mexico. While there, we went shopping and bought a few pieces of clay kitchenware.

As we crossed back into the United States, a customs official asked if we had anything of value to report.

"Not really," Maureen replied, digging in her bag for the bean crock she had purchased. Everyone around us froze as she continued, "I only bought a little pot."

Russ Tompkins

TUESDAY

John 12:35-36 Jesus said, "For a brief time still, the light is among you. Walk by the light you have so darkness doesn't destroy you. If you walk in darkness, you don't know where you're going.³⁶ As you have the light, believe in the light. Then the light will be within you, and shining through your lives. You'll be children of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

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FRIDAY MORNINGS, WEEKLY VISIT OF WOUNDED VETERANS AT THE PENTAGON by James Galloway, It is 110 yards from the "E" ring to the "A" ring of the Pentagon. This section of the Pentagon is newly renovated; the floors shine, the hallway is broad, and the lighting is bright. At this instant the entire length of the corridor is packed with officers, a few sergeants and some civilians, all crammed tightly three and four deep against the walls. Thousands are there.

This hallway, more than any other, is the "Army" hallway. The G3 offices line one side, G2 the other, G8 is around the corner. All Army. Moderate conversations flow in a low buzz. Friends who may not have seen each other for a few weeks, or a few years, spot each other, cross the way and renew.

Everyone shifts to ensure an open path remains down the center. The air conditioning system was not designed for the press of bodies in this area. The temperature is rising already. Nobody cares.

10:36 hours. The clapping starts at the E-Ring. That is the outermost of the five rings of the Pentagon and it is closest to the entrance of the building. This clapping is low, sustained, hearty. It is applause with a deep emotion behind it as it moves forward in a wave down the length of the hallway.

A steady rolling wave of sound it is, moving at the pace of the soldier in the wheelchair who marks the forward edge with his presence. He is the first. He is missing the greater part of one leg, and some of his wounds are still suppurating. By his age I expect that he is a private, or perhaps a private first class.

Captains, majors, lieutenant colonels and colonels meet his gaze and nod as they applaud, soldier to soldier. Three years ago when I described one of these events, those lining the hallways were somewhat different. The applause a little wilder, perhaps in private guilt for not having shared in the burden ... yet.

Now almost everyone lining the hallway is, like the man in the wheelchair, also a combat veteran. This steadies the applause, but I think deepens the sentiment. We have all been there now. The soldier's chair is pushed by, I believe, a full colonel. Behind him, and stretching the length from Rings E to A, come more of his peers, each private, corporal, or sergeant assisted as need be by a field grade officer.

11:00 hours. Twenty-four minutes of steady applause. My hands hurt, and I laugh to myself at how stupid that sounds in my own head. My hands hurt. Please! Shut up and clap. For twenty-four minutes, soldier after soldier has come down this hallway - 20, 25, 30. Fifty-three legs come with them, and perhaps only 52 hands or arms, but down this hall come 30 solid hearts.

They pass down this corridor of officers and applause, and then meet for a private lunch, at which they are the guests of honor, hosted by the generals. Some are wheeled along. Some insist upon getting out of their chairs, to march as best they can with their chin held up, down this hallway, through this most unique audience. Some are catching handshakes and smiling like a politician at a Fourth of July parade. More than a couple of them seem amazed and are smiling shyly.

There are families with them as well ... the 18-year old war bride pushing her 19-year old husband's wheelchair and not quite understanding why her husband is so affected by this, the boy she grew up with, now a man, who had never shed a tear is crying; the older immigrant Latino parents who have, perhaps more than their wounded mid-20s son, an appreciation for the emotion given on their son's behalf.

No man in that hallway, walking or clapping, is ashamed by the silent tears on more than a few cheeks. An Airborne Ranger wipes his eyes only to better see. A couple of the officers in this crowd have themselves been a part of this parade in the past.

