



# DOVER DAILY DEVOTIONS

On Sunday, we saw how Paul urges believers not to be ruled by past sins or past successes, but to press forward with a single-hearted focus on Christ and the heavenly prize set before them. The Christian life is a steady race of ordinary faithfulness, sustained by grace and aimed at final glory in him.

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## **Monday: The Poverty of our Spiritual Résumé**

### **Scripture Reading**

“But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.” Philippians 3:7

### **Devotional**

Most of us carry a quiet ledger in the heart. We may never say it aloud, but we keep a mental record of what makes us respectable. We remember the ways we have behaved better than others, endured more faithfully than others, served more consistently than others. We may point to our church life, our moral seriousness, our family reputation, or our usefulness in the kingdom. These things may be real blessings, but they become dangerous the moment we begin to lean on them before God.

Paul had more to boast in than most of us ever will. He had heritage, zeal, discipline, and a blameless outward record. Yet when Christ met him, all his supposed assets were exposed for what they were. They could not forgive a single sin. They could not quiet a guilty conscience. They could not make him righteous before a holy God. When the glory of Christ broke in, Paul saw that the whole résumé had to be moved out of the gain column. Not because good things are evil, but because none of them can be a savior.

This is where grace begins to feel like grace. Christ does not come to improve our record a little. He comes to end our confidence in ourselves and to become our only hope. That is painful work, but it is merciful work. The Lord loves us too much to let us keep trusting in paper crowns. Better to lose every

false ground of confidence than to lose Christ. Better to come empty handed and be received by mercy than to arrive full of ourselves and remain unchanged.

## Questions for Reflection

1. What do you most often point to, quietly or openly, as proof that you are doing well before God?
2. Where have good gifts become a substitute for simple trust in Christ?
3. What would it look like to confess your false confidence honestly before the Lord today?

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, expose the places where I have trusted in myself more than in you. Strip away false confidence and teach me to rest in your mercy alone. Make me willing to lose every rival hope if only I may gain you. Amen.

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# Tuesday: Counting All Things Loss

## Scripture Reading

“Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.”  
Philippians 3:8a

## Devotional

Paul does not only tell us what he left behind. He tells us why. He had found someone better. The Christian life is not sustained by grim renunciation, as though holiness were merely learning how to live with less. At its heart, Christianity is the glad discovery that Christ is of surpassing worth. When his beauty dawns on the soul, other things begin to fall into their proper place. Some are received with gratitude. Some must be relinquished. All of them are judged in his light.

It is possible to speak much about Christian duty while saying little about Christ himself. Paul will not let us do that. He does not say merely that he believes true things about Christ, or defends a correct system, or follows a religious path. He speaks personally. “Christ Jesus my Lord.” That is the language of belonging, affection, and holy nearness. The gospel does not simply spare us from judgment. It brings us to the Savior. The best gift Christ gives is Christ himself.

That changes the way we think about loss. Some losses come by obedience. Some come by providence. Some are the painful surrender of old sins, old prides, old identities. Yet none of these losses are ultimate when Christ is our treasure. The world is always bargaining with the soul. It offers us something visible, immediate, and measurable. Christ offers himself. The world says, “Keep what you can.” Christ says, “Come and have what cannot perish.” The man who has Christ has not made a poor exchange. He has traded shadows for substance, dust for gold, the fading for the eternal.

## Questions for Reflection

1. Do you think of Christianity mainly as avoiding judgment, or as gaining Christ himself?
2. What loss in your life is hardest to interpret through the lens of Christ's worth?
3. How might your affections be reordered if you truly believed Christ is better than every rival treasure?

## Prayer

Father, forgive me for treating Christ as an addition to my life instead of my greatest treasure. Teach my heart the surpassing worth of knowing your Son. In every loss, keep me near him, and let me find in him more than I have surrendered. Amen.

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# Wednesday: Found In Christ

## Scripture Reading

"[That I] may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith." Philippians 3:9

## Devotional

There is deep relief in these words, especially for weary consciences. Paul had learned that the worst place to stand before God is in his own righteousness. That path seems noble at first. It flatters our pride. It gives us measurable standards and the illusion of control. But in the end it leaves us exposed. If our standing with God depends on what we have done, then even our best days cannot quiet the charge of sin. The soul that leans on itself will always tremble.

The gospel tells a better story. God does not ask us to sew together a garment of moral effort and hope it will hold in the day of judgment. He gives us a righteousness from himself. It is received through faith in Christ. This is not a vague feeling, and it is not spiritual optimism. It is a real standing before God, secured by the obedience, blood, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To be found in him is to have our sin counted to him and his righteousness counted to us. This is why the Christian can be humble without despair and honest without terror.

There is also comfort here for believers who are painfully aware of their remaining sin. Holiness matters, and real growth matters. Yet your growth is not the foundation of your acceptance with God. Christ is. The Father's welcome does not rise and fall with the quality of your week. If you are in Christ, you are received in the Beloved. That does not make sin light. It makes grace astonishing. And from that secure place, the Christian is finally free to repent honestly, obey sincerely, and rest deeply.

## Questions for Reflection

1. When your conscience is troubled, do you tend to run toward Christ or back toward self justification?
2. In what ways do you still act as though God's love must be earned?
3. How would your daily life change if you lived from the security of being found in Christ?

## Prayer

Merciful God, I confess that I often want a righteousness of my own. Turn me again from self trust to Christ alone. Let me rest in the perfect righteousness you give through faith, and from that rest teach me to walk in humble obedience. Amen.

