



**THE 21/40 DAY CORPORATE PRAYER AND FASTING
DEVOTIONAL**



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INTRODUCTION

For the past few years, Destination Church has begun each year with a 21/40 days fasting and prayer in January to establish the will of God first in our lives, in our families, in our communities, as well as in everything that concern us. God commanded us to first seek **His Kingdom** and **His Righteousness**. If we seek and pray God and give Him our best and our first in the beginning of each year, He will honor that and will take care of the rest of the year.

You can fast for either 21 days or 40 days. The goal of the fast is not to get what you want by day 21 or 40 but to seek God and know what He wants and what His will is for us as individual and as a corporate body. We would also want to see you establish a prayer habit so you are still praying even after 21 or 40 days fast is over.

The 21 days fasting referred to Daniel who “mourned for three full weeks and ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.” **Daniel 10:2-3**. The Bible also mentioned about what happened in 40 days. It rained for 40 days and 40 nights during the Flood which cleansed and purified the ancient world.(Genesis 7:12) Moses was on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights praying and fasting before receiving the 10 Commandments. Jesus was also in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights praying before entering into full time ministry. This journey will not be easy but if you press into God’s presence like never before, He will take you into a level of intimacy you have never been before. Either fast you choose to do, you will be tested but transformed, and the “you” before the 21 or 40-days period will not be the same “you” after the 21 or 40-days period.

We encourage you to keep a journal for this fast so you can look back on your notes, vision, specific prayers and whatever the Holy Spirit lays on your heart daily. Trust God to answer as we are praying in one accord on our daily corporate prayer. Make sure you set your clocks earlier to wake up and make time for quiet time in the evenings for prayer.

Oswald Smith who said, “*When we work, we work, when we pray, God works.*” Throughout history, the men and women that God has used mightily have been people who knew how to pray, and for whom prayer was both a priority and a necessity. It has said, “*The secret of all failure is our failure in secret prayer.*” Not just our failure to pray, but also our failure in prayer.

We believe that the 21/40 Day Fast and Prayer will open the gates of heaven wide open. As we will behold, God will cause miracles and breakthroughs like those that we have never seen before.

It is our prayer that the Holy Spirit will speak to you daily and that your prayer life will be enriched and God will work in you and through you in new and marvelous ways.

Thank you for taking this journey with us. God changes lives in 21/40 Days, will yours be next?

DAY 1

PREPARING OUR HEART FOR PRAYER

⁴ And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. ⁶ Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. ⁷ O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. ⁸ “O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. ⁹ To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. ¹⁰ We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.... ¹⁷ Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. ¹⁸ O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. ¹⁹ O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

Daniel 9: 4-9,17-19

As we read Daniel’s prayer, we too should be compelled to follow Daniel’s example and serve as intercessors for God’s people in our county. Our nation might not be under the force such as Babylon nor people have not been taken captives into a foreign land like Jerusalem; but our sins are somehow like theirs. As a nation, we are drifting further and further into materialism: the use of drugs and violence are increasing in our cities, sexual immorality and trafficking are abounding, and many of our churches are corrupted by the current culture. Fewer and fewer people are wealthy as poverty is coming rampant; God has been removed from our institutions and ethics are no longer being taught in our law and business schools. We slaughter children in the womb and we have distorted the God-ordained institution of marriage and twisted the clear God-given identities of male and female. Truth is no longer a valued commodity as it is being substitute by lie. We, Christians, are God’s covenant people and we must confess our sins as Daniel did as well as the sins of God’s people to see the restoration of our churches, our homes and our cities.

PRAYING TO REACH GOD’S HEART

Daniel did not set himself apart as he confesses Israel’s sin but prayed as if he is as bad as the rest of Israel. In other words, the prayers that reach God are the genuine “we” prayers not “they” prayers. Let the holiness of

God drive you to a God-centered confession of your sin. Following are the main features of this portion of Daniel's prayer:

(1) Daniel's repentance and confession of sin, for himself and for his fellow-Jews. Daniel didn't minimize his sin nor the sin of his fellow-Jews but acknowledged them before God by saying that they have "sinned," "committed iniquity," "acted wickedly," "rebelled," and "turned aside from God's commandments and ordinances," "we have not listened ... to the prophets," and referred to Israel's "unfaithful deeds." Israel's bondage in Babylon is the consequence of her sin. (V.5-7).

(2) The Word of God, as spoken by the prophets and recorded in the Holy Scriptures, is the standard by which Daniel's sins, and those of his fellow-Israelites, are identified. God gave Israel His "commandments" (verse 4), His "commandments and ordinances" (verse 5), He spoke through the "prophets" (verse 6), "His teachings" (verse 10), His "Law" (verse 11), and the "Law of Moses" (verses 11, 13). God's revelation was His "truth" (verse 13).

(3) Daniel understands Israel's Babylonian captivity as the curse, which has come upon the Jews because they broke God's covenant made with them at Mount Sinai (verse 11).

(4) Israel's sins are seen in contrast to the character of God. Daniel's consciousness of his own sins, and those of his fellow-Israelites, was the result of his deep sense of the majesty of God as seen by His divine attributes. This is what he said of God that He is "great and awesome," who "keeps His covenant and lovingkindness" (verse 4). God is not just "righteous in all He has done" (verse 14); "righteousness," "compassion," and "forgiveness" "*belong* to Him" (verses 7, 9).

(5) Daniel's confession of sin is precisely what is required of Israel in order to be forgiven and restored. 1 John 1:9 says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

STANDING IN THE GAP

At the beginning of verse 16 to verse 19, notice that there is a shift in Daniel's prayer. His prayer changes from confession to petition. At first, Daniel asked for nothing but humbled himself and acknowledged his sins and those of his people; agreeing with God's Word and the righteousness of the judgment. His petition was God's centered and made in accordance with God's mercy and compassion and His love for His people.

Daniel asked 10 things to God:

1. Turn Your anger and wrath away from Jerusalem and Your Holy Hill
2. Hear my prayers.
3. Hear my petitions.
4. Look with favor on Your sanctuary.
5. Incline Your ear to hear.
6. Open Your eyes
7. See the destinations of the City that bears Your name
8. Forgive our sins
9. Listen and act.
10. Do not delay.

Daniel's prayer is a great model for all who would repent and turn to God for salvation. First, it is important to acknowledge the perfections and holiness of God and a recognition of our own sinfulness and that yes there are consequences for our sins. However, God is merciful and compassionate, and He invites us to come to Him for mercy and grace. Sometimes, we think that God does not hear our prayers because we do not get the answers right away. Daniel did not give up but the Bible says in Daniel 10:2 ² "At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks" and the angel told him "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them." I want to encourage you to stand firm in the days to come and do not give up. The enemy will try to discourage you to give up. Remember that God is no respecter of persons and He does not change. What He has done for Daniel, He can do that for you too.



"Can Jesus Christ see the agony of His soul in us? He cannot unless we are so closely identified with Him that we have His view concerning the people for whom we pray. May we learn to intercede so wholeheartedly that Jesus Christ will be completely and overwhelmingly satisfied with us as intercessors." — Oswald Chambers

DAY 2

SERVICE WITH A SMILE

¹⁵ *I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.* ¹⁶ *Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.* ¹⁷ *Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*

John 13:15-17

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples after He had washed their feet so they would not forget the example of humility that He had given them. The disciples were told that happiness is not found in merely *knowing* these things but in *doing* them. As Christians, we need to move our knowledge base into action! It is not enough to know of Christ; but it is more than enough to live through Christ. Through this righteous living, we can then have a happier new year.

What specifically can you do to have a Happier New Year? To answer this question, you first must understand happiness. The word happiness is based upon “happenings” and what happens in this life is certainly not always happy. In fact, Jesus said, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33). Peace and joy are not the same thing as happiness because happiness is based upon happenings and happenings are temporary but the peace of God endures forever, even in hardships in this life.

The fact is that “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22). Paul says, “Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses” (2 Corinthians 6:4).

It’s not all gloom and doom though. God, through His Son Jesus Christ, helps us through our issues. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid” (John 14:27). Possessing the peace of God means possessing it forever. You should have peace of mind in your salvation, your destination, and knowing your sins have been forgiven. Happiness is based upon what happens today but the peace of God, which supersedes human understanding, is as eternal as the life to come. This is the meaning of true happiness. To know that you have a Savior, who died for YOUR sins and rose again so that you might have life and have it more abundantly is the best reason to be happy.

If we can accept this about happiness, then we can have a Happier New Year. But there are some specific actions that we can daily exhibit so that we as believers can have a Happier New Year.

BELIEVE

Our faith in His power to supply every need that we will have in the New Year will give us every reason to rejoice.

Christ has the power to save: *“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrew 7:25)*

Christ has the power to strengthen: *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)*

God has the power to protect: *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)*

God has the power to provide: *“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1) and “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)*

BEHAVE

We all know the cliché that “actions speak louder than words.” For this reason, the Word of God places great emphasis on the believer living a godly and holy life. Our behavior should exemplify Christ in the following areas.

In our daily life: *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16a)*

In our witness before the world: *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16b)*

In our church fellowship: *“if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.” (1 Timothy 3:15)*

BEWARE

Conscientiously be aware...

Of the deception of men: *“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.” (Colossians 2:8)*

Of the snare of the devil: *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)*

Of your own self: *“Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.” (Luke 12:15)*

BELONG

We often understand and acknowledge belonging to Christ, but do we accept that we belong to His church? The scriptures are clear that we belong to both Christ and His church.

To Christ: *“Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.” (Mark 9:41)* and *“You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.” (1 Corinthians 7:23)*

To His church: *“praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47)*

There you have it. The choice is yours. You are now equipped to have a Happier New Year. All you have to do is believe, behave, beware, and belong. Make 2017 the year that your happiness is taken to a deeper level based on your choices to live a Christ-centered life.



If this is to be a Happy New Year, a year of usefulness, a year in which we shall live to make this earth better, it is because God will direct our pathway. How important then, to feel our dependence upon Him! - Matthew Simpson

“We are not built for ourselves, but for God. Not for service for God, but for God.” - Oswald Chambers

DAY 3

BREAK-FAST

¹⁶ “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:16-18

Have you ever noticed that the word *breakfast* is a compound word, which combines the words *break* and *fast*. Historically, breakfast is the first meal of the day. It typically is the longest period that one goes from eating the last meal of one day, which is dinner the night before, and the first meal of the next day. A period without eating is known as a fast. So unbeknownst to many, you have a period without eating from one day to another, which is broken when you eat breakfast. By eating breakfast, you simply break your fast. As Christians, we are called to another level of fasting. It’s more intense than the 8-16 hours some of us go without eating food.

FASTING: OUR CUTTING EDGE

A fast can last anywhere from one meal too many days without food. There are different types of fasts – the most common is to go without any food for a designated amount of time. Some people choose to fast from food and water, although this can only be done for short periods of time. Some people choose limited fasts, allowing themselves only juice or other liquid sustenance during their fast. There are partial fasts, where you will give up certain types of food for a period of time. Taking food out of the equation, others fast from television, social media, talking, computers or computer games, shopping, etc. The key is to fast from anything that is habitual in your life.

IS FASTING SOMETHING WE SHOULD DO AS CHRISTIAN?

The simple answer is yes. Many people in the Bible practiced fasting: for example, Moses, David, Elijah, Esther, Daniel, Paul and Jesus. When Jesus taught on fasting in Matthew 6, he said “when you fast,” not “if you fast.” He assumed that we would fast. It is not just the people in the Bible that practiced fasting, but also the members of the church who should include fasting as part of their regular spiritual discipline.

WHY FAST?

The first and main purpose of fasting is to draw closer to God. This allows us to increase our hunger for God. Out of all the spiritual disciplines, fasting is most like physical exercise. It is both physical and spiritual and it builds our faith muscles so that we can withstand the bigger contests that come our way. If done properly, fasting improves our prayer life and can bring a note of urgency to our praying. The best way to determine why

you should fast is to ask yourself this: what is my purpose for fasting? Am I considering a fast to glorify God or just to bring glory to myself? Is my heart or my motives pure? It is not for someone to convince you to fast; but it is for you to see the importance of doing so and willfully doing it to enhance your relationship with the Father.

There are five passages that provide different reasons for fasting:

1. **Secret Fasting.** *Matthew 6:16-18* (see key scripture). Jesus tells us to fast in secret and not for show.
2. **Fasting to Overcome Addictions.** *(Isaiah 58:3-7)*. Fasting can be used to undo the straps of a yoke and can lose these bonds of wickedness (sins) and break every yoke (addictions).
3. **Fasting for God's Intervention.** *(2 Samuel 12:15-17)* We can fast when someone's healing or and salvation, for revival for our church and for ourselves, for spiritual growth, to seek God's will in an important decision.
4. **Fasting for Humility.** *(Psalm 35:13-14)* During times of fasting, you see just how much you can depend upon God for my sustenance.

Choose today to Break-Fast in a spiritual manner so that you can eat off of His everlasting life.



“If your prayers remain unanswered, start fasting” — Sunday Adelaja

“Fasting without prayer is just like dieting”-

DAY 4

GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD

¹⁴ *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV

If is the biggest two-letter word in the English language. The destiny of persons, families, and nations hinges on that one little word. Notice that God is not addressing the unsaved because they do not need revival but need to be saved! This verse is addressing to His people, God's people and there are 4 conditions that need to be met before God responds. He gives us the formula for starting a fire in our hearts. Getting right with God is your responsibility. It is not the pastor's responsibility, your leader's responsibility. It is your responsibility.

Four things we must do when we called on God:

1. **Humble ourselves** is a statement of position, knowing our failures, manifesting sorrow for our sins, renewing our commitment to do God's will. Humbling ourselves before God and His word is recognizing our spiritual poverty. When we humble ourselves, God promises to hear and respond. He never breaks that promise. You will not find a time in the Bible where men humbled themselves before God that He did not hear and respond them. The command is not to feel humble. The command is not to praise humility. The command is to intentionally humble ourselves. God does not send revival until we humble ourselves. Peter says in **1 Peter 5:5b-7**. "*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand*". When we humble ourselves, we bend low; we prostrate; we fall to the ground. Jacob fell on the ground seven times before he met his brother. It is worth remembering the root of the words humiliation and humility is humus, meaning dirt or soil. We meet God on our knees. Like two sides of the same coin, a humble person not only sees himself or herself as they are - lowly and desperate; they see God, as He really is - majestic, sovereign, omnipotent, and gracious. We see a God who, too, humbled Himself on a cross, so that He could be in relationship with us.
2. **Pray**- Spend time with God. Pray indicates a relationship between the Creator and us, the created. It is hard to get right with God if you are not spending time with God. Statistics reveal that most evangelical Christians spend less than ten minutes a day in prayer and Bible reading. How can we be right with God if we are not in conversation with God? Prayer needs to be earnest and sustained until God answers from heaven "¹²...*pray to me, and I will listen to you*". (**Jeremiah 29:12**). The Bible does not say, "Preach without ceasing." It doesn't say sing without ceasing." The main thing Jesus taught about prayer was this: Don't Give Up! Keep praying.
3. **Seek His face**- means longing for God's presence. It shows the intent of our desire to be with God. Notice, it does not say, "seek My hand." Too often, we seek God's hand - what He can do for us; rather than seek God's face - who He is. In **Jeremiah 29:13**, God said "¹³ *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart*".

4. **Turn from your wicked way-** means repenting from sin, renouncing conformity to the world, drawing near to God for mercy, forgiveness and cleansing. Repentance means to turn around. It is to say I'm going in the wrong direction; I need to turn from my wicked way. God wants His people to stop their sinning! We are to examine our lives, identify anything that does not please the Lord or line up with the Bible, and we are to eliminate that from our lives! It sounds harder than it is, because as we humble ourselves, pray and seek His face, our sin will become increasingly clear. We do not like words like repentance. They have the tendency to make us feel as though our lives are lacking in some area or the other. The fact is, before revival can come to a people, that people must be clean! They must be practicing repentance at every level. This is God's command. It is time to embrace holiness.

If we will meet the requirements, then we create an atmosphere in which we can experience some tremendous spiritual rewards from the hand of the Lord.