These are our men, broken in body they may be, but they are our brothers, and we welcome them home. This parade has gone on, every single Friday, all year long, for more than four years.

Mark's Musings

WEDNESDAY

John 12:37-40 All these prophecies Jesus had given them and they still didn't get it, still wouldn't trust him. This proved ³⁸ the prophet Isaiah was right: "God, who believed what we preached? Who recognized God's arm, outstretched and ready to act?" ³⁹ First they wouldn't believe, then they couldn't—again, just as Isaiah said: ⁴⁰ "Their eyes are blinded, their hearts are hardened, So that they wouldn't see with their eyes and perceive with their hearts, And turn to me, God, so I could heal them."

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My husband and I arrived at the auto dealership to pick up our new car, only to be told that the keys had been locked inside. We then went to the service department, where a mechanic was working to unlock the driver's side door. Instinctively, I reached for the passenger door and – voila –it was unlocked. "Hey," I shouted to him. "It's open!"

I know," yelled the mechanic. "I already got that side open. Now I'm working on this door."

Betty Phillips

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If you ever drop your keys into a river of molten lava, let'em go, because, man, they're gone.

Humor Digest

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Billy Graham was returning to Charlotte after a speaking engagement and when his Plane arrived there was a limousine there to transport him to his home. As he prepared to get into the limo, he stopped and spoke to the driver.

'You know' he said, 'I am 87 years old and I have never driven a limousine. Would you mind if I drove it for a while?'

The driver said, 'No problem. Have at it.' Billy gets into the driver's seat and they head off down the highway. A short distance away sat a rookie State Trooper operating his first speed trap. The long black limo went by him doing 70 in a 55 mph zone. The trooper pulled out and easily caught the limo and he got out of his patrol car to begin the procedure.

The young trooper walked up to the driver's door and when the glass was rolled down, he was surprised to see who was driving. He immediately excused himself and went back to his car and called his supervisor. He told the supervisor, 'I know we are supposed to enforce the law.... but I also know that important people are given certain courtesies. I need to know what I should do because I seem to have stopped a very important person.'

The supervisor asked, 'Is it the governor?' The young trooper said, 'No, he's more important than that.'

The supervisor said, 'Oh, so it's the president.' The young trooper said, 'No, he's even more important than that.'

The supervisor finally asked, 'Well then, who is it?' The young trooper said, 'I think it's Jesus, because he's got Billy Graham as a chauffeur!' *DM*

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A group of 40-year-old girlfriends discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally, it was agreed upon that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the waiters there were very good looking.

Ten years later at 50 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the food there was very good, the wine selection was good also, and the waiters were cute.

Ten years later at 60 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because they could eat there in peace and quiet, the restaurant had a beautiful view of the ocean, and the waiters were sweet boys.

Ten years later, at 70 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because the restaurant was wheelchair accessible, they even had an elevator, and the waiters were kindly.

Ten years later, at 80 years of age, the group once again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they should meet at the Ocean View restaurant because they had never been there before. *Bob Seegmiller and GCFL*

THURSDAY

John 12:41 Isaiah said these things after he got a glimpse of God's cascading brightness that would pour through the Messiah.

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Prayer request: A retired Christian soldier, Colonel Lee Mize, Korean War Medal of Honor recipient has lung cancer. He is in the hospital in Gadsden, Alabama.

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I sat on the bed, tears streaming down my face, negative thoughts racing through my mind ... Why does marriage have to be so hard sometimes? Why can't he see my side of things? Why won't he change? Maybe I married the wrong man.

This was a scene repeated over and over the first five years of my marriage.

I was discouraged, overwhelmed and so tempted to give up. But here I am about to celebrate my 18th wedding anniversary so thankful I didn't walk away.

One of the best ways for Satan to start these separations is by luring us into a place of grumbling and complaining. If he can get us to focus only on what is aggravating and negative in life, then little cracks of distance start forming in our relationships. The grass starts looking greener everywhere else except where we are standing.