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# Thursday: Resurrection Power and Costly Obedience

## Scripture Reading

“That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” Philippians 3:10

## Devotional

We gladly welcome the first half of this verse. We want resurrection power. We want strength over sin, courage in weakness, hope in grief, and life where everything feels barren. And rightly so. The risen Christ is not a memory but a living Lord. His resurrection power raises the spiritually dead, sustains tired saints, and will one day raise our bodies from the grave. Christianity is not held together by human stamina. It is upheld by the living Christ who will not leave his people in the tomb.

Yet Paul joins resurrection power to fellowship in suffering. This is where many of us hesitate. We want Christ's help, but not always Christ's path. We want comfort, but not costly obedience. We want life, but not death to self. Yet the Christian life is marked by this pattern. We do not suffer to pay for sin. Christ has done that fully and forever. We suffer because union with Christ draws us into his likeness. Costly love, patient endurance, unseen faithfulness, and quiet obedience often wound our pride and unsettle our ease. But none of that pain is wasted.

There are seasons when faithfulness looks like losing. You may lose approval, ease, advancement, or the illusion of control. But when obedience to Christ costs you something, it is not proof that he has abandoned you. It may be one of the clearest signs that you are walking with him. The cross always comes before the crown. But because Christ is risen, the road of costly obedience is not a dead end. The life of the age to come is already at work in those who belong to him.

## Questions for Reflection

1. Where are you tempted to want Christ's comfort without accepting Christ's costly path?
2. What present hardship might become more bearable if seen as fellowship with Christ?
3. How does the hope of resurrection strengthen you for present obedience?

## Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are risen and reigning, and all my life is held in your hands. Give me courage to follow you in both suffering and hope. When obedience is costly, keep me near your cross and steady me with the power of your resurrection. Amen.

# Friday: Pressing On

“Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.” Philippians 3:12

## Devotional

This verse keeps two errors from swallowing the Christian life. The first is despair. Paul himself says he has not already obtained it. He has not yet arrived. That matters, because many sincere believers are discouraged by the slow pace of sanctification. They feel the ache of repeated weakness, recurring temptation, and uneven growth. They know what they should love, yet find within themselves a heart still learning obedience. Paul does not answer that struggle with denial. He answers it with realism and hope.

The second error is passivity. Grace is never a pillow for spiritual laziness. Paul says, “I press on.” The Christian life involves effort, vigilance, repentance, prayer, and real warfare against sin. But here is the great order of the gospel. Paul presses on because Christ Jesus has made him his own. He does not run in order to be chosen, but because he has been claimed. He does not fight for acceptance, but from acceptance. Christ's grip comes before Paul's striving. That is the difference between slavery and sonship.

This means your effort matters, but it is not ultimate. The deepest reason you keep going is not that you are strong enough, disciplined enough, or earnest enough. It is that Christ will not let you go. The Savior who laid hold of you in mercy has not become careless with your soul. He is patient with slow saints. He finishes what he begins. Therefore press on. Repent again. Pray again. Rise again. Not as a man trying to build a place in the house, but as a child learning to walk in the home where he already belongs.

## Questions for Reflection

1. Which temptation is stronger for you right now, discouragement or spiritual carelessness?
2. How does Christ's prior claim on you change the way you think about effort in the Christian life?
3. What is one area where you need to press on in repentance and faith today?

## Prayer

Gracious Savior, thank you that my hope rests not in my hold on you, but in your hold on me. Keep me from both despair and laziness. Strengthen me to press on in holiness, trusting that you will finish the good work you have begun. Amen.

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# Saturday: Straining Forward

## Scripture Reading

“Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:13–14

## Devotional

Paul is not teaching us how to become forgetful men. He is teaching us how to become single-hearted ones. “Forgetting what lies behind” does not mean pretending the past never happened. It means refusing to live under its tyranny. Some believers are chained to former sins, as though Christ’s blood were not enough to cleanse them. Others are chained to former successes, as though yesterday’s faithfulness were enough to sustain today’s obedience. But both kinds of looking back can hinder the race. Guilt can paralyze us, and pride can soften us. Neither is fit company for pilgrims pressing toward glory.

The Christian life requires holy forwardness. Paul says, “one thing I do.” There is concentration here, a gathered life, a heart no longer scattered among a hundred lesser ambitions. The goal is not self-improvement as such. The goal is the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. God has called us heavenward in his Son. He has set our feet on a road that ends not in earthly applause, but in resurrection life and full conformity to Christ. The race is hard, but the finish line is sure.

This gives ordinary faithfulness great dignity. To resist temptation today, to repent quickly, to pray when weary, to keep worshiping when the heart feels dull, to love your neighbor when no one notices, to endure sorrow without letting go of Christ: these are not small things. They are part of the race. You may feel slow and faltering, but the prize is not awarded to the impressive. It is given through Christ to those who belong to him and keep pressing on by faith. So lift up your eyes. The road is narrow, but it leads home.

## Questions for Reflection

1. Are you more often hindered by the shame of past sin or by resting too easily in past faithfulness?
2. What “one thing” most needs to govern your life right now if you are to press on toward Christ more steadily?
3. What ordinary act of faithfulness is the Lord calling you to pursue today without losing heart?

## Prayer

Father, keep me from being ruled by the past, whether by guilt or pride. Fix my eyes on Christ and teach me to press on in steady faith. Strengthen me for the ordinary race of obedience, and bring me at last to the prize of your upward call in your Son. Amen.