NO REVIVAL WITHOUT REFORMATION

Revival starts with a passionate commitment to praying for God to return; not that He left but we have gotten negligent and have left. It is delayed because prayer decays. Revival never starts because of organizing, "but a radical reformation that will go to the root of our moral and spiritual maladies and deal with causes rather than with consequences, with the disease rather than with symptoms." A. W. Tozer said "*We must have a reformation within the Church. To beg for a flood of blessing to come upon a backslidden and disobedient Church is to waste time and effort. A new wave of religious interest will do no more than add numbers to churches that have no intention to own the Lordship of Jesus and come under obedience to His commandments. God is not interested in increased church attendance unless those who attend amend their ways and begin to live holy lives.*" Church, let pray for God to come powerfully to touch our lives and the lives of the people in this community and say, "God, I'm not going to give up until it comes." Let bombard heaven until the answer comes.

1. **God Will Hear Us** - Sin hinders prayer (***Psalms 66:18***). However, when sin is taken care of, prayer can flow unhindered to and from the throne of God! There is no more powerful force in the world than an unhindered prayer life! Why? Because He hears the prayer of the righteous (***Prov. 15: 29***).
2. **God Will Help Us** - God also promises to "***forgive our sins***". This means that not only is the prayer line restored, but it means that we can be in close fellowship with Him. Nothing in this world compares with being able to have close communion with God Almighty! The ability to come into His presence, to worship Him, to sense His power, His peace, His joy and His presence is priceless!
3. **God Will Heal Us** - Our homes, communities, schools, neighborhoods and nation have been devastated through a drought of spiritual blessings and power. If God's children will come back to Him in genuine repentance and faith, we will see our nation impacted for and by the glory of God. Revival is a real possibility! Its first evidence is that God begins to hear and answer prayers from heaven and show compassion to His people. He will forgive, clean our sins, and restore His favor, presence, peace, truth,

righteousness, and power. He will heal you and pour out His blessings, favor and His Holy Spirit upon you.

4. ***The purifying fire of God's presence makes us holy like God:*** God has always used fire to identifying his presence and purify his people. To Moses, God spoke through a burning bush, saying the place you are standing is holy ground. To Elijah, God consumed the altar with fire from heaven, proclaiming, among other things, that this was a holy man. To the first few believers in Jerusalem, God visited them in a violent blowing wind and tongues of fire, announcing that these were a holy people. To Solomon and the worshipers at the Temple, God came as a fire from heaven consuming the temple, stating that this was a holy place. Remember what Peter wrote, "but, as the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, be holy, because I am holy" (***1 Peter 1:15-16***).
5. ***The consuming fire of God compels us to worship God:*** Worship is a response to God's presence, His all-consuming holiness, and His glory. Worship is expressing our love to God, for who He is, what He said, and what He doing. In worship, God purifies and sanctifies you, as you get closer to Him.
6. ***The spreading fire of God leads us to witness of God:*** The nature of fire is to purify and to consume. Its nature is also to spread. God not only wants His presence to consume us resulting in our worship; He also wants His fire to spread into the hearts of others. An intimate connection exists between worship and witnessing. The goal of our witnessing produces worshipers of God. In addition, worship provides the motivation for witnessing. Worship produces a desire in us to tell others about Christ.



“Revival is falling in love with Jesus all over again” — Vance Havner

DAY 5

THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. ³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. ⁷ And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. ⁸ Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

1 Timothy 2:1-8 NIV

One day Hudson Taylor was traveling on a Chinese junk from Shanghai to Ningpo. He had been witnessing to a man called Peter who was resisting the message, but was under deep conviction. In the course of events, Peter fell overboard. Taylor panicked when he saw that no one made any effort to save the man. Instinctively, he sprang to the mast, let down the sail, and jumped overboard in hopes of finding his friend. A fishing boat was close by, so Taylor tried to solicit their help. However, they would not stop their fishing to look for this drowning man unless Taylor agreed to pay them. Not only that, but to Taylor's consternation, they wanted to barter for every penny he had. Finally, after he agreed to pay them a sizeable sum, they agreed to help. In less than a minute after dragging with the fishing net, they found Peter. Nevertheless, it was too late; Peter was dead. They had been too busy fishing to worry about a drowning man." (Steven J. Cole)

What a tragic story! Those fishermen were so business driven that they did not even care about saving the life of the drowning man. But don't we all act just like those fishermen? How concerned are we about those around us who are dying without Jesus? One reach one and the best way to start is pray.

WHAT IS THE GOOD OF PRAYER?

Prayer is not part of the natural life; no person who is too busy not to have time to pray. The life of God in you will suffer not because of the lack of food but prayer. Prayer is not a mean to develop ourselves but it helps us develop the life of God in us. The more we stay in contact with God through prayer, the more He nourished our lives. Most of the time, we use prayer to get things for ourselves, but the main reason of prayer is that God's holiness, purpose, and wise order may be brought about. When you are in distress, you constantly pray without really thinking but simply blurts it out. "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses" (*Psalms 107: 13*). Prayer is not a way to get things from God, but rather a way to know Him. "Prayer is not to be used as the privilege of a spoiled child seeking ideal conditions to indulge his spiritual propensities. The purpose of prayer is to reveal the presence of God, equally present at all times and in every condition" (Oswald Chambers).

PURPOSE OF PRAYER

The purpose of prayer is to reveal the presence of God, equally present always and in every condition.

1. **Prayer that all be reached with the gospel is in line with God's plan (2:1-2, 8).** "Prayer is not a nicety, but a necessity. God is sovereign, yet His sovereign plan includes the prayers of His people. If we are involved with God's plan for the world, then we will be praying in line with His plan."

God's plan about prayer:

A) God wants us to pray for all people with all kind of prayers.

- i. "Entreaties" = sense of need. Sensing our lack and God's sufficiency
- ii. "Prayers" = any kind of prayer for more wisdom, godliness, repentance, revival, etc.
- iii. "Petitions" = means to converse freely; go into the presence of God on behalf of others; the intercessory work of the Holy Spirit and of Christ on our behalf (Rom. 8:27, 34; Heb. 7:25).
- iv. "Thanksgivings" = our gratitude to God for His gracious answers.

We need to pray because of our need for God. Not only pray all kinds of prayer but for all people. God wants everyone to know Him. You may not be able to speak to the person about God; but you surely can speak to God about that person.

B) God wants us to spread the gospel so that people may be saved. Praying for those in authority so that we might enjoy a tranquil and quiet life. It doesn't mean that we have comfortable and happy lives, but so that we can grow in "godliness and dignity" to spread the gospel by manifesting Christian virtues.

C) God wants us to live in holiness and harmony among His people. We are to live in "godliness," and in "dignity". Having those requirements show that we take God seriously. How can we pray and work according to God's plan if we are not walking in holiness and harmony as God's people. We are His ambassadors here on earth. It is imperative that we reflect and represent Him with dignity.

2. Prayer that people will be in line with God's will (pleasure) (2:3-4). The words, "good" (beautiful, pleasant), "acceptable," and "desire." God's desire is for the salvation of all men. Ask yourselves those questions: Do I want to see people coming to Christ? Do I pray for those who do not know that Lord so that they can reflect God's pleasure and be saved?

3. Prayer that people will be in line with God's provision (2:5-6). Jesus is the mediator between God and men. He is the only way that men can be saved. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death but God provided a way out for us: Jesus who paid the price for us on Calvary. He reconciled us with God. He is our ransom, the one who paid the price to release us from bondage to sin and judgment. This ransom is more than enough for those who receive it and the best part is that it is free.

4. Prayer that people will be in line with God's procedure (2:7). We are the extensions of God's hands here on earth. He brought us into the Kingdom so that we can continue what He already started. It is not about your opinions or mine but His opinions. As we pray that God would reach all people with the gospel, we must pray

for people to tell them (Rom. 10:14). Jesus asked His disciples to pray for workers for God's harvest (Matt. 9:37-38). God is saying "What about you? Will you talk to your neighbor about Me?"



*"Fervency in prayer is as fire to the incense — it makes it ascend to Heaven as a sweet perfume" – **Thomas Watson***

*"Pray because you have a Father, not because it quietness you, and give Him time to answer."- **Oswald Chambers***

DAY 6

GOING DEEPER

⁹ *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*”

Matthew 6:9-13 NKJV

The Lord’s Prayer was given to the request of the unnamed disciple in verse one, “*Lord, teach us to pray.*” In reality, the disciple must have seen or heard John the Baptist’s disciples pray and he wanted to the same thing. He might have seen the changes on their faces after they pray or maybe the look of God after spending time with the Father. He is anxious to know how to pray and wanted to have the same experience. The disciple plea to Jesus provides us with a model of how to pray effectively. This prayer is not a ritual that we must follow or recite; but it is designed to show us the nature of prayer, how to approach our Father. Nothing wrong with reading or reciting it, it was never meant to be simply recited or never intended to be used as an amulet or special words to protect someone when in danger. The Lord’s Prayer is divided into two sections: “Your,” and “us.” The “Your” section points us to God and concerns our relationship with Him regarding His person, character, being, purposes, and activity on earth; and the “us” section deals with our needs as they are related to God and His activity and purposes in our lives here on earth.

Prayer is not a religious routine to do so we may feel good about ourselves. more than a mere religious routine we go through as it is in some religions in which worshippers recite certain words and bow in a certain direction specified times of the day. There is nothing wrong with scheduled prayer (*Dan. 6:10*) (*Ps. 55: 16-21*), but, as with both David and Daniel, the time of prayer was the expression of their hearts as they desire to be in communion with God and spends time with Him. Prayer shows our dependence on God in the same way we need to take in oxygen through the process of breathing. Just like the Psalmist said: “As the deer pants (heavy breathing) for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God” (*Ps. 42.1*)

1. ***Addressing our God as a family:*** God is our Father and calling Him such just tells us that we are His children. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” (*1 John 3:1*). He is a good, good Father and He has adopted us into His family... Is not an awesome and a beautiful truth! “Our Father” says we are His heirs and co-heirs with Jesus —that we are a part of the heavenly family. The Bible says, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father ... give good things to them that ask Him” (*Matthew 7:11*)? What a comfort to know that we have a Father who wants us to have the best and who gives us His best too. What kind of love is this? Just like our earthly father loves and disciplines us; so does our Heavenly Father.
2. ***Which art in Heaven:*** It tells us how far and near God is. The word “heaven” gives us a sense of distance but in reality, He is much closer than we think. The heaven is where throne is and the earth is

His footstool. “Our Father” is a very intimate, up-close idea, but “in heaven” gives us a sense of His distance from us. We are separated from God, and we are acknowledging that by saying, “There’s a problem: We’re here; You’re there. “Which art in heaven,” is to make the distinction between our earthly fathers and our heavenly Father. Our earthly fathers are carnal, and sinners by nature of being human but our Father in heaven is perfect and holy. “Our Father which art in heaven,” it is telling us we need to look past our flawed earthly relationships and know that He is our perfect model and that we can approach Him directly. You do not have to see God through the broken glasses of your family experience.

3. **Hallowed be your name:** “Hallowed” is defined as “to set apart, make holy, or treat as holy.” As God’s children, we must represent His name with dignity and respect. We are His extension, His representatives here on earth. Our behavior reflects on Him and we should not bring shame to bear His name and represent Him before the world. We need to be careful how we act because it affects His name and reputation before others. To hallow God’s name or sanctify it means to turn my life over to Him for sanctification. Meaning that we must let Him in our life and allow Him to make us like His son, our Savior. A good place to start is by surrendering and committing ourselves to Him and walk in obedience and total dependence.
4. **Your kingdom come:** There is a battle between two kingdoms, and we are in the middle of it. When the enemy deceived Adam and Eve, they surrendered the dominion that God had given them over the earth. Since then, our priority has been to “seek ye first the kingdom of God” (*Matthew 6:33*). As ambassadors of His Kingdom, we are responsible to advertise it by living according to the coming kingdom that will someday fill the earth. Do you know why the phrase “the kingdom of God” is found 70 times in the New Testament? Because of the war between the Kingdom of God and the devil, who says he is the prince of this world. That is why it is important to pray that His kingdom will come: first within us, then someday around us.
5. **Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven:** Contrary to popular belief, God’s will in this world is not always being done. When tragedy such as an earthquake or a tornado happens, people tend to say, “Well, it must have been the will of God.” Nowhere in the Bible it is found or taught that the way it goes. If it is true, why do you think God will ask us to pray for His will to be done on earth? At the same token, it does not mean that all good things come from God either. Sometimes the devil may even cast prosperity in someone’s path to stall or derail his or her longing for God. Like Solomon, we should pray for wisdom and grace, and that His Spirit will guide our wills into conformity with His. It is important to learn God’s will for our lives. In the garden of Gethsemane, before the separation from the Father, Jesus prayed three times and petitioned to God saying: “Not My will, but yours, be done” (*Luke 22:42 NKJV*). It is not always easy to do God’s will. Jesus struggles with that too; therefore, we need to pray like Jesus did “Your will be done “By praying that, we are admitting that our will is not what we should seek for, but His will, which is the best for us. When we pray “Thy will be done,” we are giving Him permission to use us according to His purpose.
6. **Give us this day our daily bread:** Bread has different meanings in the Bible. First, “daily bread” means the necessary provision to sustain a daily life. Yes, it is a pattern of prayer, but it does not mean that you cannot also pray for water, clothing, and other needs. By asking God for our daily bread, we are

simply praying for God to supply the necessities of our everyday lives. “Our daily bread” has a very important spiritual application. In **Matthew 4:4**, Jesus teaches that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God” using the word “bread” as the temporal needs of humanity. Most important, He would later say, “I am the bread of life” (**John 6:35**). Jesus is emphasizing that the physical needs are necessary but we need to abide in Him and invite Him in our hearts daily. Jesus, our spiritual bread, is far greater and more fulfilling than any physical bread on earth. To be fed spiritually, we need to read our Bible daily. Not only reading our Bible, but also praying daily. “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray” (**Psalms 55:17**). Daily bread, daily communion with the Lord, should be our top priority. That is why in the prayer, Jesus did not tell us to ask for monthly bread but daily bread. Most of us fill store our refrigerator with supplies that usually last a month, so sometimes we do not really appreciate the implications of praying for daily bread. The bread is not only mine but ours. Therefore, we need to be as concerned about the needs of others as much as, or more than, our own.

7. **And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors:** Our relationship with God is not only vertical but also horizontal. God says, “Now that you’re forgiven, I expect you to forgive each other.” The Bible says that Jesus paid a high price for our forgiveness to make it easier for us to forgive one another. We need to forgive each other. How do we expect God to forgive us if we do not want to forgive others? **Matthew 5:23-24** says “²³Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses” (**Mark 11:25, 26 NKJV**).
8. **And lead us not into temptation:** At a glance, it almost seems as though we’re begging God not to tempt us. “Please, Lord, we know you don’t want to tempt us. Yet if I don’t ask you not to tempt me, you’re going to tempt me.” That is a poor translation. In fact, James 1:13 says, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted he any man.” We are not pleading, “Lord, please don’t tempt me.” Naturally, we tend to walk toward temptation, and then ask God to lead us away from it. Translated more precisely, the prayer would go more like this: “Lead us away from our natural bent to temptation.” Do we need to pray that prayer? You sure do! We tend to play too close to the edge. One minister says, “When the Lord says to flee temptation, we often crawl away hoping it catches up with us”. **James 4:7** says, “⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” The devil likes it when we crawl, because it is easier to catch us with those little compromises. King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, murdered Uriah, and lied to his people. We should pray, “Lord, lead me away from even the little things, because that’s how the big things start.”
9. **But deliver us from evil:** We live in a world drowning in sin. “Deliver us” takes us away from evil and separates us from it eternally. In speaking of the second coming, Christ said, “Pray always” (**Luke 21:36**). Every day, every hour, we must pray to God to deliver from evil, to make a way for us to

escape what is about to happen in this world. Pray that we will be ultimately delivered and saved from evil within and around us.

10. ***For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever:*** Jesus doesn't say, "For Yours will be the kingdom," rather "For Yours is the kingdom." God is all-powerful and He has control over all things now. Our first motive is to give God the honor and the glory that He deserves. The enemy hungers to be a god and he does not deserve it at all. It is important that we must confess our sins to God and get to know Him. Like Paul said "10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (***Philippians 3:10***)

This prayer is about the Kingdom, NOT about us. It is our willingness to submit our lives to the Lord. Maybe, you do not have that relationship with Him or you have not trust Christ as Savior. He will come into your life, if you open the door to your heart. "Look at me. I stand at the door. I knock. If you hear me call and open the door, I'll come right in and sit down to supper with you." (**Rev 3:20 the Message**)



"We impoverish God in our minds when we say there must be answers to our prayers on the material plane; the biggest answers to our prayers are in the realm of the unseen." - Oswald Chambers

DAY 7

THE PLEA OF THE DISCIPLE

“It came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.”