How sad I spent five years thinking the grass would be greener with someone else. Not true. The grass is always greener where you water and fertilize it. And being thankful --really intentionally listing out things for which we are thankful-- is a great way to start watering and fertilizing and changing everything.

Encouragement for Today

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BRITTANY (age 4) had an earache and wanted a pain killer. She tried in vain to take the lid off the bottle. Seeing her frustration, her Mom explained it was a child-proof cap and she'd have to open it for her.

Eyes wide with wonder, the little girl asked: "How does the medicine bottle know it's me?"

Laugh & Lift

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One teenager was talking to another, "I'm really worried. Dad slaves away at his job so I'll never want for anything, so I can go to college. And Mom spends every day washing and ironing and cleaning up after me. She takes care of me when I'm sick."

The other kid says, "So what are you worried about?"

The first teenager says, "I'm afraid they might try to escape." *John Maxwell,*

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A man who had just undergone a very complicated operation kept complaining about a bump on his head and a terrible headache. Since his operation had been an intestinal one, there was no earthly reason why he should be complaining of a headache.

Finally his nurse, fearing that the man might be suffering from some post-operative shock, spoke to the doctor about it.

The doctor assured the nurse, "Don't worry about a thing. He really does have a bump on his head. About halfway through the operation we ran out of anesthetic."

Good Clean Funnies

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My father began teaching business classes at the local prison through a community college program. On his first night of class, he started a chapter on banking. During the course of his lecture, the subject of ATMs came up, and he mentioned that, on average, most machines contain only \$1,500 at a given time.

Just then a man in the back raised his hand. "I'm not trying to be disrespectful," he told my father, "but the machine I robbed had about \$5,000 in it."

Jennifer Johnson

FRIDAY

John 12:42-43 On the other hand, a considerable number from the ranks of the leaders did believe in Jesus. But because of the Pharisees, they didn't come out in the open with it. They were afraid of getting kicked out of the meeting place. When push came to shove, ⁴³ they cared more for human approval than for God's glory.

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Excerpts from actual employee evaluations. Sincerely hope none of these have been lodged in your employee files:

* "Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap."

* "His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity."

* "When she opens her mouth, it is only to change feet."

* "He doesn't have ulcers, but he's a carrier."

* "If you see two people talking and one looks bored, he's the other one."

unknown

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Walking through the hallways at the middle school where I work, I saw a new substitute teacher standing outside his classroom with his forehead against a locker. I heard him mutter, "How did you get yourself into this?"

Knowing he was assigned to a difficult class, I tried to offer moral support. "Are you okay?" I asked. "Can I help?"

He lifted his head and replied, "I'll be fine as soon as I get this kid out of his locker."

Helen Button

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Police are called to an apartment and find a woman holding a bloody 5-iron standing over a lifeless man.

The detective asks, "Ma'am, is that your husband?" "Yes" says the woman.

"Did you hit him with that golf club?" "Yes, yes, I did."

The woman begins to sob, drops the club, and puts her hands on her face.

"How many times did you hit him?" "I don't know, five, six, maybe seven times....just put me down for a five." *James Hamilton*

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Lincoln's attempt to make a lawyer of himself was under adverse and unpromising circumstances often caused comment. And it was not to be wondered. One old man, who was yet alive as late as 1901, had frequently employed Lincoln to do farm work for him, and was surprised to find him one day sitting barefoot on a woodpile and attentively reading a book.

"This being an unusual thing for farm-hands in that early day to do," said the old man, when relating the story, "I asked him what he was reading.

"'I'm not reading,' he answered. 'I'm studying.'

"'Studying what?' I inquired.

"'Law, sir,' was the emphatic response.

"It was really too much for me, as I looked at him sitting there in farm work-overhauls expecting to become a lawyer. 'I can't believe it!' I exclaimed, and went on about my business..

"Lincoln merely laughed and resumed his "studies." *unknown*