

## BE ON YOUR GUARD

After the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt, Nehemiah appointed some guards in place with clear instructions that were meant to prevent any enemy from breaking in. He chose Hanani as the captain because he feared God more than most men. Nehemiah knew that if the city gates were left open, it would attract the enemies. Nehemiah was on his guard against the enemies.

Just like the wall that was guarded, you have to always guard your eyes, ears and thoughts, not letting the enemies come and take control of your heart. To guard your heart, you have to keep your eyes and ears from seeing and listening to anything that displeases God. Instead, read your Bible every day and do what God says. Spend more time listening to His word. That will give you hope, peace and joy.

The devil always tries to attack our hearts with negativity, such as stress, fear, depression, anxiety, jealousy, and many more.

Be on your guard. Be ready to always involve God in your daily life and be alert to the attacks from the devil.

### Key verse:

*1 Corinthians  
16:13*

*Be on your  
guard; stand firm  
in the faith; be  
courageous; be  
strong.*

### Prayer

*Dear God, I pray  
that You would  
help me to guard  
my heart against  
any evil and  
impure things.  
Amen.*





## DEVOTION

DAY

157

NEHEMIAH 8:9-11

# THE JOY OF THE LORD

When Ezra was reading the law to the people, they wept because they realized that their behavior was not in alignment with the law. But Nehemiah and Ezra instructed them to celebrate because "the joy of the Lord is their strength".

The joy of the Lord is a feeling of happiness that does not depend on your circumstances. It is much more than the happiness you feel when your dreams come true, when you score well in your exams or when you are having your favorite ice cream with your best friends in the weekends.

This joy comes from God alone and from the relationship that you have with Him. It is a timeless joy that you can experience in any circumstance in your life, whether good or bad.

When you know the truth from the Bible and have a close relationship with God, you will have the joy of the Lord all the time. May the joy of the Lord be your strength!

### Key verse:

*Nehemiah 8:10b  
The joy of God  
is your strength!*

### Prayer

*Dear God, thank  
You for being  
my source of joy  
and strength in  
this world. Your  
joy will carry me  
through anything  
I am facing.  
Amen.*



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NEHEMIAH 11:1-2

## GREATER THINGS

This was the time when the leaders and one tenth of the Israelites had to move into Jerusalem to make the city prosper. It was a new challenge for the Israelites because by then they had already been settled in their own cities.

However, there were some people who volunteered themselves to move to Jerusalem for greater-good. By moving to Jerusalem, it meant they left their comfort zone as they had to leave their good friends, jobs and comfortable life. Then, they had to find a new job and adjust to the new place. God gave a special blessing to them because of their faith, sacrifice for the greater-good and willingness to face new challenges.

When God opens a way for you to move to a new class, school or house, it means God has a greater purpose in your life. God wants you to see many new greater things. God has stored his blessings for you in the new place. Be excited and get ready with your new adventure!

### Key verse:

*John 1:50  
... You will see  
greater things  
than that.*

### Prayer

*Dear God, I am  
ready to be  
placed at any  
place where You  
think I should  
be. Because I  
know You have  
prepared many  
greater things  
for me to see.  
Amen.*



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ESTHER 2:5-9 & 15-18

## FAVOUR OF GOD

When King Xerxes was looking for a new queen, all beautiful young women in the land were brought into the palace. One of them was Esther. The king had appointed someone named Hegai to take care of all of those women. Firstly, Esther got a favour from Hegai. Next, Esther also won King Xerxes's favour more than any other woman. Esther obtained favour in the sight of all who saw her.

Favour is a form of approval or support. When you are highly favoured beyond measure by God, you no longer need to depend on your own strength and abilities. The other women might have grabbed the best garments, perfumes and accessories to beautify themselves, but Esther fully depended on God's favour by following Hegai's advice. Hegai knew the king's preferences best.

Just like Esther, simply rest in God and be assured that God loves you. Humble yourself before Him and God will give His favour upon you. When you have a close relationship with God, many people will be able to see God's favour upon you. When God's favour is upon you, everything that you do will shine and you will stand out in a crowd.