Luke 11:1

When we think about Jesus, we think about Jesus, we naturally assume that He knew how to do all things and His faith was so strong and we tend to forget that He couldn't do anything without communicating with His Father. How do we think that we can do His work without talking to Him? A direct communication with our Father is important. Jesus rose sometimes early in the morning to pray and sometimes all night. Sometimes we rely on our talents and gifts and forget our dependency on God. The disciples had must have heard that John had taught His disciples on prayer and they wanted to know how to pray. They must have seen Jesus' appearance after He was done praying, one of His disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray. Notice that there is no record in the Bible where the disciples asked, “Lord teach us how to witness,” or “teach us how to perform miracles after Jesus fed 5,000 or raised Lazarus from the dead” or “teach us how to teach.” However, in this passage, we do find one of the disciples asking; “Lord, teach us to pray . . .,” Noticed that they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray after He had a prayer session. They have been going to the temple, heard, and recited all kind of prayer. But when they saw Jesus, His face must have been beaming with the light of heaven and energized by the Holy Spirit. They knew that something was missing and they wanted it. It was not just about prayer; it was how He prayed in relation to all that He was and all that He did in His life on earth. His dependency to the Father, his attitude toward prayer that saturated His life and every decision, step and action He took which reflected His intimacy with His Father. Perhaps they noticed that all of Jesus' preaching, teaching and performing miracles was linked to His prayer life. Prayer was never just a religious responsibility nor exercise Christ engaged in because He was obligated to do so. Just a religious responsibility nor exercise Christ engaged in because He was obligated to do so.

JESUS' DEPENDENCE ON HIS FATHER

Jesus' prayer shows us His deep dependence that came from a very intimate fellowship that He always had with the Father. As a human, He knew that He could do nothing of own resources. That is what the disciples have seen in Him and that is what they were longing for. They realized that they could be believers in the Lord, they could not be true disciples who became like their teacher (*Luke 6:40*) unless they stayed in touch with the Father through prayer just like Jesus did. They realize that it is about proximity with God, the Father. In other words, the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them to have a passion to pray like He did and they saw the results of His prayer. For Jesus Christ, prayer was a way of life, an absolute necessity: it was a means He used to talk to His Father and to receive the power needed to do His Father's business while He was on earth. As a man, Jesus needed the help of the Holy Spirit to perform the miracles He did. Though God of very God Himself, Jesus generally did not depend on Himself but on the leading of His Father and the Holy Spirit. (*Acts 2:22*). It was the Father working through Jesus, the man. Jesus recognized that “the Son can do nothing of Himself”. (1) In the midst of a busy schedule, He found time to spend time with His Father through prayer so He can draw upon the

resources of God the Father (2) When it was time to choose the disciples, Jesus didn't review their qualifications; but prayed for the direction and provision of the Father. (3) At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus prayed and raised His eyes heavenward in dependence and thanksgiving for what the Father was about to do (**John 11: 40-42**). By praying to the Father, He wanted to show people around Him His dependence to the Father and they might learn the secret of dependence. (4) When He fed the five thousand; He looked "up toward heaven" and prayed-demonstrating His dependence on the Father (**Mark 6:41**). Also, "He blessed the food" which shows His thankfulness to God the Father for it and for what He, the Father, was about to do through Jesus, the man, a God-dependent, God-approved man. Jesus was the Son of God, God incarnate, the perfect man and the absolute Creator God who also as the God-man adequately and continuously fulfilled every expectation of God for man. He was the joy and the delight of the Father's heart and was always pleasing Him. However, He admitted that apart from Him, He couldn't do anything. NOTHING! All He did is depending on the Father!! The disciples saw in Christ's life, not only prayer, but a prayer life which demonstrated a dependency upon and intimacy with the Father unlike anything else they had ever seen and they wanted to know the secret of this.

THE TRAGEDY OF PRAYERLESSNESS

Prayer is our greatest invitation extended to us from God, and invitation to the greatest banquet but some of us decline that invitation because we are so busy with our occupation or find excuses like in **Luke 14:18-20** "18 But then every single guest began to make excuses. One said, "Oh, I'm sorry. I just bought some land, and I need to go see it. Please excuse me." 19 Another said, "So sorry. I just bought five pairs of oxen. I need to go check them out. Please excuse me." 20 Another said, "I just got married, so I can't come."

PRAYERLESSNESS IS A SIN AGAINST:

(1) **God:** To live a life of prayerlessness is to live a life of rebellion against God, it is us saying that we can do life without Him. Prayer is not just an opportunity, it is a responsibility. It is not just a monologue in which we express our wishes and wants to God; it is a dialogue in which we also listen to Him. Through prayer God has designed to give us grace and guidance, correction and instruction where we seek to live per his will. To live a prayer-less life means we neglect to check into headquarters to find out what the Lord wants us to do. What keeps you from talking to the Father? Do you want a less life or a prayer life?

(2) **Self:** We impoverish ourselves when we neglect to pray because prayer is the divinely ordained channel through which we are to receive those things essential to carrying on the work of God. Prayerlessness reveals something tragic about our spiritual heart condition. To neglect prayer reveals a smug spiritual satisfaction, moral laziness, unbelief, and preoccupation with pointless activity. Why do we willingly live in the desert of prayerlessness, empty and impoverished?

(3) **Others:** When we spiritually impoverish ourselves by failing to pray, we also rob others of blessings. Have you ever really wanted a vibrant faith? Do you eagerly desire that for others? Do you hunger for them to understand His strength and experience His love? Through prayer I can open a door for you but that requires me to pray selflessly. Is there room in your prayer life for others?

Prayer is the Christian's greatest privilege. It is our greatest tool, our greatest weapon and our greatest opportunity. Prayer is the key to God's storehouse, the switch to God's power station and the greatest work in which one can become involved.



*“The purpose of prayer is not to give orders to God; the purpose of prayer is to get orders from God” — **Mark Batterson***

*“Prayer is exhaling the spirit of man and inhaling the spirit of God.” — **Edwin Keith***

DAY 8

THE PRESCRIPTION FOR PERSISTENT PRAYING

“And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you”.

Matthew 7:7

Each of these commands (“ask, seek, knock”) is in the continuous present; meaning that they aren’t something we do just once but they are actions that are repeated over and over and over again. Jesus encourages perseverance in prayer because God honors by it and it reveals our faith and allows God to reveal His glory. Few prayers are answered the first time we pray them. But God’s delays do not mean He doesn’t care. We are to ask, ask, and keep on asking. We are to seek, seek, and keep on seeking. We are to knock, knock, and keep on knocking. If we do, we will receive, find, and the door will be opened to us.

- 1. Keep on Asking:** It implies consciousness of need and the belief that God hears our prayer. This is a command to keep on bringing our request, keep on coming to the Lord with the need and the issue. Do not give up or faint. Do not throw in the towel. We are to persevere before the Lord in our requests. Do not lose heart or give up. Maybe you have believed God for the salvation of your family, for healing, for financial breakthrough. God’s delay is not necessary a denial.
- 2. Keep on Seeking:** It implies earnest petitioning along with obedience to God’s will. This is beyond asking and seeking for the thing requested. Meaning that in our prayers and through the prayerful reading and study of the Word, we need to seek for God’s will and the lessons He wants us to learn. Pray for spiritual wisdom and understanding and for that which God is doing in the situation (*James 1:5*).
- 3. Keep on Knocking:** It implies perseverance in coming to God when He does not answer quickly. You cannot give up or stop. Pray and wait and rest assure that God has it and will act on His own timing. Just trust in the goodness and wisdom of God. Knocking once does not indicate perseverance, but "continued" knocking does.

THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT FRIEND

In *Luke 11: 5-8*, Jesus teaches His disciples about the certainty of God’s answer and supply through persistent prayer. We often ask ourselves the following questions: Why are we to continue to pray for something if the first time we pray we believe God for our request? Isn’t that unbelief? What about those times when we pray and are certain of an answer and no answer is forthcoming? We believe and are confident it is God’s will, yet nothing happens. What are we to do? What are we to think? The Lord’s story of the friend who refused to take no for an answer is given to counter feelings of doubt and to become a reason and motivation for continuous and persistent prayer that believes God for what we ask. Sometimes, we get discouraged because a request is "repeated." The requester cannot allow himself to become discouraged merely because his first or second request is denied. He must be persistent. Persistent prayer does at least three things in our lives. (1) It reminds us of our weakness apart from God’s grace; (2) It reminds us to look to God as our Father; (3) It disciplines and humbles us to receive the Father’s gracious provisions so that we might live as kingdom citizens.

ASK YOUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

Jesus' purpose in these verses is to encourage us and motivate us to pray.

1. **He Invites Us to Pray:** Ask your Father for what you need. Seek your Father for the help you need. Knock on the door of your Father's house so he will open and give you what you need. Ask, seek, and knock. I invite you three times because I really want you to enjoy your Father's help.

2. **He Makes Promises to Us if We Pray:** Even better and more amazing than the three invitations are the seven promises. Verses 7-8: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives, and the one who seeks, finds, and to the one who knocks and it will be opened." Then at the end of verse 11b: "How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" Seven promises. It will be given you. You will find. It will be opened to you. The asker receives. The seeker finds. The knocker gets an open door. Your Father will give you good things. Surely the point of this lavish array of promises is to say to us: Be encouraged to come. Pray to him. It is not in vain that you pray. God is not toying with you. He answers. He gives good things when you pray. Be encouraged. Pray often, pray regularly, pray confidently in 2017.

3. **God Makes Himself Available at Different Levels:** Jesus encourages us not only by the number of invitations and promises, but by the threefold variety of invitations. In other words, God stands ready to respond positively when you find Him at different levels of accessibility. Ask. Seek. Knock. The point seems to be that it doesn't matter whether you find God immediately close at hand, almost touchable with his nearness, or hard to see and even with barriers between, He will hear, and He will give good things to you because you looked to Him and not another.

4. **Everyone Who Asks Receives:** When He adds the word everyone in verse 8, He wants to overcome our timidity and hesitancy that somehow it will work for others but not for us. Of course, He is talking about the children of God here, not all human beings. If we have Jesus as our Savior and God as our Father, then these promises apply to us.

5. **We Are Coming to Our Father:** When we come to God through Jesus, we are coming to our Father. God is our Father. He is our Heavenly Father and He is better than our Earthly father. He will far more certainly give good things to us than they did.

6. **The Cross Is the Foundation of Prayer:** In *Matthew 26:28*, Jesus said at the Last Supper, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Because of Christ's blood, our sins are forgiven when we trust in him. His death is the foundation for all the promises of God and all the answers to prayer that we ever get. This is why we say "in Jesus' name" at the end of our prayers.



"Fervency in prayer is as fire to the incense — it makes it ascend to Heaven as a sweet perfume" – **Thomas Watson**

DAY 9

WINNING THE WAR OVER WORRY

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?” ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Matthew 6:25-34 NIV

One morning Death was walking into a city when a man stopped him and asked what he was doing. Death answered, “I’m going into the city to kill 10,000 people.” The man replied, “That’s terrible that you would kill 10,000 people.” Death responded, “Taking people when their time has come is my job. Today I have to get my 10,000.” Later, as Death was coming out of the city, the man met him. Again, he was furious. He said, “You told me this morning that you were going to take 10,000 people, but 70,000 died today.” Death answered, “Don’t get mad at me. I only took 10,000. Worry killed all the rest.” (Keith Krell)

Worry has an uncanny knack for killing people. The poet Robert Frost (1874–1963) wrote, “The reason why worry kills more people than work is because more people worry than work.” Seriously, worry has become an American pastime. For many people, worry has become so ingrained in their personalities that once the old worries are gone they search for new ones. They have become dependent on worry as a lens through which to view life, and they have forgotten any other way to live. People worry about high-energy costs, a worsening economy, rogue nuclear nations, threats of terrorism, widespread job layoffs, and tension in the Middle East—all these make for uncertain times. Surveys show that more than half of Americans report irritability, anger, fatigue, or sleeplessness. In *Matthew 6:25–34*, Jesus uses the word “worry” six times and He says, “Don’t worry” three times.

TWO REASONS GIVEN BY JESUS WHY WE SHOULD NOT WORRY

1. *Worry is an exercise in futility (Matthew 6:25–30).* Jesus promises that He will meet our needs because He cares for you. The phrase “do not be worried” simply says “stop worrying.” Jesus does not want us to worry about food, drink, or clothes because He will meet our material needs. First, do not worry does not mean that you can’t plan. Jesus wants you to work hard and plan for your future. To do otherwise is to be foolish. Second, do not worry does not mean do not be concerned. If you are not concerned about your children playing near traffic, you are a terrible parent. If you are not

concerned about your health, you are a fast-food junkie. The root idea of the verb “worry” means, “to be pulled apart.” Do not confuse “concern” and “worry”. Concern is when you can do something to help a situation, so you do what you can do. Worry is when you cannot do something, but you do not want to leave it up to God. That is why Jesus did not say, “Don’t be concern” but He rather says “Don’t be worry”. You can spiritualize it all you want, but worry is a sin. If you are a worrying Christian, you are a sinning Christian. When we worry, we are simply saying that we do not trust God to handle that or to look after us. Worry is a hideous sin to God because it is an indictment against Him, a slap at His love. Worry means there is something over which we cannot have our own way, and in reality, is personal irritation with God. So, do not worry, be hopeful.

2. *Worry is a demonstration of faithlessness (Matthew 6:31–34).* Jesus clearly said that the pagans run after all these things, (food, drink, and clothing) because they do not have a loving Father like you and I have. Our Father knows that we need and will take care of it. Pagans are anxious, stressed, and tormented because they think that their future was in the hands of Fate and Fortune. In other words, according to Jesus, worry is practical atheism. When we worry, we act like people who have no hope and we become just like the pagans, the unbelievers. When you worry, you are saying, “God, I don’t really know about You. I am not sure You are a caring God. I am not sure You are a providing God. You are good for church on Sunday, but I am not sure about You for the rest of the week. So, I’ve got to take care of this myself.” (***Keith Krell***). Jesus said not to worry. He got your back and He will take care of you.

3. TRUST GOD IN EVERYTHING

- 1. *God will ensure your survival.*** Jesus says, “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” God is the life giver and He will sustain it too. In other words, Jesus says, “If you are going to worry, at least worry about something important, such as your life.” God says, “If I’m going to wake you up tomorrow, I’m going to feed you. Now which is easier? Feeding you or waking you up? Do not worry about breakfast tomorrow. Worry about whether your heart is going to stop tonight. Worry about whether I am going to keep your brain working and your heart pumping. If you’re determined to worry, worry about that.” (***Keith Krell***)
- 2. *God will meet your material needs.*** “Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?” (**6:26**). The word translated “look” is a compound verb that can be translated “take a good look at.” You are created in the image of God; therefore, you are far more valuable to God than birds (***Matt 10:31; 12:12***). The lesson is that we are carry out our responsibilities to follow God’s word and He will and He will carry His responsibilities for He is faithful.
- 3. *God will grant your allotted days.*** Jesus says, “And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?” (**6:27**). Worrying does not lengthen your life but may shorten your life. You can no longer sleep at night because you are so worry. “Are you worrying so much that you’re losing sleep? The Bible says that in ***Psalms 121:2-4*** “² My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.³ He will not let your foot slip—He who watches over you will not slumber;⁴ indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. If God stays up all

night, so, why should you? You are the one who needs to sleep! Worrying is such a waste of time. To worry is to insult the God who has your life under control. The word worry comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word that means “to choke” or “to strangle.” Worry will cause high blood pressure, headaches, loss of sleep and ultimately die before your time.

4. ***God will cover your external appearance.*** God will cover your external appearance. Jesus says, “And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; ²⁹ they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!” (***Mathew 6:28–30***) Jesus says, “Don’t be worried about what you will wear. Just look at the flowers.” When you look at the analogy of Jesus, you might say the birds and lilies do not worry about life, but they also do not have mortgages, car payments, grocery bills, and college tuitions to keep them awake at night. Yet, here, Jesus says, “God will meet your need for clothing.” You may be wearing your favorite designer shirt or pants but you will have what you need. Jesus is saying, “Trust God to meet your needs.” God’s trustworthiness is the issue.
5. ***God will take care of your tomorrow:*** Jesus does not want you to worry about tomorrow either for it “will care for itself” (***Matthew 6:34b***). The problem with worrying about tomorrow is you never run out of tomorrows. “Each day has enough trouble of its own.” You must learn to live life one day at a time. God only gives you help you need for today. He does not give you tomorrow’s help today. That is one of the reasons why He renews His mercy daily. So, do not worry about what you are going to do tomorrow, because when you get to tomorrow, God’s grace will be there to meet you and give you what you need.

