

1. Alcorn, Randy *The Grace and Truth Paradox: Responding with Christlike Balance*, Multnomah, 2003

THE FOLLOW UP

GOD WANTS ME TO BE HAPPY
*You have 6 days to get
these 4 devos and the Quiet
Time Challenge done*



So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then. But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy. For the Scriptures say, "You must be holy because I am holy."
~ 1 Peter 1:14-16

DEVO #1—God is Not a Vending Machine

READ: Isaiah 40:12-31

There are so many things that can go wrong with vending machines! Have you ever put your money in a vending machine to get a bag of chips or pretzels only to see that bag get stuck in its slot and taunt you by not falling down into the retrieval area? I have, and it stinks!

Have you ever put money into a soda machine, pressed the button, and a soda other than the kind you wanted popped out? I have, and that really stinks! Boy, each time stuff like this happens, I get upset. I feel like I spent my hard earned money and have nothing to show for it.

Why all the talk of vending machines? Well, sometimes we treat God like a vending machine. We spend our time in prayer and expect to get what we want from Him. It's almost as if we think God exists for us instead of the other way around, but that can't be true, can it?

1. How is God described in the verses you read?
2. How do these verses show that God is not a vending machine who exists to make us happy?
3. How do these verses show we exist for the Lord?
4. Have you been guilty of turning our great and awesome God into a vending machine? If so, what must you do about this?

PRAYER

~Thank God for giving you what you need not what you want
~Confess to God, if necessary, treating Him like a vending machine that should give you what you want when you want it
~Ask God to fix your eyes on Christ and all He has for you

ADDITIONAL NOTE SPACE

POSSIBLE ACTION STEPS

- ◆ If you have been guilty of viewing God as a vending machine, what must you do about this?
- ◆ Nothing steals our happiness like sin, guilt, and shame. If your heart is heavy with those things, confess your sin, and rededicate yourself to living for the Lord
- ◆ Keep praying at least ten minutes each day
- ◆ Spend some time asking the Lord where He would have you serve Him

QUIET TIME CHALLENGE

NOTE:

The *Quiet Time Challenge* is NOT a devotional in itself. It is designed for you to do separately apart from your daily devotional time.

HOW IT WORKS:

Find a quiet place with no distractions. Make this between just you and God. Clear your mind then read the Bible verse(s). After doing so, work through the questions. At the end, spend five to ten minutes in "listening mode." Just ask God to speak to you and then be quiet and seek to hear His voice.

PART 1 — READ: Acts 17:28

PART 2 — QUESTIONS

Explain this verse in your own words:

Instead of God existing for us, Acts 17 tells us that we live and move and breathe because of God. Since that is the case, how should you be living?

PART 3 — LISTEN

Ask God to examine your heart. Have you gotten it backwards, thinking God exists for you instead of vice versa? Seek to hear His voice speak to your soul. (Feel free to jot down anything you hear.)

DEVO #2 — It's Not About Me

READ: Psalm 8; Galatians 2:20

Life can be so frustrating when I make it all about me! I can always find someone mad at me, and then I spend my day wondering, "What's he mad at?" I can always find someone who has slighted me, and then spend my day internally grumbling, "Who does he think he is!?" I can always find someone with nicer stuff than me, a bigger house, a newer car, loads of money, etc. Indeed, I can always find ways to feel bad, get frustrated, and pity myself.

Frankly, thinking life is all about me and my happiness makes me pretty tired!

1. How does reading through Psalm 8 help "put us in our place"?
2. Can you confidently say what Paul says in Galatians 2:20?
3. If you answered "no" to question 2, what needs to change?
4. Gayle Sayers, the great Bears running back, entitled his autobiography, *I Am Third*. What he meant by that was this: "God is first, others are second, and I am third." Is this the order that you have?

PRAYER

- ~Thank Jesus that He was willing to set aside "self" so that we could have eternal salvation and eternal joy
- ~Confess to God, if necessary, having a "life is all about me and my happiness" attitude
- ~Ask God to help you humble yourself, so that He can be first, others can be second, and you can be third

DEVO #3 — No More Guessing Games

READ: Philippians 3:1-16

Have you ever played those carnival guessing games? Games that have you guess what cup the ball is under, how fast you can throw a baseball, how many jelly beans are in the jar, etc. It's almost impossible to guess right in some of those games. In fact, most the time our guesses aren't even close!

Unfortunately, many people treat "where can I find joy" like a guessing game. They make their best guesses as to where they can find joy and go for it, hoping against hope that they are right. But there is a better way! That's the Good News of the Bible—we can KNOW where joy is!

1. In verse 1, Paul says, "Whatever happens, dear friends, may the Lord give you joy." Right there, Paul gives the answer. There is no guesswork. The Lord is the One who gives joy. If this is true, why do you think we are always looking elsewhere?
2. Read through verses 4-11. Paul gave up trusting earthly things to provide success, joy, and salvation. Instead, he put his trust solely in Christ. What did Paul say was the result of that choice?
3. When we make life about us and our happiness, things generally don't go as planned. Have you found that to be true?
4. How do you think your life would be different if you centered your life on the Lord instead of asking Him to center on you?

PRAYER

- ~Thank God that there is no guesswork involved in finding joy. We can find it, in abundance, through Christ
- ~Confess to God, if necessary, hoping in earthly things to give you joy over hoping in Christ
- ~Ask God to fill you with desire to put Him, and keep Him, first

DEVO #4 — Holiness over Happiness

READ: 1 Peter 1:13-25

We tend to think that godly, holy living centers around a list of "Dos and Don'ts." Randy Alcorn, however, in his book, *The Grace and Truth Paradox*, says that God's holiness is more like guardrails to keep us plunging off a cliff. Someone who crashes into a guardrail doesn't say, "I hate that guardrail, it just bent my fender!" No, someone who crashes into a guardrail, looks over the cliff that the guardrail kept him from going over and says, "Thank you God for this guardrail." Guardrails are not there to hurt us but to protect us. God's holy standards exist for the same reason!¹

Often, in living for our own happiness, we end up making choices that leave us very unhappy. However, seeking after holiness, and staying within His guardrails, makes us better!

1. What does it mean to be holy as God as holy?
2. Why is holiness not a bad (or boring) thing, but a very good thing?
3. How are you doing at living for God's holiness over your own happiness?
4. In what areas do you need some work?

PRAYER

- ~Thank God for the protective boundaries of His holiness
- ~Confess to God times you have blown through His guardrails and ended up with major life consequences
- ~Ask the Lord to help you always see the good reasons behind His standards and His plans