### Key verse:

*Psalm 5:12  
Surely, Lord,  
You bless the  
righteous; You  
surround them  
with Your favour  
as with a shield.*

### Prayer

*Dear God, may  
Your favour  
surround me like  
a shield so that  
everything I do  
will be a success.  
Thank you for  
Your favour.  
Amen.*





## DEVOTION

DAY

160

ESTHER 3:1-5,13-15

# OUT-OF-CONTROL ANGER

Just because Mordecai did not bow down and kneel before him, Haman got offended and he became furious. He was extremely angry to the level that when he found out that Mordecai was a Jew, he planned to kill all the Jews in the entire kingdom. Haman's out-of-control anger caused him to want to destroy Mordecai and everyone associated with him.

As humans, we have feelings. One of them is an angry feeling. It's normal for you to have angry feelings at times. However, it is crucial to remember that anger should never be in control over your heart and life.

There is nothing good coming out of the out-of-control anger. It leads to wickedness. It results only in nasty words and hurtful actions. It tears apart relationships and ruins the joy and health of many.

Controlling anger is important. God's word contains the principles regarding how to handle anger in a Godly manner and how to overcome sinful anger. You can overcome out-of-control anger through prayer, reading the Bible and relying on the Holy Spirit.

### Key verse:

*James 1:20  
For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

### Prayer

*Dear God, help me to always control my emotion and anger whenever I feel so angry so that I do not cross the line and hurt others. Amen.*



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ESTHER 4:15-16 & 5:1-8

## TIMEOUT TO COOL DOWN

When Esther found out about Haman's evil plan, she must have been furious and worried too. She gave herself a three-day timeout and spent it by fasting together with her servants. At the end of her fast, she was able to deal with Haman's threat to her people with a cool head. She managed to keep her anger under control. It was totally the opposite of Haman.

Determined to save her people, Queen Esther went to meet king Xerxes, although she had to risk her own life. The king asked her to tell him whatever she wanted; even half of his kingdom he would give to her! Yet, Esther didn't directly confront Haman or asked the king to execute Haman. She chose to prepare a banquet for Haman and the king. Then, Esther invited King Xerxes and Haman to attend another banquet the following day.

Let's learn from Esther together! When you feel angry, take a timeout to cool down. During that period, you can spend your time praying, reading the Bible or sharing your feelings to your parents or trusted friends. Once you have cooled down, make a sensible decision on how to deal with the source of the anger wisely.

### Key verse:

*Proverbs 15:1  
A gentle answer  
will calm a  
person's anger.  
But an unkind  
answer will  
cause more  
anger.*

### Prayer

*Dear God, I want  
to be like Esther,  
to be someone  
who is wise even  
when I am feeling  
angry. Help me  
God. Amen.*



## BOAST NO MORE

When King Xerxes could not sleep, he commanded his man to read the king's history record book to him. It was written in that book that Mordecai had saved the king from the evil plot by the king's doorkeepers a few years back (Esther 2:21-23). He found out that Mordecai had not been rewarded for his heroic act. Therefore, he planned to give a great honour to Mordecai.

Mordecai never even once tried to boast about his heroic action nor requested for a reward for his action. He kept silent. Mordecai had proven that God sees and acknowledges our good deeds even when nobody notices what we have done.

After achieving a success, it is normal for people to have the tendency to brag about it. Bragging or boasting is showing pride and glorifying yourself. It is actually stealing the glory that belongs to God alone. Remember that all the good things that you have are from God.

God is watching over you all the time. He is pleased when you help others and do your best sincerely without bragging or boasting about it. Let's use your success to glorify God's name instead of your own name.

### Key verse:

*Psalm 75:4a  
To the arrogant  
I say, 'Boast no  
more.'*

### Prayer

*Dear God, I  
thank You for  
all the success,  
accomplishment  
and good things  
in my life. I admit  
that they are  
from You alone.  
I praise Your  
mighty power!  
Amen.*

