



FADING LEAF DEVOTIONAL

ISAIAH 64:6

“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”

EXPERIENCE

Fall is my favorite season. I love the blaze of glory that precedes a leaf falling to the ground. I love the array of wonderful colors on the trees. I enjoy the cool crisp air and the unique smells of the harvest season. The pleasing sound of rustling leaves as they are blown across the ground is a favorite too. I look forward to the ritual raking of leaves with my kids on a sunny fall afternoon. The satisfying crunching sound of treading on leaves often makes me deviate from walking in a straight line just so I can step on a leaf or two. A leaf is one of God's most potent emblems in creation and, though fall leaves can be a lot of fun, a fading leaf has a particularly sobering message.

CONTEMPLATION

Take a moment today and collect a handful of faded and fallen leaves. Be reminded of the withering effects of sin on your life. Feel the frailty and brittleness of lifeless leaves. Ponder how sin can and does hurt your life. What have been the destructive effects of sin in your own life? How has your sin made you subject to being more easily tossed around by the prevailing winds of life circumstances? Let God's truth expressed through fading leaves convict your heart of the sins that have been harmful to your relationship with God and others.

Application: Take one leaf in your hand using it to represent a specific sin you need to confess. Confess and repent in prayer before your Lord, then let go of the leaf. As that leaf falls again to the ground and gets blown to the east or the west, remember that in Christ Jesus, God has removed your transgression from you as far as east is from the west (Ps 103:12). Your heavenly Father has not allowed you to be taken away by your sin. Thanks be to God for his victory over sin and death.

PRAYER

Lord God, I confess my sins to you. I recognize the withering effects that sins have had on my heart and on my relationship with you and others. I acknowledge how easily I have been blown around by the winds of culture. I have seen how sin disintegrates and destroys. Do not let me be carried away in my sin, but draw me again to yourself O Lord, that my relationship with you might be strengthened and restored. Might I flourish again by a deep and strong attachment to you. I ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

CONFIRMATION

Isaiah 64:6 says we all are subject to the effects of sin. There is not one of us who has not experienced sin's withering influence on our life. Our love for God and others can shrivel so quickly. Sometimes we may feel like a leaf being blown this way and that by our sin, unable to maintain any semblance of control. Left to ourselves in our sinful vices, our relationship with God fades . . . but thanks be to God for Christ Jesus our Lord. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin. . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7 & 9). Fading leaves remind us to confess our sin and to turn to him for forgiveness and renewed fellowship.

- A withering leaf is an emblem of the effects of sin on humanity and the weakness of human nature apart from the Holy Spirit.
- A fallen leaf is an emblem of spiritual death— meaning separation from God.



Charles Spurgeon

From Sermon "A Sight of Self" #437.

"We all do fade as a leaf." Some of you have been lately awakened, you have felt yourselves to be lost souls, and what have you been doing? Why, you have promised to be better, and you have tried to be, you have mended in various ways, or, rather, you have proposed to yourselves to amend. Perhaps you made up your

mind that you would never go out to your labor again without prayer—that you would never lose your temper—that when tempted to indulge your passions you would restrain them—that those things which had been your besetting sins should now be given up. What progress have you made with your resolutions? Are you not today like the man who resolved and re-resolved but remained the same? Truly, in our own strength, we all do fade as a leaf. We look fair and green in the morning when we rise from our beds, fresh with midnight vows and repentings, but before night we are as faded and withered as the dry [weathered] leaf withered with autumn blasts. We went forth, saying, “Today I shall stand, this time I shall not fall, now I am safe, I have made up my mind, I am resolved, I know there is a something in me which can improve, I can be better if I like, I will reform, I will stand up and make myself a Christian.”¹

¹ <http://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs437.pdf>