SUGGESTION FOR CHRONIC WORRIERS

First, find a shoebox and call it your “worry box.” Each time you feel tempted to worry, write your worry on a piece of paper and drop it in the box. Be sincere because He already knows and let Him know of your concern.

Second, trust Him. He is trustworthy and He alone can meet your needs. So, trust Him today before we do anything at all. The motto of many is “Don’t worry, be happy!” but Jesus is saying: “Don’t worry, and trust Me!”



“If you were to pray as much as you worry, you would have a lot less to worry about.”

DAY 10

SET YOUR PRIORITY IN ORDER

³³ “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”.

Matthew 6:33 KJV

The world makes it easy for you to fill your calendars or agendas with all kinds of things that push God in the last place in your life. Sometimes, your careers, your goals, and your families, even your ministries take priority in your life instead of God. If your priorities are not in order, your life will not be in order. If Jesus is not the most important person in your life, then you need to rearrange your priorities. If you do not have first things first, then everything else will also be out of order and cause you problems and chaos. What is the kingdom Jesus talks about? It is His reign as Lord and King in your life. Living under the rule of Christ each moment and submitting to His will on all things. His Holy Spirit works in you, through you, and around you so you can live and do the will of God. To seek the kingdom, you must first seek the King because you cannot have a kingdom without a king. When Jesus used the word “seek”, He means (1) Intentionally- when you lost something important, you must put aside other things and seek until you find it (2) Importance- position, prosperity and popularity can be good things when used properly. But without the rule of Christ in your life, you’ll always be vulnerable to the devil (3) Importunity- no matter how long it takes, how hard you work, it is vital that you rearrange your schedule to have your quiet time with Him. Have a time of devotion, or an appointment with God and do it regularly. Your quiet time is a daily fellowship with Him through His Word and prayer. A special time you set aside with Him alone. Turn off your phone, your laptop and talk to Him. He longs to spend that time with you in fellowship. The goal is that you may grow in your relationship with God and know Him, love Him, serve Him and become like Him. The more time you spend in the presence of God, the more you become like Him. Your thoughts will be consumed by Him, your speech will be changed, and people will know that you have been with the King. He comes first and not last. He wants the first moments of everyday, the first day of every week and the first part of every paycheck. Schedule a time alone with God to read His word just like as though you are scheduling an appointment on your calendar to meet a friend for lunch or dinner. Find a time that suits you best, be excited about that and look forward for that. He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. (*Hebrews 11:6 NIV*)

REQUIREMENTS TO THE COMMAND

(1) This kingdom requires us to seek it; meaning that we seek to belong to it by knowing God’s will and do it. We must seek to recognize by Christ as one of his subjects, and seek to promote the interests of this kingdom, as all true subjects of any kingdom do, and should do if the government deserves their support. He who truly seeks first the kingdom of God, seeks to be as really and perfectly governed by Christ now, as the holy in Heaven are. He would have Christ living and reigning within him so that every thought shall be brought into obedience.

(2) We are required not only to seek the kingdom of God but also “His righteousness”. We must be right with God and be sanctified and justified by Him. This also includes forgiveness.

The command to first to seek His kingdom and His righteousness is very important as it is the great business of our lives. Seeking first His kingdom implies that it is the first thing we should attend to. Not to grab your cellphone and go on Facebook but to agonize to enter in His presence by pressing on. The Bible declares that the kingdom of God has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.

(3) Seeking God's kingdom first requires perseverance and supreme earnestness. You need to seek Him with all our hearts. We must press on and get back to obedience. The blessings within reach are too great and precious to be lost for want of perseverance in the pursuit.

NO EXCUSE ACCEPTED

This command implies that everything else must be postponed to this. The spirit of the precept demands that everything else be thrown into the back-ground, and this be placed foremost of all. When Christ was upon earth, He admitted no apology for delay--would allow nothing to interpose between the soul, and its present duty. On a certain occasion, Christ called a man to follow himself. The man replied, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." No, said Christ, "leave the dead to bury their dead"--the dead in sin to bury the natural dead--"but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Now it is plain that our Savior puts these strong cases for the very purpose of enforcing strongly this point--that nothing else whatever may be placed before prompt obedience to this great precept, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

In summary, Jesus is saying --I will take away from you all apology for neglecting the things of My kingdom--you shall have no excuse for not making religion the chief thing; let it be your first business--first in point of time--first in your esteem--first in the earnestness with which you seek it; then trust me to make up all the other things that you need. Do My business and I will do yours. Take care of My kingdom--throw your whole soul into Its interests. Jesus was full of life and He was passionate about the Kingdom. His life is referred to the "Passion of the Christ". As His followers, we must be the most passionate people on earth. Pursuing God-ordained passion isn't optional but essential part of chasing Him. We often sing at church "I am chasing after You, no matter what I have to do" I wonder if we really mean it sometimes.

WHY SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

(1) It is of supreme importance to us that we should attend to these spiritual things. The infinite well-being of the soul depends upon it.

(2) The time is so short: and the fact that we know not how short it is, renders it indispensable that we should attend to it immediately. Life is so uncertain that we can place no dependence upon the prospect of doing another day what we put over from this. "Who knoweth what a day may bring forth?"

(3) Every hour's delay makes success more doubtful and your peril of damnation more portentous. Your heart will be more hardened, temptations will have gained more power, and a mightier struggle will be demanded ere victory can be sure.

(4) If you neglect but for one moment too long, it will be fatal. There is a moment beyond which if you neglect seeking the kingdom of God, you can never attend to it with success thereafter. If you wait beyond that point, no mercy remains; the door of heaven is shut against you; your damnation is certain.

(5) Unless the subject is treated as of supreme importance, it is of no use to attend to it at all. Some persons

attend to it just enough to make their damnation as certain as it can possibly be made, and as dreadful. Let one attend just enough to quiet his conscience and lull his fears--just enough to keep the truth before his mind and learn to resist it--just enough to habituate himself to resist the claims of God and do despite to the Spirit of grace; he is in the worst condition possible. He is commonly decent enough to prevent being aroused and alarmed by his own open wickedness. He does nothing that shocks his own moral sense and startles him from his deep lethargy; so, he moves along waxing daily worse and worse, till he wakes at last in hell. Now it was better for this man to let the subject entirely alone than to attend to it in this sleepy, profitless, heart-hardening way. It is better also for the sake of others that he should let the subject alone than give it only such attention; for he will greatly stumble others and lead them down to perdition. Jesus said "I would that thou wert cold or hot; because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Christ therefore prefers that you let the subject entirely alone, rather than attend to it just enough to quiet your fears, evade conviction, harden your heart, induce others to ruin, and never do your duty.

(6) The supreme importance of the subject would render Christ's command in the text more reasonable even without the annexed promise. For even if we were to suffer the want of bread and the worst pinching of poverty, this were infinitely better than to lose the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Therefore, it must be wise to seek the kingdom of God first.

ATTACHED PROMISE

Jesus is saying "If you will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, you shall have all these earthly things of which He had been speaking. You shall be fed as surely as I feed the ravens, and clothed as well as I clothe the lilies. You need not be anxious for these things. It is my business to provide them". Remember that your Father knows your wants and will take care to supply them. Only, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." He is simply saying "Do your duty as I enjoin it, and I will be responsible for these lesser things." Indeed, we have no reason left us for neglecting obedience to this great and good command.



"When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place"

DAY 11

JESUS' ANSWER TO LIFE'S PURPOSE

“My food,” said Jesus “is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work”.

John 4: 34 NIV

As food is pleasant, and delightful, and refreshing to the body of man, so doing the will of God was as delightful and refreshing to the soul of Christ: He took as much pleasure in it, as an hungry man does in eating and drinking. One part of the will of God was to assume human nature; with delight and pleasure: another part of it was to fulfill the law; and this was in His heart, and was His delight, and He was now doing it: and another branch of it was to suffer and die, in the room and stead of his people; and as disagreeable as this was in itself to the human nature, yet He cheerfully agreed to it; and was sometimes, as it were, impatient till it was accomplished; and He voluntarily became obedient to it: no man could, with greater eagerness, fall to eating, when hungry, than Christ went about his Father's will and work, even that which was most ungrateful to him, as man.

JESUS' FOCUS

Jesus made this statement to His disciples after His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well. His first concern was not to be fed physically but to do the will of the Father and finish the work. He was seizing every opportunity to serve others. He had come to this well tired, hungry, and thirsty and within minutes had even turned His own needs into an opportunity to serve others' needs! He had such inspiration from the Holy Spirit, He was in such a flow, and He did not give a thought to food or anything else. His only focus was His Father's will as He had an opportunity to engage with the Samaritan townspeople. Just as the Father has sent Jesus, He is sending you today to do His will. It is time to do His work because the field is ripe. *“Lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest (John 34:35 NIV).* Let look around us. We are surrounded by opportunities that are ready for harvest. The problem is not that we lack the tools. The Master of the Harvest has ensured that both the sower and the reaper have the tools and resources they need. The problem is a lack of motivation to put our skills, talents, and opportunities to work for the Master. It is important that you not only do what God has called you to do, but that you finish it. You cannot do it halfway and halfhearted. He had invested so much in you and called you to be continue His work until He comes back. God has also given you His Holy Spirit to help you; so never think that you are alone. Do not use your own strength or anointing to do what only the Holy Spirit can do. In *Acts 20:24*, Paul said... *“if only I may finish my course with joy...”* Take pleasure in doing God's work and enjoy every minute of it. Jesus did not come to preach a message of coexistence, tolerance, or ecumenism. Jesus was preaching the Gospel for, which He was anointed and sent; and which He did with great assiduity and constancy. Jesus came to do the works of His Father, so people could understand that He and the Father were one. Jesus came as the light of the world, giving fallen humankind the opportunity to move from utter darkness into His marvelous light. He came to save people, He was concerned about the conversion of sinners, whom He was sent to call, and with whom He delighted to be; He performed

the miracles His Father gave Him to finish; such as healing diseases, and dispossessing of devils, and which He went about doing continually, with great delight. He endured the cross patiently, and despised the shame of it. He did it exactly as He was commanded to do according to the pattern given Him, with all faithfulness, and integrity; with the most consummate wisdom and prudence; with all application, diligence, and constancy, and so as to finish it, and that without the help of any other; and in such a manner that nothing can be added to it to make it more perfect, or that it can be undone again by men or devils: and that the doing and finishing of this were His meat, or as delightful and refreshing to him as meat is to the body, appears from his ready and cheerful engaging in it in eternity; from his early and industrious entrance on it in time; from his constancy in it, when He had begun, insomuch that nothing could deter him from it; nor did He sink and fail under it, nor left it until He was hanged on the cross and said ³⁰“*It is finished.*” (*John 19:30 NIV*)

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Jesus has not only done His Father’s will while submitting Himself to Him and obeying Him to finish the work. Nothing left undone. Jesus completed the work required to bring us back into communion with God. Jesus, having completed His mission, gives a victory shout. It is a shout emerging from his joy — not an “I’m glad this is over” but more like a good and faithful son hearing His father say, “It’s done. Well done!” Jesus responds with this glorious shout, “It is finished!” The victory is won; the captives are free to come home. What Jesus did through His perfect earthly existence, sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection fully completed the work the Father had given Him to do. Not only did He complete His sacrificial work but also His accomplishment is fully efficacious today and will be forevermore. There is nothing more to add--nothing more to be done by God, man, or religious institutions. The undeniable, factual, historic, and eternal work of Jesus Christ was completed, and will forever remain completed. “IT . . . IS . . . FINISHED!” At the cross, the Great Exchange took place (*2 Corinthians 5:21, Colossians 2:13-15*). God the Father looked upon His perfect, precious, and priceless Son as if He had lived the filthy, detestable, sin-stained lives of fallen humankind, but He looks at you if you had lived His Son's perfect, precious, and priceless life. At the cross, God kept His promise to crush Satan's head through the bruising of His Son. The power of sin and death was vanquished once and for all time. The sin debt you owe to God was and your Lord and Savior pay it in full, when He shed His innocent blood on the cross on my behalf. Let get to work, do His will and finish the work just as Jesus did!



“Jesus paid for salvation for every man, woman, boy, and girl who would ever live on this earth. But people must believe on Jesus and receive Him as their own Savior before salvation can benefit them.” — Kenneth E. Hagin

DAY 12

YOU ARE MEANT TO MOVE MOUNTAINS

You will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

Matthew 17:20

What is a mountain in the life of a believer? It is simply a temporary situation that you are facing. The mountain is the barrier trying to stop you for doing God's will. So often we spend time talking to God about our mountains and we want Him to take care of our mountains (problems) in your life while He has given us the authority to do that. A mountain is usually a barrier that is impeding your progress on the Kingdom. Most of the time, we magnify our mountains instead of magnifying our God. Sometimes we use the mountain as an excuse to slack instead of using the authority given to us by God. You are responsible to speak to the mountain in your life to be removed. God will not do what He has commended you to do. When a farmer sows a seed, he expects a harvest. His crops do not grow overnight but it takes time. Otherwise, his crops will be premature. Our God is not a microwave God or a genie in a bottle, all we have to do is rob the bottle and we get the result. Praying is like planting. It takes time and it is not our responsibility to manufacture the miracles because we are impatient and we expect God to answer at a speedy time. It does not mean that because God did not answer you that He has forgotten you. A delay is not a denial. So do not stop planting, but keep praying, obeying, giving, serving and loving.

Notice that Jesus never asked His disciples to pray to the Father about the mountain you are facing; but He said to speak to the mountain to your spiritual man.

Prayer and fasting will not move a mountain. They are spiritual disciplines but they will move you into a more confident position to speak to the mountain.

Never once, Jesus told us to deny or ignore the problem by saying "I don't have a mountain" or "what problem?". He did not say to go around the mountain, climb the mountain or to go over the mountain. Having a positive attitude is great but it is contrary to what Jesus asked us to do. You need to acknowledge that there is a problem and walk in obedience by doing what Jesus asks you to do: speak to the mountain or problem and tell it to be moved. It requires faith. Be a believer not a doubter. When you believe, NOTHING will be IMPOSSIBLE for you"

JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING THE MOUNTAIN OR PROBLEM

It is your responsibility to:

1. **Receive** when you pray (*Mark 11:24; Matthew 21:21*)
2. **Speak** to the mountain or problem you have; rebuke, give directions to the problem (*Mark 11:23, Matthew 21:21, Matthew 17:20, Luke 17:6, Mark 16:17, Luke 11:20, Matthew 12:28*)
3. **Say** what you want to happen, into existence (*Mark 11:23*). It shall be done according to God's Word

WHAT KIND OF FAITH DOES IT TAKE TO MOVE MOUNTAINS?

1. *Matthew 17:20* states that only the amount of the size of a grain of mustard seed is enough. It is the smallest seed of all in the time of Jesus.
2. God expects all of us to have at least a "speck" of faith and a speck is all that is needed to move mountains.
3. It does not take a great man or woman of God to have this kind of faith. The Bible provides us with some examples such as: the Syrophenician woman's daughter was healed, the Centurion whose servant was sick, was healed, the ten lepers were healed, the man let down through the roof was healed, the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment in the street was healed, the lame, blind and the insane were all healed. They were not followers of Jesus, or regular church attendees, but all exercised that little speck of faith and were healed.
4. A tiny speck of faith can and will grow like the mustard plant, but it, unlike the mustard plant must be cultivated and cared for and it will grow to gigantic height.

WHY DON'T MORE HAVE THAT KIND OF FAITH?

1. *Matthew 17:14-20* is the main reason. The very same reason the disciples could not heal the man's son... unbelief, doubt. We do not believe that God really hears or will even answer our prayers. We do not believe in what we ask God to do for us enough.
2. We are like the Pharisees of the days of Jesus in lots of ways: We do not need God's help except in emergencies. We do not have a prayer life at all. We do not read our Bible at all.
3. We try to bring God down to our human limitations: Because of our self-limitation, we try to place God under the same limitations, the same possibilities and impossibilities. Whatever limits us or we cannot understand and cannot do, we place the same limitation upon God. .
4. We worry about everything instead of trusting God.

HOW CAN WE GET THE KIND OF FAITH JESUS SPEAKS ABOUT?

1. The first step is to become as little children. We need to submit ourselves to God's commands and trust Him.
2. We must establish a prayer life. Prayer goes hand in hand with faith. If you have plenty of prayer life, then you will have plenty of faith.

3. We must read the Bible seriously and very frequently. Just like God commanded to Joshua ⁸ *Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. (Joshua 1:8)*

4. The most important thing of all is BELIEF. We must believe that Christ is who the Bible says He is. God will answer our prayers because He cares for us.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THE MOUNTAIN?

1. Speak to the mountain (problem) and direct it to be removed. Refuse to be faithless or doubt and talk about the mountain.
2. Speak the life giving, spiritual words of Jesus. Be careful about what comes out of your mouth.
3. Use the authority given to you by "speaking" to any problem that is stopping God's will in my life.
4. Do not ask or beg, but require and demand God's will to be accomplished.

WHAT KIND OF RESULTS DOES THIS KIND OF FAITH BRING?

1. Peace: of mind and soul, and with God
2. It assures us of our future home in heaven.
3. It gives us boldness.
4. We will bear fruits and win the lost of the Lord.



“Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading.” — Oswald Chambers

DAY 13

ARE YOU BOTHERING GOD?

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. ² He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ ⁴ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care what people think, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually come and attack me!’” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”

Luke 18:1-8

Pray is important for the life of all believers because it transforms your life. For some, prayer is just a spiritual exercise. Prayer is so important that God makes Himself available to be influenced by man so He can stand at the gap for you. Take time in the presence of God. Cry unto Him and birth what God has for you. When we pray, we come into the presence of God and He hears us. If we are to have a right relationship with God, we must pray. It is essential for our faith. The health of God’s church is dependent on us having a more intimate relationship with Him and discerning His will for the church. We cannot afford to do things our way or to plow through the future without God’s lead. It takes all of us fervently praying together. But, how much should we pray? How long should we pray for something? Are you like some people who may pray one time and it is enough? Do you pray a few times about some need and then stop? Is it ever ok for us to stop praying? In response to His disciples’ request for Him to teach them to pray (**Luke 11:1**), Jesus told them to keep on asking, seeking, and knocking. The Apostle Paul affirmed this in several of his letters. **Romans 12:12** says we should “be constant in prayer”. **Colossians 4:2** says to “continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving”. Of course, everyone knows **1 Thessalonians 5:17** that says, “Pray without ceasing.” Lest this important truth about not being prayer quitters should be lost on His disciples, Jesus told a parable to stress the importance of persistent prayer.

THE UNJUST JUDGE AND THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

The important thing in this parable is what the widow did to get justice. A widow during Jesus’ time was almost helpless. Her only hope was that her persistent plea for justice was granted. The only hope the widow in this parable had was to keep coming to that unjust judge until she was vindicated. In this story, the widow is the hero. She is the underdog. People love for an underdog to win. You may have been praying to God for justice and maybe you think God is not listening to you. If so, what are you supposed to do? Just like the widow, you cannot give up. Keep on asking, keep on seeking, and keep on knocking. Keep on praying. The focus of this parable is not on the widow but on the unrighteous judge, because his character is to teach us by contrast about God’s character. The woman persisted in her petition because that judge was a wicked man who would act only

out of self-interest, and she literally wore him down. She got what she wanted from him because he was evil and would put his ease and best interests above anything else.

In sharp contrast, the Christian is taught to persist in prayer because of the character of God, which is the opposite of that of the judge. God is righteous; the judge was unrighteous. God has chosen His disciples—they are called “His elect” (v. 7), and He cares about His disciples because He has chosen them. But the unrighteous judge has no feelings and no relationship to the widow. He has no compassion toward her, while God has great compassion on His elect. The unrighteous judge delayed because he did not care about God or man; the Lord Jesus delays out of compassion on guilty men, giving them time to repent and be saved. The unrighteous judge only cared about reducing his “pain,” while the righteous Judge came to suffer the greatest pain of all—the just wrath of God—in order to save fallen man. The unjust judge brought about justice slowly and reluctantly, but the Just Judge of all the earth will hastily bring about justice when He returns to the earth.

It is time to be realistic about why sinful men ever bring about justice. To be frank, they only do it for their own self-interests. It is not righteousness, which prompts men to act in favor of justice, but self-interest. Government officials are looked upon as duty bound to promote justice, but if the justice they are obliged to administer is not in their own self-interest, do not plan on it taking place, at least quickly. If unjust men will not bring about justice because it promises them no pleasure or benefit, then persistence may force them to act in self-interest to reduce the pain of our persistence.

GOD'S SURE JUSTICE

It is easy to look at this parable and wonder who the judge is. Well, he represents God. That may be unsettling to you, but do not worry that God is compared to this unjust judge. Jesus is compared to a thief in the night regarding His second coming. That is not to say that Jesus is a thief, but that His second coming will be sudden like a thief in the night. If the unjust judge finally granted the persistent widow’s request, how much more will a just God hear and grant the petitions of His followers who pray to him day and night. The comparison of this parable is not how God is an unjust judge, but that He responds to our prevailing prayer. God is good, righteous and just. His love of justice, His love for His own (and His compassion for the oppressed) predispose Him to act to bring about justice. It is this positive aspect of His character, which promotes the perseverance of the saints in prayer, while it is the very wickedness of the unjust judge, which required the same perseverance from the widow. The character of God is our motivation not to lose heart and to press on in prayer for His coming and for the establishment of justice on the earth. Remember that only God can bring about justice in a corrupt world. That is why we must pray and not give up in our work. God can bring miraculous justice in a corrupt world, just as God can bring miraculous healing in a sick world. Suddenly, the Berlin wall opens, the apartheid regime crumbles, and peace breaks out. In the parable of the persistent widow, God does not intervene. The widow’s persistence alone leads the judge to act justly. But Jesus indicates that God is the unseen actor. “Will not God grant justice for his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?”

God invites you come boldly before His throne and He wants you to persevere and never give up. He wants you to be like the persistent widow in this parable and keep on praying. This does not mean to pray constantly

without a break, but to pray persistently. Don't stop when the answer is delayed. No matter what, continue praying, seeking, asking and knocking. So, are you bothering God? You should. He wants to hear the persistent prayers of His children. What are you waiting for?



“Never give up, God is our strength” -

DAY 14

LET IT GO

¹⁴“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, Your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Matthew 6:14-15

How do you climb a mountain? One-step at a time. God is asking us to let it go. So why are you holding on to your anger, hurt, disappointment etc...? We all agree that this is a difficult word from the Lord. It is a long process with small victories along the way. It is hard to understand and even harder to apply. To forgive is the hardest thing to give away and sometimes it goes to those who do not deserve it. In other words, forgiving someone can be difficult. However, forgiveness is not always about the other person but it is about your own freedom and our spiritual growth. Love and forgiveness cannot be separated. If you choose to live out the love of God as the purpose of your life, then forgiving is an option that cannot be avoided. “*Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you*”. (*Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV*) When you hold resentment toward others, you are imprisoning yourself by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiving someone is not an easy process to go through but it is the only way to freedom. If you refuse to refuse, what hope do you have of receiving what you need? To receive from God what He promised you in His Word, you must obey Him, regardless of how difficult it may be. Yes, it is sometimes painful and the Holy Spirit is here to help you through that process. The greatest deception Satan uses is that if your feeling has not changed, it means that you have not truly forgiven. Do not let the enemy convince you that you did not forgive because you still have the same feelings. When we go to God and ask Him to forgive us, we expect Him to forgive us of our wrong, therefore we should do the same with each other. If God by His grace and mercy forgave us, we must forgive others no matter how much we have been hurt. What we suffer cannot compare to what Christ suffered for us.

A SERIOUS WORD TO THE UNFORGIVING

Just like a disease can sometimes spread in someone’s body, so are the effects of unforgiveness, our real problem is personal. So often, we do not see ourselves as very great sinners; therefore, we do not appreciate how greatly God has forgiven us. But when your own sins seem small, the sins of others against you will seem big indeed. The reverse is also true. The greater you see the depth of your sin before God; the less the sins of other people against you will bother you. If you think you are not much of a sinner, then the offenses of other people are going to appear in your eyes as big. Do not talk about repentance unless you are willing to forgive your brothers and sisters. Unless you are willing to forgive, your repentance is just so much hot air and empty talk. True repentance always starts with a change of mind that leads to a change of heart that leads to a change (in this case) in the way we view those who have sinned against us. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great English preacher, said that if you pray with an unforgiving spirit, you have virtually signed your own “death-warrant.” Unless you forgive, you will not be forgiven. To refuse to forgive someone else and then to ask God for forgiveness is a kind of spiritual schizophrenia. You are asking God to give you what you are unwilling to

give to someone else. Forgiveness is a decision that you will no longer credit offenses against others or take revenge. God will take care of it.

TEN CONSEQUENCES OF AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT. (R. T. KENDALL, WAYLON MOORE, AND BOB LELAND.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Our fellowship with the Father is blocked. | (6) You force God to become your enemy. |
| (2) The Holy Spirit is grieved. | (7) You lose the blessing of God on your life |
| (3) Your prayers will not be answered. | (8) You waste time nursing a wounded spirit |
| (4) God leaves you alone to face the problems you hate | (9) You become enslaved to the people of life in your own power. |
| (5) The devil gains a foothold through your refuse to forgive | (10) you become like the people you bitterness |

PRINCIPLES TO KEEP IN MIND

- A. Failure to forgive demonstrates our unwillingness to treat others on the same basis of grace that God has treated us. We must be willing to extend forgiveness as freely to others as God has freely extended it to us (*Matt. 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32*).
- B. Failure to forgive others stems from our failure to turn the matter over to the Lord and trust in His sovereign purposes and control. The Lord who rested totally in the Father's love and plan is our perfect example in this (*1 Pet. 2:21-25*).
- C. Failure to forgive others keeps the Lord from forgiving us. Unforgiveness, like any known sin, stands as a barrier to fellowship. The basis for our forgiveness is always the cross and Christ's presence before the Father as our advocate (*1 John 1:9-2:2*). Failure of people to forgive one another results in a sick church—one without the power and blessing of God on its ministry and life.

STEPS TO FREEDOM:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (1) Admit the wrong | (5) Release the hurt to Jesus |
| (2) Admit the hurt | (6) Bless the one(s) who hurt you |
| (3) Acknowledge the need for healing | (7) Let the Lord replace it with |
| (4) Confess any sinful response | (8) Forgive yourself |
| | (9) Embrace God's forgiveness |

Today, take God's hand and let Him lead you in the path of freedom, forgiveness and complete healing. You will come out of it victorious and free.

*“God’s forgiveness frees us from the chains of regret” — **Bill Crowder***

*“Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong” — **Nelson Mandela***

DAY 15

SPIRITUAL WEED CONTROL

We take every thought captive to obey Christ,

2 Corinthians 10:5

During Spring, plants and flowers are blooming; so are weeds. For the plants and flowers to thrive, we need to take care of the weeds otherwise; they will kill your garden. Like our gardens, our minds are fertile grounds where thoughts are sprouting and growing. In order to bear good fruit, we must exercise Spiritual Weed Control. When we are tending our gardens, we trim and prune to promote new, healthy growth. To avoid choking and assure the survival of our plants and flowers, we must remove the weeds so we work diligently. We dig, pull, and spray because the weeds are resilient and persistent. They seem to grow no matter how poor the soil, and no matter how poor the conditions. Our minds are the gardens of our lives. We must tend to them, nurturing the thoughts that help us to grow in spirit and build a strong relationship with God. Our thoughts, good and bad, define us. They express our inner selves – our hopes, dreams, desires, and feelings and set our priorities. *Proverbs 23:7* tells us, “*As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.*” The Bible clearly commands us to take captive every thought and to obey Christ. We cannot entertain those thoughts and let them to root in our minds. We are at war. Take captive every thought means “to control, to conquer, to bring into submission.” We take captive. We make it submit. Make it obedient means “to bring into submission, to bring under control.”

FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR WINNING THE BATTLE OF YOUR MIND

1) ***Don't Believe Everything You Think***: We are bombarded by thoughts daily, some from the enemy and some from our sinful nature. We have an amazing ability to lie to ourselves. The Bible says Satan is “the father of lies” (*John 8:44*). If he can get you to believe a lie, he can get you to sin. Anytime you sin, you are thinking that you know better than God does. He said this, but what about that? Therefore, you have to question what you think.

But one of the big reasons why you need to not believe everything you think is that we see what we want to see. We must remind ourselves, and teach others, not to believe everything we think!

2) ***Guard Your Mind from Garbage***: The old cliché from the early days of the computer — GIGO, garbage in/garbage out — is still true today. If you put bad data into a computer, you will get bad results out. If you put mental garbage into your mind, you will get garbage out in your life. *Proverbs 15:14*: “A wise person is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on trash” (NLT).

3) ***Never Let Up on Learning***: Love knowledge. Love wisdom. Learn to love the act of learning. The word disciple means “learner.” You cannot be a disciple of Christ without being a learner. Jesus said, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden [by the way, that sounds like a felt need! and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me” (*Matthew 11:28–29*). Jesus wants us to learn from Him.

4) ***Let God Stretch Your Imagination***: If we are going to learn, and teach others, how to fight the battle for the mind, we must learn how to let God stretch our imaginations. This is a part of the battle. This is part of thinking.

Everything that happens in life begins with a dream. Somebody has to imagine it first. God gave us the ability to dream, envision, and imagine something before it comes into reality. Every building we see is first an imagination by an architect before it was built. Every piece of art is imagined before it is painted. Every song is imagined before it was written. Every athletic award is imagined before it ever happened. Every church that's been started was imagined by the planter first. Rarely does anything happen until somebody starts dreaming. We need to capture God's ideas conceived by the Spirit of God. They are not the byproduct of human logic but the byproduct of divine revelation. Yes, it's tough to discern between a good idea and a God idea. "You need to take captive God's idea when it is conceived in your spirit and pray like it depends on God while working like it depends on you until the dream becomes reality!" (*Pastor Mark Batterson*).

THINK!

"T" stands for **test** every thought. *Psalm 139:23–24* says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!" Ask God to search and test your thoughts. Don't believe everything you think. Test every thought.

"H" stands for **helmet** your head. Put on the helmet of salvation. Just like you can't ride a motorcycle without wearing a helmet, the Bible says, "Take the helmet of salvation" (*Ephesians 6:17*). Repentance means changing your mind — not just changing what you do. It's first and at its heart mind change. Repentance is changing the way you think. It is a mental shift. Put on the helmet of salvation.

"I" stands for **imagine** great thoughts. Think about all the great promises of God. Everything is possible to him who believes. What an amazing blank check we have in Christ. Imagine great thoughts.

"N" stands for **nourish** a godly mind. Make sure that you are growing and developing. *Psalm 119:15* says, "I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways." Meditate and fix. Study and reflect.

"K" stands for **keep** on learning. The Bible says, "Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress" (*1 Timothy 4:15*). You will see progress in your life and your words and conversations will be more powerful, deeper, stronger, more practical, and more life-touching



"The shortest pencil is longer than the longest memory" — Mark Batterson

DAY 16

HOW TO BEAR SPIRITUAL FRUIT

⁷ *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you*

John 15:7 NKJV

The verb “abide” or “abide in Me” appears at least 6 times from verses 1 to 8. It emphasizes the importance to abide, to continue, to remain, to stay to dwell, in the presence of God and to depend on Him always. It is imperative that we continuously stay in the Word of God and keep a close relationship with Christ. To abide in Jesus simply means to keep His commandments; keeping His commandments translates to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds and to love our neighbor as ourselves. As we abide in Him, we will bear the fruit of righteousness. That is how the transformation of your heart happens. Abiding in Him will keep our lives clean through His Word, resisting all sin and yielding to the direction of the Holy Spirit. As we abide in Him, we are protected from the hand of the enemy and we will bear fruit. By not abiding in Him, though we may live in the flesh, we will die in our spirit and we will not bear fruits. He explains that by not abiding in Him we are like my pitiful plants — we will soon fall off the vine — our roots where we receive nourishment were never truly planted. The fruit of the vine is proof of our faith. Not perfection — but fruit, even if a small bud.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR JESUS' WORDS TO ABIDE IN US?

Letting Jesus Abide in Us Through His Words: Jesus said “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (*John 15:5*). The result of abiding in Him will be that you bear fruit. To bear fruit simply means to grow in character — to become more like Christ and reflect the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22–23*). And this is where we come to his command to abide: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch, cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me” (John 15:4). We abide in Jesus and He abides in us. Both are connected to fruit bearing when we let Jesus abide in us, as we let His words abide in us.

Letting Jesus Abide in Us Speaking: meaning that we allow Jesus to live in us not as a silent guest with no opinions or commands, but as an authoritative guest, whose opinions matter more to us than anyone else's and as the commander of our lives. As He abides in us, His views, His priorities, His principles, His promises, His commands, His words also abide in us.

Seeking the Words of Jesus as Living Words: meaning that His words abide in us by not only reading it or memorizing it but by meditating it just as He commanded Joshua “...meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it”. We should not just listen to it but preach it, teach it and do everything written in it.

Abide means not ceasing to be persuaded by its *truth*, and never elevating any other truth above it. It means not ceasing to be attracted by its *beauty* and *value*, and never seeing anything as more beautiful or more valuable or more attractive than the word and the Lord it reveals; not ceasing to rest in its *grace and power*—never turning

away as though greater peace could be found anywhere else. It also never ceasing to eat and drink from the word as the *bread of heaven and living water*, as if life could be sustained anywhere else. Finally, it means never ceasing to walk in the *light* of the word, as though any other light could show the secrets of life.

In his book, “*Draw the circle*” Pastor Mark Batterson gives five reflections of meaning of abide word abide:

To stay overnight: To press on into the presence of God a little longer just like Jesus did before the crucifixion

To hold fast: Every time we pray, we gain a position on the spiritual real. It is the way we take enemy territory and hold our ground

To stand still: Stay in the Word of God and trust His promises

To be moved: When we abide in His word, new passions are conceived within us.

To tarry: To press into His presence and getting in His Word.

WHAT THEN DO YOU DO TO ABIDE IN HIM?

1. Remind: Prepare a way to remind yourself repeatedly of the reasons that meditating on the Scriptures is good for you. Jesus said in **John 15:11** “*These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy might be full.*” Letting the words of Jesus abide in you will make your joy full and you will be prosperous and successful. (**Joshua 1:8**)

2. Plan: Find a place and set a time aside when you will read the Bible and think about it each day. Put it on the calendar as an appointment. It is a meeting with a Person just as much as any other appointment you might make. In his book *Praying with Paul* (Baker Academic), D.A. Carson points out that “Much praying is not done because we do not plan to pray. We do not drift into spiritual life; we do not drift into disciplined prayer, we will not grow in prayer unless we plan to pray. That means we must self-consciously set aside time to do nothing but pray. . .

“Set times for prayer are important: they ensure that vague desires for prayer are concretized in regular practice. . . Wise planning will ensure that we devote ourselves to prayer often, even if for brief periods; it is better to pray often with brevity than rarely but at length. But the worst option is simply not to pray – and that will be the controlling pattern unless we plan to pray.”

3. Decide: Decide ahead of time how you will read the Bible. Coming to the appointed time and having no idea where to dip into the Word often makes us feel weak and unreal.

4. Memorize: Memorize verses or paragraphs or chapters. Memorizing is hard work. But it gives the greatest satisfaction and the greatest power and the greatest comfort. It also will have the greatest effect on your prayers, helping you pray according to the will and Spirit of God. When you memorize, the Word of God is not just there in the crisis when you need it, it is there again and again shaping your thinking and your will. Memorizing Scripture is one of the surest routes to going deep with God and having power in prayer.

5. Retreat: Taking time away from everyone and soaking yourself in the Word of God until you feel that you are lifted into the presence of the Lord in a remarkable way so that your prayers are uncluttered by worldly thinking.

6. Journal: Keep a journal and write out your thoughts as you meditate on the Scripture. Write down what the Holy Spirit is saying to you while meditating His Word.

7. Read: Read great Christian writers who know God to deepen your understanding. It doesn't mean that you should stop reading your Bible.

8. Keep: Finally, remind yourself repeatedly that the Bible is the Word of God manifested in Jesus. He is the living Christ, who is always with you. .

As you enter last week of the 21 Day Fasting and Prayer, remember the words of Jesus: "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you."



"Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees." – **Corrie ten Boom**

DAY 17

WANTED: BOLD BELIEVERS!

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Colossians 4:2

According to pollster George Barna, almost 90% of Americans say they pray. Over 60% of unchurched Americans say they pray. Of those unchurched Americans, one in three believe that prayer makes a difference in their lives. Among “born again” respondents, nearly 70% say that God personally answers their prayers. But exactly how do Americans pray? Barna offers these insights: 95% express gratitude to God; 76% ask God to forgive particular sins; 61% make specific requests of God; 12% pray in tongues. So how is your prayer life?

FIVE FACTS ABOUT PRAYER

(1) Prayer makes a difference; (2) Prayer brings wisdom; (3) Prayer provides strength for difficult times; (4) Prayer convicts us of areas in our life that need changing, and (5) Prayer brings us assurance of our position in the Father.

SIX EXCUSES FOR NOT PRAYING

(1) **“I am too busy to pray”**: If you are too busy to pray, you are too busy”. In his book *Understanding the purpose of prayer*, Dr. Myles Monroe said “We can never be too busy to pray because prayer makes our lives more focuses, efficient and peaceful.” Jesus knew of what was important because He spent time with His Father.

(2) **“I feel too spiritually dry to pray”**: This excuse has two presuppositions (1) the acceptability of my approach to God in prayer out to be tied to how I feel. But is God especially impressed with us when we feel joyful or carefree or well rested or pious? Is not this a part of what we mean when we pray “in Jesus’ name”? The main reason why God accepts us is the grace that He has bestowed upon us in the person and work of His Son. (2) My obligation to pray is somehow diminished when I do not feel like praying. Your mood or feelings do not determine what you ought to do. This is being self-centered; meaning that I, and I alone, determine what my duty, my obligation is. In short, it means that I am my own god instead of being *faithful in prayer*” (**Rom. 12:12, NIV**).

(3) **“I feel no need to pray”**: One of the self-consciously reason is “I am too important to pray. I am too self-confident to pray. I am too independent to pray” and prayer is only important in other people’s lives especially those that we assumed to be weaker in character, needier, less competent, and less productive. That breeds yet another round of prayerlessness.

(4) **“I am too bitter to pray”**: We cannot live long in this world without coming across injustice, chronic lack of fairness. And when the injustice or unfairness is directed against us, our reaction is to nurture a spirit of revenge, or at least of bitterness, malice, and gossip. And the excuse is “How can I be expected to pray when I

have suffered so much?" "Don't talk to me about praying for my enemies: I know who has kept me from being promoted."

(5) ***"I am too ashamed to pray"***: Shame encourages us to hide from the presence of God and it engenders prayerlessness. We cannot successfully hide from God anyway. In ***Psalm 139:7-12***, David is saying that we cannot hide from God because He is everywhere. Our sense of shame can scarcely be an adequate ground to excuse our prayerlessness. He forgave us, and He is inviting to come boldly before His throne to obtain mercy and grace.

(6) ***"I am content with mediocrity."*** Some Christians want enough of Christ to be identified with Him but not enough to be seriously inconvenienced. They genuinely cling to basic Christian orthodoxy but do not want to engage in serious Bible study. They value moral probity, especially of the public sort, but do not engage in war against inner corruptions. They fret over the quality of the preachers' sermon but do not worry much over the quality of their own prayer life. Such Christians are content with mediocrity.

THREE WAYS TO PRAY EFFECTIVELY

A. ***Be devoted to prayer***: The word "devote" means to grab hold of something and not let go. To "devote" yourself to prayer means to hang on no matter what happens. You never give up on prayer even when it seems useless. Devotion is a strong word. Most of the time, we use the word devotion for the most important and critical things. Just like you are devoted to your family (spouse, children), it is not the same as the relationship you have something that you are not fully committed. One thing is crystal clear: God's will that we pray to Him. Sometimes we struggle to know the will of God for our lives. But there are some things that you do not have to struggle to know. One of them is that God's will is that you pray to him. The text says, "Devote yourselves to prayer." God will for you to pray to him. King James said "Continue in prayer" means to persevere in, holding on fast. It means that you pray often and you pray regularly. Prayer is not infrequent and prayer is not hit and miss. Being "devoted to" prayer means that you are not haphazard and you are not forgetful. It means you take steps to see that it is part of your regular life, the same way eating and sleeping are. Prayer is dependence on God, and that is the name of the game! If you don't pray, then you are not expressing any dependence on Him at all. Paul is saying. "Be ready to break into prayer -- in your thought life -- instantaneously, at all times, because that is the way we ought to live." In other words, always be ready to pray. Pray when you feel like it; pray when you don't feel like it. Pray when you believe in it, pray when you doubt it. Pray when your heart is filled with faith, pray when you do it by habit. Do you ever feel like giving up? Paul says, "Keep at it!" Keep the lines open so that you can breathe a prayer in an instant.

B. ***Be watchful in prayer***: The word means to "stay awake." That's good advice for prayer and for sermon-listening on Sunday morning! This is a call for earnest prayer. It is the opposite of sleepiness or laziness or coldness or indifference. Have you ever noticed how easy it is to be distracted when you pray? Just as you bow your head, the phone rings, or your pager beeps, or some music distracts you, or you suddenly remember that you must check the roast in the oven. A thousand things come crowding into your mind. Sometimes it seems as if the devil's best work comes when we decide to pray. He unloads his full armory of distractions against us. Or perhaps you decide to spend an hour in prayer. So, you get on your knees and begin to pray. You pray for

yourself, the members of your family, all your friends, the leaders of your church, the missionaries you know etc.... Then you look up and discover you've only been praying for five minutes!

James 5:16 speaks of the “effective fervent prayers” of the righteous person. They “avail much” with God. They matter to God. He pays attention to “effective fervent prayers.” The Greek word for “fervent” means “boiling.” Boiling prayers get God’s attention. Do you know what a “boiling” prayer is? Praying that speaks of total concentration. Better a short prayer from the heart than a long prayer that puts you to sleep.

C. *Be thankful in prayer:* The verse says “being watchful and thankful.” Gratitude is the doorway to every spiritual blessing. (1) When you wake up in the morning, take 30 seconds to give thanks to the Lord for the day that stretches before you. Thank Him in advance for all that will happen that day. Do it before your feet hit the floor (2) When you are tempted to lose your temper during the day, instead of counting to ten, take a few seconds to count ten blessings you have received. You may find that your anger has melted away. (3) When you are interrupted, instead of being exasperated, remember that God rules over the “interruptions” of life, and what seems an “interruption” to us is really His rearrangement of our plans. (4) When you climb into your bed at night, take 30 seconds to review the day, giving thanks for the blessings you have experienced and for God’s protection every step of the way.



“Prayer is not begging God to do something that He is loath to do. It is not overcoming reluctance in God. It is enforcing Christ’s victory over Satan”

Paul E. Billheimer

DAY 18

CROSSING INTO YOUR DESTINY

“Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you.”

Joshua 3:5

The people of Israel led by Joshua were at the verge to enter the Promised Land. It has been a long journey faced with many challenges. Remember 40 years earlier, 12 spies went into the land but only 2 believe that they should enter and take it. They were about to embark in a difficult and challenging path having a whole nation including men, women, children, old and young cross the Jordan River. Not an easy task. Before they cross the Jordan, God gave Joshua a specific command to “consecrate yourselves”. He calls His people to holiness, purity, and separation. For the Israelites on the edge of the Jordan, this meant washing themselves with water and practicing the ceremonial rites that would make them clean. They were to flush their minds of the filth and dirt that had accumulated over the years. They were to approach God with pure hearts, clean hands and feet, and blameless minds. They were about to enter the Holy Land - God's country. Think about it. Every time in scripture that God's shows up people were to recognize that the place was holy. People took off their shoes. They fell prostrate in humility. When God said consecrate yourselves it was His way of saying only holy people would occupy a holy land.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CONSECRATION?

The word *consecrate* means “to set apart”, “purify”, “to be designated for a special purpose”, and “to be completely dedicated to God”. The Hebrew word “kawdash” — it means to be “holy”, set apart; sanctified. The related word “kadosh” is the word the angels who minister around the throne of God cry out day and night: “kadosh, kadosh, kadosh ... holy, holy, holy.” In *Leviticus 11:44* God told the people of Israel, “Be holy, for I am holy.” So when He was telling them to “consecrate” themselves that was telling them to make themselves clean from contamination they might have had from contact with any of the unclean things they might have come in contact with. The act of purification points to the principles that God will not act powerfully on behalf of His people if they are not inwardly clean and aligned with His will. The same thing is true for us today. If we want to consecrate ourselves before God, to prepare for Him to do something special among us, we need to make sure that we are obeying Him in every area of our life, and that nothing is contaminating our relationship with Him. Before we ask God to perform miracles, signs and wonders, we must first make sure that our hearts are pure and our desires guided by His Holy Spirit to be designated. The need for holiness, purity, and separation comes before the blessings of tomorrow, not the other way around. We often believe that if God will bless then we'll get our lives right. God says that holiness precedes honor. Cleanliness comes before usefulness. Penance before power. The promise that God would work miraculously tomorrow was contingent on the people's willingness to consecrate themselves today. Waiting speaks to God's schedule; consecration addresses our sanctification; the third deals with our steps.

The word *tomorrow* holds promise for our future. Even better, ours is a future based on God and His good plan. In our future, God will do for us, be for us, help us, strengthen us, direct us, love us and forgive us. And use us for His good purpose.

Scripture doesn't promise us a certain number of days to live on this earth. But even if our earthly life ends today, because of Jesus' salvation, we still have the promise of tomorrow and eternity with Him. God is still in the process of performing miracles. He is still alive and at work. Our job is to allow Him and, when appropriate, to assist in whatever He is doing. Our job is also to watch for what He is doing...and prepare to be amazed.

POSITIONING OURSELVES FOR GOD'S WONDERS

You know you're surrendered to God when you rely on God to work things out instead of trying to manipulate others, force your agenda, and control the situation. You let go and let God work. You do not have to always be in charge. *Instead of trying harder, you trust more.* Consecration means we no longer are in charge, it is death to self (**Pastor Mark Batterson**). The supreme example of self-surrender is Jesus. The night before his crucifixion Jesus surrendered himself to God's plan. He prayed, "Father, everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will, not mine" (**Mark 14:36 NLT**). Jesus surrendered himself to God's will. He prayed, "God, if it is in your best interest to remove this suffering, please do so. But if it fulfills Your purpose, that's what I want, too." Genuine surrender says, "Father, if this problem, pain, sickness, or circumstance is needed to fulfill Your purpose and glory in my life or in another's life, please don't take it away!"

This level of maturity does not come easy. In Jesus' case, he agonized so much over God's plan that He sweated drops of blood. Surrender is hard work. In our case, it requires intense warfare against our self-centered nature. So many times, we want God to rescue us and get us out of a situation because we cannot bear the pain. How often do we surrender ourselves to go and let me walk us through the situation? The goal of every Christian should be to become Christ-like, and to live life with the courage, compassion, power and principles of Jesus.

BECOMING A "GENERATION OF RADICAL FAITH"

God is not looking for perfect people but a willing generation who believe that God can do great things, and has come to expect God to do great things a "Generation of Radical Faith". Neither we, nor Joshua's generation, were born a "Generation of Radical Faith". In both cases, God had to mentor us, and painfully and patiently mold us. We have been rendered humble by God's mercy. We witnessed His grace over our lives and nothing is impossible to our God. You can become the "Generation of Radical Faith" ...

- that believes God has set them apart for a great purpose – He is not wasting our time; and,
- that is anxious for God to do something great among them – live in expectation that God will do great things, and that we will witness great things.

BECOMING A “GENERATION OF RADICAL OBEDIENCE

God seeks for people who will cross the Jordan and represent Him on the other side, no questions asked. Represent Him even when you are alone, despised, and surrounded by a world that seems to be going the other way – a world antagonistic to a God. He is calling us to cross; to execute His purposes; to carry His Name forward as His ambassadors and to convey of His greatness and His power. God is indeed eager to show us “Amazing Things”, and use us for His purposes in the Land beyond the Jordan. But He is calling us to “Consecrate Ourselves”. This call to “consecration” is radical. It is not merely a call to “do something different”; it is a call “to become someone different” –a different kind of people – than we are now.

(1) Crossing the Jordan – Without Touching It (A Commitment to Never Compromise) Israel did not need a miracle to cross the Jordan and they have crossed it without God’s intervention. Spies had already been crossing back and forth across the Jordan. Two spies had just come back from across the Jordan. The miracle was passing THROUGH the Jordan, without getting wet – passing through the waters without touching them. God is looking for a people who will pass “through the waters” of this culture without touching them. This has been the problem with His people, particularly His church. Good pastors, good churches, numberless victims of one of Satan’s oldest strategies, touch the corrupt waters of our cultural Jordan, and get wet. Let not forget that we are not “of this world”. We are in it, but not of it.

(2) Circumcision at Gilgal (A Commitment to Internal Holiness): Circumcision is a radical symbol of belonging to God. Which is what “Consecration” means. Consecration says, “All that I have is God’s, and I will admit no other owner; no other God can claim me.” How radical a symbol is Circumcision? Although it is a surgical procedure, it is a spiritual act of surrender.

True radical obedience is costly and never without pain. We need to surrender to God the areas of our hearts that will bleed and ache when we surrender them. And until we do, we cannot claim that we fully belong to Him and the Spirit of God will continue to encounter an obstruction in His work in us, and the enemy will always have some claim to us.



“Consecration is only possible when we give up our will about everything.” – F.B. Meyer

“Radical obedience to Christ is not easy... It risks losing all these things. But in the end, such risk finds its reward in Christ. And He is more than enough for us.” — David Platt

DAY 19

VICTORY OVER THE WORLD THROUGH FAITH

“For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith”

1 John 5:4

Why do we have to fight all the time and try to overcome? Did not God make the world and did He not say, “everything that He had made and, behold, it was very good”? Yes, He did. But after sin entered this world, men came under its power and, now, by “the world” are meant all mankind who remain under the power of sin and are enemies of God. “The world” means the whole corrupt mass of human society out of which God has taken a people whom He has chosen for Himself, whom He quickens by His Divine Spirit and whose business it is to overcome the world. They will find that the world—the power of evil—will war against them and they must war against it! In addition, the issue of the battle must not long be doubtful. There remains for us only one of two courses—either the world must overcome us and we must yield to it—or else we must overcome the world and cause it to submit to us.

The Apostle helps us to understand what he means by “the world” by what he says in the third verse. *“In fact, this is love for God: to keep His commands. And His commands are not burdensome.”* Now, anything, which makes us think that God’s will is burdensome, is of the spirit of the world, against which we have to fight. If, for instance, we are tempted to think that the restrictions of God’s Law—His commandments and precepts are too stringent, it is the spirit of the world, which tempts us to think so, for, “His commandments are not burdensome to those who truly love Him. It is only to the rebellious world that the restrictions of God appear to be too stringent, or that the commands of Christ become burdensome. If we are suffering pain or poverty, or whatever form of trial we may be called to endure, if we are tempted to say, “God is dealing harshly with us, He is unkind to us,” that, also, is manifesting the spirit of the world against which we are to contend until we conquer it. For God’s will is always right. If we really love Him, we shall acknowledge that it is right. Though, for a while, we may have to fight against the spirit of rebellion, yet if we are, indeed, God’s children, we must get the mastery over that spirit of evil and, so, the will of God, even when it involves pain, weakness, shame, or death, itself, shall still be perfectly agreeable to us because it is the will of God! We have not completely conquered the spirit of the world until we can truthfully say that the commandments of God, so far from being burdensome to us, are acceptable simply because they come from Him.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO OVERCOME?

1. *The spirit of covetousness*: It is greediness after the things of the world.
2. *Rising above its engrossments*: It is overcoming the pursuit of worldly things. In Ecclesiastes 1: 2 Solomon wrote "*Vanity of vanities,*" says the Preacher; "*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*"
3. *The fear of the world*: fear to stand up for the truth, to preach what they know is true, it will injure his reputation. The fear of the world's displeasure is so much stronger than the fear of God's displeasure that we are completely enslaved by it. This bondage to man!
4. *The state of worldly anxiety*. It is common and almost universal among worldly men. It is perfectly natural if the heart is set upon securing worldly good, and has not learned to receive all good from the hand of a great Father and trust Him to give or withhold with His own unerring wisdom.
5. *The enslaved and bondage to the world in any of its forms*: There is a worldly spirit and there is also a heavenly spirit, and one or the other exists in the heart of every man and controls his whole being.

WHO ARE THOSE THAT OVERCOME THE WORLD?

The answer is in our text: "*For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world*". Notice that all who are born of God overcome the world--all these, and it is obviously implied-- none others. The characteristic required to overcome the world is that you must be born of God. To be born of God can only be through Christ Jesus.

WHY DO BELIEVERS NEED TO OVERCOME THE WORLD?

This victory over the world results as naturally from the spiritual birth as coming into bondage to the world results from the natural birth.

Natural birth reveals to the mind objects of sense and these only. It brings the mind into contact with worldly things. Of course, it is natural that the mind should become deeply interested in these objects thus presented through its external senses, especially as most of them sustain so intimate a relation to our sentient nature and become the first and chief sources of our happiness.

Spiritual birth into the kingdom of God is when spiritual objects are thus revealed to the mind is by the Spirit. The Spirit of God seems to usher the soul into the spiritual world the great truths of

Again, the first birth makes us acquainted with earthly things, the second with God; the first with the finite, the second with the infinite; the first with things correlated with our animal nature, the second with those great things which stand connected with our spiritual nature, things so lovely, and so glorious as to overcome all the ensnarement's of the world.

Again, the first begets a worldly, and the second a heavenly temper, under the first, the mind is brought into a snare--under the second, it is delivered from that snare. Under the first, the conversation is earthly--under the second, "our conversation is in heaven."

HOW TO OVERCOME THE WORLD?

The only way we can overcome the world is by the Holy Spirit. Without Him, no good result is ever achieved in the Christian's heart or life. The text says, *“This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith”* Doubtless is the precise meaning. Believing and trusting in God, and having realizing impressions of His truth and character made upon our mind by the Holy Spirit given to those who truly believe, we gain the victory over the world.

Being an overcomer means that you need to have victory over the sinful pattern of life. In other words, you need to walk in obedience to God. It can be attained by being born again and by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives inside you and gives you strength. John talks about two aspects of victorious livings talking about: (1) the initial victory of turning in faith from the world to God ("has overcome"); (2) the continuing day-by-day victory of Christian living ("overcomes").

Faith is the key for a victorious life meaning that we must believe what God said regardless what we think. All He requires from us is to trust Him and His promises and purposes. “Faith is abandoning ourselves and our efforts and resting in Jesus' promise of forgiveness and transformation.”



“Faith never knows where it is being led, but it loves and knows the One who is leading”-
Oswald Chambers

“The life of faith is not a life of mounting up with wings, but a life of walking and not fainting” – Oswald Chambers

DAY 20

GOING ON WITH CHRIST

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”

Colossians 2:6-7

This is the story of Dr. Matthew Henry, a great Bible commentator, talking about his experience how he was once was robbed while walking along a highway. He told his friends that afterwards, he was thankful for four things. First, it was the first time being robbed after living for so many years and he felt grateful for that. Second, he said, “Though they took all my money, I am glad they did not get very much.” That was something to be thankful for. Third, he said, “Though they took my money, they did not take my life, and I am grateful for that.” Finally, he suggested, “I am thankful that it was I who was robbed, and not I who robbed.” This is an example of a man who had learned how to be “overflowing with thankfulness!” Our reactions? I am sure that we would find all the reasons to be mad or complain about the situation and even post it on Facebook. The Bible says, “Continue to live in Him” meaning to “Obey Him, follow Him, converse with Him, draw upon His grace, lean on Him, look to Him for comfort.”

Becoming a Christian is a lot like falling in love. You are full of joy, you are guilt free and you are at peace with God. He gives you His hope of eternal life. You are a brand-new creation in Christ and it feels wonderful, kind of like falling in love. However, those wonderful feelings will not automatically last. Trials and disappointments will come. You may suffer health problems. You pray for something, but God does not answer. Doubts will creep in. Old friends cut you off and ridicule your faith. How do you go on with Christ over the long haul and sustain that first love for Him? Sadly, some do not go on. They grow bitter at God because of their trials. Some fall prey to false teachers, who offer them health and prosperity if they just have enough faith. Some are sucked in the cults. Others settle in for routine Christianity, like a routine marriage, where they go through the motions, but they do not enjoy the love of Jesus. They fill the void by collecting more things that promise to make them happy. Some succumb to temptation, thinking that an affair will bring happiness and fulfillment. Paul gives us a simple, but not simplistic, answer: We go on with Christ in the same way we received Him.

WHO, THEN, IS THIS CHRIST AND HOW DID WE RECEIVE HIM?

I. Christ Jesus the Lord is the one whom we received.

A. We received Him as the Christ: The One we first received is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One (“Christ” is the Greek and “Messiah” is the Hebrew for “Anointed One”). He is the one prophesied of in the Hebrew Scriptures, written centuries before He was born. He is God’s anointed King, Prophet, and Priest.

As **God's anointed King**, Jesus is appointed to reign as the sovereign of the universe. God has put His Son on the throne at His right hand and will give Him the nations as His inheritance and the very ends of the earth as His possession (*Ps. 2:6-8; Ps. 110:1*). No power in heaven or earth can stand against Him (*Eph. 1:20-22*). He is God's anointed King!

As **God's anointed Prophet**, Jesus speaks for God as *the prophet*, par excellence. Being one with the Father from all eternity and sent by the Father to do His will, Jesus is uniquely qualified to reveal the Father to us (*John 10:30; 1:18; 8:38; 14:9*). He is omniscient and without sin, so that all He speaks is both true and authoritative. He is God's anointed Prophet.

As **God's anointed Priest**, Jesus mediates between God and man (*1 Tim. 2:5*). He offers the blood sacrifice, which the holiness of God demands as the means of approaching Him. But unlike the Old Testament priests, who offered the blood of animals and who had to offer sacrifices for their own sins, Jesus offered His own blood for the sins of the world (*John 1:29; Heb. 7:26-28*). Jesus offered Himself once for all, providing complete forgiveness for all who trust in Him (*Heb. 10:1-18*).

B. We received Him as Jesus: Jesus is His human name. When the angel announced to Joseph Mary's conception by the Holy Spirit, he said (*Matt. 1:21*), "You shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew "Joshua," which means, "Yahweh saves." Jesus said (*Luke 19:10*), "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

C. We received Him as the Lord: The Colossians received Him as Christ Jesus, but also as "the Lord." "Lord" refers to His deity. In the Old Testament, it is the personal covenant name of God. It focuses on His absolute sovereignty as the Creator of the universe, the ruler over all that exists. It means that what He commands we must obey. He made us and knows everything about us. His commands are not burdensome, to plague us. Rather, they are perfect, right, and for our good (*Ps. 19:7-11; Rom. 7:12; 1 John 5:3*).

D. We received Him: The word "received" means "to receive as transmitted" from their teachers. Paul received the gospel directly from Jesus Christ (*Gal. 1:12*). He passed it on to others. When we believe the gospel, we do not just believe a body of doctrines, although that is true. We receive Christ Jesus the Lord personally. We recognize who He is and we welcome Him into our lives as our Savior from sin and as our rightful Lord.

II. We go on walking with Him as Christ Jesus the Lord: *Colossians 2:6*: "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" "Walk" is in the present tense, indicating an ongoing process. It is a frequent word for describing the Christian life (*Eph. 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15*). Walking is not as impressive or quick as running, galloping, or flying. However, if you keep walking in a deliberate direction, eventually you will get there. It implies a daily, steady, systematic effort and progress toward a goal. We are to walk "in Him," that is, in all that Jesus is for us as we are in Him.

A. To walk with Christ Jesus the Lord means being rooted in Him. A tree, firmly rooted so that it gets the water and nutrients from the soil to grow and be healthy. It can withstand the storms that blow against it and endure times of drought because of its roots. The roots are hidden from view, but they are essential. Without those deep roots, the tree will fall over in a storm or die during a drought. When we genuinely trust in Christ, God roots us in Him, but we need to continually sink down more roots into Him.

B. To walk with Christ Jesus the Lord means being built up in Him. This pictures a building under construction. The present participle indicates steady progress toward completion. If you have watched a building under construction, sometimes the progress is evident: the frame goes up or the roof goes on. At other times, you wonder, “What did they do there this week?” They were inside working on things you could not see, like the wiring or plumbing. Nevertheless, they are essential for the finished building to function properly. When you walk with the Lord, sometimes there are obvious changes that others can easily see.

C. To walk with Christ Jesus the Lord means being established in the faith. The word “establish” was sometimes used as a legal term meaning, “to confirm, guarantee, or make irrevocable.” To go on with Christ, you must make a deliberate effort to be established in the faith.

D. To walk with Christ Jesus the Lord means overflowing with gratitude. Our gratitude to God for all that He has done for us in Christ should flood out onto those around us. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, instead of thanking God for delivering me from bondage to sin and providing me with all the blessings of His salvation, I complain about the little things instead of overflowing with gratitude to Him for His abundant grace.

One of the roots' functions is to anchor the tree in the soil, providing stability and a firm base for the entire structure of the trunk, branches, leaves, and fruit. Being rooted in simply means that you allow Him to influence your values and priorities. Paul said that there are three things that happen here. (1) you have been “rooted” in Christ. Just as a tree deeply rooted, you are planted in Christ; (2) you have been “built up” in Him. As you are deeply rooted, you are also growing in faith; (3) you have been “strengthened” in the faith. You have been tested, and because of that, you are much stronger and your faith was strengthened too. Today, find something in every situation for which you can genuinely be grateful and thankful.



When we are securely rooted in personal intimacy with the source of life, it will be possible to remain flexible without being relativistic, convinced without being rigid willing to confront without being offensive, gentle and forgiving without being soft, and true with nesses without being manipulative” – Henri J. M Nouwen

DAY 21

WRESTLING MATCH ON EARTH

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6: 10-13

The word finally is defined as “used to introduce a final point or reason”; however in the context it has a different meaning. Finally, does not imply “in conclusion” but rather “as “for the rest of life and its challenges are concerned”. Paul is addressing the brethren, the church because we are in a fight that will last until we die or Jesus come back. We are charged, commanded not only to be strong in the Lord but also to put on the full armor of God. Paul is describing the armor of the average Roman soldier and for him to be effective, he needed to protect himself on the battlefield. Most of us have forgotten that the Christian life is not a playground, but a battlefield. As a result, very few of the Lord's people are armed, equipped and ready to wage spiritual battle. Whether we ever believe it or not, we are engaged in spiritual warfare. If we are to be successful in our work for the Lord Jesus, then we must be prepared for that battle and be ready to go to war. Therefore, we must know how we are to prepare to ourselves to be effective in that fight. We have a real enemy whose goal is to destroy us. He is a shrewd enemy, crafty and tricky and he is a spiritual enemy- Too often, we fight the wrong foe! We fight our family, friends, as well as our fellow believers, when the real enemy is the devil! He is a master at sowing discord among the brethren. It is important to remember that our fight this evening is a spiritual battle.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Today, about 267 million units of war games such as Halo, Call of Duty, Battlefield, Medal of Honor, Gears of War, are sold at over \$17 Billion. However, these games are unhealthy and overly associated with death/ killing, our culture recognizes that we are in a battle. To maintain our freedom, we must engage in warfare. The Bible transmits the same message: to be a victorious Christian, we must embrace the mindset that we are in an invisible, spiritual war. Unfortunately, so many Christians do not realize they are living in a BATTLEGROUND; they think they live in a PLAYGROUND! Today, we tend to take the ideas and practices of our culture and form our Christian beliefs around them. We are being taught by society to be "tolerant" of anti-Bible actions and practices. We have become “society pleasers” because we want to fit in, and be accepted

by everyone around us; which can easily lead us to compromise with the world instead of holding to Christ's teachings and commandments. When you read the book of Colossians, you can see how easy it was for the culture of the day to infiltrate the Churches teaching and water down the truth. It is happening again today when many people hold to the idea that "what's true for you may not be true for me". The only truth we have to remember is the Word of God. **John 8:32** says “³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Take your stand on The Truth!

THE CHRISTIAN UNIFORM

Here, Paul uses the image of their armor to teach us about how we need to dress up for the day of battle. To put on the armor of God is to prepare for battle. He describes six pieces of armor (combat gear): Two were offensive weapons: shoes and sword; three were defensive weapons: breastplate, shield, and helmet and one was neutral: the belt of truth.

1. ***The Belt of Truth*** - This was a very important piece to the Roman Soldier's armor. The Roman soldier put around his waist a very wide belt, which was the holder for a lot of equipment. This belt encircled the waist and served to stabilize the body, protect the mid-section and provide the soldier with a place to restrain his garments so that his movements in the heat of battle would be unhindered. The belt was tied in several places to stay in place, so that no matter how the soldier moved about, fell down, climbed hills, etc., the belt was always in place with weapons at the ready. Our truth is knowing the “truth” of the Bible. Just as the soldier had to put on his belt daily, we must apply the Word of God to our lives daily or we will not be able to maintain our defenses. Just as the belt was the first thing the soldier put on, a Christian must out on the Word of God first. Knowing the truth will stabilize us, protect us and prevent us from being tripped up in the battles of life.

2. ***The Breastplate of Righteousness*** -This refers to the leather body armor that was worn to protect the soldier's vital organs (heart, lungs, liver, etc.), came down over the girdle or belt, increasing the protection of the loins. By protecting these vital organs, the breastplate emboldened a soldier to face the enemy without fear tender areas of the body. While the heart is the one key organ responsible for sending blood through our circulatory system to keep us alive, our spiritual lives can deaden if our hearts are not right with God! As a believer, we are commanded to practice righteousness as a habit of life. We need to guard our hearts from the attacks of the enemy. When you walk in the righteousness of God, it is a weapon of defense against all those slanderous accusations, and outrageous strategies of the devil.

3. ***The Shoes of The Gospel*** - Roman soldiers wore sandals that had nails driven through the bottoms to provide the soldier with the surest of footing on the battlefield. He did not have to worry about his feet slipping in the heat of the battle, for he was always well grounded and balanced that gave him a superior posture in battle on hills and uneven terrain. We need to be well grounded in the things of God and be ready to march into battle at our Commander's order (**2 Pet. 3:15**). Having a good footing will protect us when we walk through the rough places and keep us steady in the heat of a battle; keeping our spiritual foes where they belong...under our feet. Your "walk" is the witness of your speech, your behavior and your attitude

4. **The Shield of Faith** – Often, Roman soldiers would soak these leather shields in water before battle to make them more effective in quenching the flaming missiles of the enemy. The surface was kept bright with oil, which reflected the sun to blind the enemy. It helped deflect the enemy's blows. Our shield need be soaked in the Word of God. Our faith will allow standing in the battle, quenching all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and receiving the victory regardless of the odds we face. Notice that the verse started with "**above all**". Without faith, we cannot serve God, nor can we please Him. The value of faith lies not in the person exercising it, but in the person whom the faith is in.

5. **The Helmet of Salvation** - The helmet was given to the Roman soldier to protect his brain. The Roman helmet had chinstrap, visor, and came down to cover the back and sides of the neck. Your mind is the battleground between the flesh and the spirit; a disciplined soldier will not yield to the flesh, but will be strong in spirit, and that the area the enemy wants to attack the most so he can damage our assurance of salvation. Once our thoughts are corrupted, it is easy to fall into sin. Therefore, we need to renew our mind and protect it. It is the battlefield. We must have a clear mind to be discerning in all situations. It is important to immerse yourself in God's word and prayer.

THREE GUARANTEED OF ULTIMATE VICTORY

Not all the armor is designed to protect the soldier. Once we put on all the armor of God, we need the equipment designed to defeat the enemy. Therefore, the soldier possessed three offensive weapons that allowed him to strike back when he was attacked.

1. **The Stand:** We need to stand; meaning “to be found standing after an active battle” and “to take your stand for the next battle”, “to resist without yielding; to maintain a position; to persist; to endure; to remain upright; to encounter; to meet face-to-face”. To withstand suggests that we need “vigorously opposing, bravely resisting, standing your ground. We are given the authority and the spiritual weapons to defeat the enemy. As an heir and child of God, you are to STAND in that place that is already yours. It has been delivered to you through the cross of Jesus Christ

2. **The Sword of the Spirit** - The SWORD was both defensive and offensive and it refers to the short, straight and two-edged sword with the end turned upward carried by every Roman soldier. It was very effective in hand-to-hand combat and was essential to the survival of the soldier. It was designed to inflict much more damage than the other swords. Not only was it intended to kill, but also it could rip the enemy's insides to shreds. It only needed to penetrate the enemy a depth of two to three inches to mortally wound him. Another advantage to this sword is that the soldier did not have to turn his sword around to inflict damage to the enemy. It cut in two directions. This was seen as a very deadly and powerful weapon. The Bible refers the sword of the Spirit as the Word of God, which enables us to conquer the enemy in every battle we face. As the Word of God is used as the sword of the Spirit, we will see the enemy sliced to shreds in every battle we fight!). When Satan in the wilderness tempted Jesus, He quoted His Father's words and spoke them with authority. Consequently, each Word was like a sword-blow to Satan's head! God has given us the authority to use and speak His Word according to His will and there is no power in the universe who can withstand it!

3. **Prayer in the Spirit**- is a means by which the Holy Spirit intercedes through your spirit in prayer. Pray with the assistance of the Holy Spirit also includes praying in tongues. When you pray with your understanding, you are easily influenced by your feelings, thoughts, desires, experiences, distractions, understanding and will. Even your vocabulary can limit your prayers. God gives you a prayer language that bypasses your mind, will and emotions and allows you to continue in prayer without interruption. Though we live on a conscious level within this physical world, we also are alive spiritually and can be in union with our Father by the simple acknowledgement that God is. He “searches all things, even the deep things of God” (*1 Corinthians 2:10*)

Did you notice that the full armor has no back plate; there is nothing to cover the back half of a Christian? Because in this battle, God has our backs... The reason that He has our backs is because our role is to advance, His name, His kingdom taking the banner of Christ forward defeating the powers and principalities of darkness. We must determine to never accept defeat.

Although surrounded and outnumbered, we are not fighting for victory but from victory. Our Commander-in-chief, Jesus Christ, has already won all the victory for us. All that is required from us is to put on our armor, stand up and line up awaiting our marching orders toward victory. Therefore, use the equipment given to us and learn to stand no matter what. We are in the fight of our lives, and thank God for the victory belongs to us (*1 Cor. 15:57*)

REASONS TO DAILY PUT ON THE ARMOR

- It helps you to stand against the schemes of the devil.
- It keeps you strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.
- It enables you to resist in the evil day of the enemy's attack.
- It secures your safety and repels the enemy.
- It accomplishes the Father's will.



The armor is for the battle of prayer. “Take up the whole armor of God... Stand therefore....” And then pray. It is not to fight in, but to shield us as we pray. Prayer is the battle – Oswald Chambers

DAY 22

GETTING A GRIP ON PRAYER

¹⁷ *Pray continually,*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

The job of every Christian is to pray. Plain and simple. Yet we want to do more than simply pray. We want to do something for God; we want to be someone important to Him. We want to build; we want to mobilize; we want to show our strength and exert our influence. Prayer seems like such a small thing to do – next to nothing at all in fact. However, that is not what Jesus said. To Him prayer is everything; it is a duty as well as a privilege, a right as well as a responsibility. We use prayer as a last resort; Jesus wants it to be our first line of defense. We pray when there is nothing else we can do; Jesus wants us to pray before we do anything at all. Nevertheless, most of us would rather spend our time doing something that will get immediate results. We do not want to wait for God to bring about the results in His good time because His idea of ‘good time’ is seldom in sync with ours. Many times, we even try to answer our own prayers. We have the idea that more people will become Christians if we can make God look good to them. Therefore, we try to convince them of God’s generosity by proving that He answers prayer. If we can just help, God spruce up His image a little, we can get more people in His side. Moreover, that is what He wants us to do, right? Wrong. He wants us to pray. Always and about everything. During times of joy as well as sorrow. He wants us to talk to Him, not about Him. He wants us to talk to Him about unbelievers before we talk to unbelievers about Him. Prayer is our business, our only business. Prayer is our holy occupation. Plain and simple.” (*Harry Verploegh*)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING?

The first time someone hears about the concept of praying without ceasing, the first thing that comes in mind is how is it possible? To "pray without ceasing" is simply to be continually in an attitude of prayer. It is being conscious of the presence of God, where everything you see and experience becomes a kind of prayer, lived in deep awareness of and surrender to Him. It should be instant and intimate communication-not unlike that which we enjoy with our best friend. To "pray without ceasing" means when you are tempted, you ask God to help you so you will not fall. When you experience something good and beautiful, your first reaction is to thank God for it. When you see evil around you, you ask God to make it right and to use you toward that end, if that is His will. When you meet someone, who does not know Christ, you pray for God to draw that person to Himself and to use you to be a faithful witness. When you encounter trouble, you turn to God as your Deliverer. When you see an accident on your way, you can lift up the people involved.

PRAYER: A HOLY OCCUPATION

Webster defines occupation as (1) a: an activity in which one engages b: the principal business of one's life (2) a: the holding of an office or position (3) a: the act or process of taking possession of a place or area. As we begin this year of 2020, we hope that prayer becomes more than just an occasional ‘dial-up’ to God when the

going becomes tougher than usual. Whether you have been a Christian most of your whole life, or just a new member of the family of God, prayer is to be a matter of life – our whole life, our daily life.

Following is a list of requirements for the Holy occupation requires boldness, childlikeness, communion, concentration, desire, discipline, faith, honesty, intimacy, obedience, patience, power, purpose, silence, simplicity, wonder, work, and worship.

HOW TO MAINTAIN A PRAYER LIFE?

Many of us think that because we have been praying for 21 or will pray for 40 days that we store enough prayers for stormy days and God will just tap into our provisions and exhaust our prayers. Prayer is the breath of the Spirit. No prayer, no life. We all want to have a prayer life but most of the time; we do not know how because of the misconception we have about prayer. When Paul said to pray without ceasing, it doesn't mean that we have to be on our knees 24/7; even Jesus didn't do that otherwise He wouldn't have time to perform all the miracles. Pray without ceasing simply means that we need to be consistent, be a regular. Daniel is good example. He used to pray 3 times a day regardless the decree of the king. Unceasing prayer is continual dependence to our God. The difference between a champion and a loser is that he does regularly, daily what a loser does randomly. A champion train daily.

Following are some points on how to maintain a prayer life:

- 1. *Dependence:*** Independence is the great enemy of prayer. The more we identify and embrace our dependence on God the more we come to Him for help through prayer. Our love for Him would also cause us to want to not only depend on Him but to spend time with Him.
- 2. *Desire:*** It is impossible to maintain a prayer life if you do not like to pray. God does not force us to do something you do not want to do. You can ask God to give you the love for prayer. You will see that you will never miss an opportunity to pray and communicate with God. When we embrace our dependence upon God, it produces a desire to pray because He is the One we need and the Provider of all we need. The more we embrace our dependence the more constant our desire to seek Him in prayer will be.
- 3. *Discipline:*** Daniel was committed to pray three times a day not because he always felt like it, but he had to make that choice. Jesus also was disciplined in His prayer life. It is easy to know where He was and what He was doing. When they came to arrest Him, Judas knew exactly where to find Him due to His routine. Find a time to spend with God. Do not pray only when you feel like it. If you do not keep the appointment, do not feel bad or discourage and do not fall back but repent, get up and press on. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you persevere.
- 4. *Respect your appointment:*** Put it in your schedule. Write (or type) it into your schedule or planner. Actually, do this! If you treat prayer like an important meeting or appointment, then you will be much more likely to keep it. You will not keep it perfectly all the time, but you will pray much more if it is in your calendar. In addition, here you can make technology your friend—if you use a calendar on your computer or phone, set a reminder and alert time to pray.
- 5. *Stick with it:*** Like going to the gym, the “muscles” of prayer do not develop overnight. Every new habit takes time to develop, so be disciplined and “don't despise the day of small beginnings” (Zech. 4:10). If it would help

you to stay more consistent in prayer, why not ask a peer or more mature believer to keep you accountable to your schedule?

6. *Pray in season and out of season:* Pray always. You will have a sound prayer life once you can develop a good praying habit. Do not just pray when everything is going “wrong” in your life and forget about God when you seem to be doing well in life.

Any one of us would have to admit – at one time or another – that prayer does not always have a primary place in our lives. It is often temporary. It frequently comes into play when we are at the end of the rope and prayer is all we have left with which to hang on. It is what we use when all other resources have been used up. Prayer has become the ‘first aid box’, the ‘9-1-1 call’ to heaven, the ‘last straw’, the ‘passing of the buck. God delights in His people and wants us to talk with Him. Mike Bickle says, “As we come to know God as our tender Father and Jesus as the Bridegroom King, we are energized to seek God with all our strength and to experience new delight in our relationship with Him.” As we make time for prayer, we find the Spirit helping “in our weakness” (**Rom. 8:26**). Over time, we will cultivate a consistent and enjoyable prayer life.



“Every time we pray our horizon is altered, our attitude to things is altered, not sometimes but every time, and the amazing thing is that we don’t pray more” – Oswald Chambers

“Prayer does not equip us for greater works - prayer is the greater work.” - Oswald Chambers

DAY 23

THE ART OF SEEING

⁵¹ so Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

Mark 10:51 NKJV

To be blind is to live in total darkness. Blindness, for a person with excellent vision, is impossible to comprehend. How can we imagine being locked up to darkness? Without outside intervention, blindness is being destined to a life of stumbling and falling. For a person born blind, the image of the unseen would have little meaning. No doubt, the senses, like touch, hearing and smell, would be highly tuned. Not to be able to see the movements of the clouds, the trees, the plants and the people walking back and forth. Not to be able to see flowers or the colored feathers of birds. Bartimaeus was a blind man by the side of the road begging, probably something he has grown accustomed to doing every day. The Bible tells us that he was a beggar. We may safely assume that ‘begging’ is the most humiliating way of making a livelihood. A beggar is very dependent on others. Bartimaeus was also blind which made him even more helpless. He completely depended on the kindness and mercy of other people. Day after day he would sit along the road calling out, “Please, sir, remember the beggar, please sir, please!” Perhaps, from time to time, he would receive something and say, “Thank you, thank you!” Then he would have to ask again, “Please sir, remember the beggar!” However, today was going to be a good day for Bartimaeus because the Passover Feast was going to be held in Jerusalem. Thousands of people were on their way to this great feast. Large crowds would walk past the spot where Bartimaeus was sitting.

In addition, you know how it goes: when people are going to a festival, they are usually in a good or generous mood. Furthermore . . . the more people - the greater the chance that Bartimaeus would collect some shekel money. Yes, Bartimaeus was exciting and was expecting to have a good day! However. . . Bartimaeus was blind! When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was nearby, all kinds of thoughts came to his mind. He had heard about this miracle doer. Jesus had healed lepers and crippled people. He had even raised people from the dead! He even heard that Jesus had given sight to the blind! Moreover. . . Bartimaeus forgot about how much money he could make, now his hope was high and it was his chance to recover his sight too. Therefore, Bartimaeus shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” It was only a simple expression of Bartimaeus’ faith. He was persistent and had to shout louder because of the crowd. However, he called on Jesus to do something for him. Bartimaeus believed that Jesus could do something for him. Nevertheless, Jesus asked a simple question “what do you want me to do for you?” That was a very strange question to ask a blind man, wasn’t it? Everybody could see that he was blind—they could tell by the way he struggled through the crowd, that he was blind. His very voice, which had long been used in begging, would show that he was a blind mendicant. The first thing that crosses our mind is why does Jesus ask such a question? . . . I mean, this is Jesus, right? Does He know that He was talking to a blind man? In addition, you are probably think that Bartimaeus’ answer should have been “Really?” what do you think I want Lord? There he stood before the Savior and Jesus knew what he

wanted, yet He put to him this singular question, “What do you want Me to do for you?” Why do you think that Jesus asked such a question? There is a deep meaning, a gracious reason, in all that He says. Jesus wanted to know what Bartimaeus wanted specifically. Bartimaeus had the boldness to ask Jesus what he wanted. He told the Lord Jesus what he desired and his answer was “Rabbi, I want to see.” He believes that Jesus is able to do that and what can happen to his life- no more begging, or complaining about the lack of compassion from people. This incident shows how very wonderful Jesus is and at how much respect He has for each of us and for our individual freedom. We need to be specific in our prayers. Though God knows everything we need before we ask (*Matt. 6:8*) yet God wants his children to come with specific needs crying out “Give us this day our daily bread” (*Matt. 6:11*).

BE SPECIFIC

Bartimaeus handicap was not only physical but he also needed his spiritual eyes opened at the same time. We can say with great confidence that Jesus heals people. Sometimes He does it through doctors, sometimes through friends, and sometimes-through people, we do not even know. When Jesus asks, He unnerves, realigns, transforms, and subverts all the old assumptions and loyalties. Jesus came to recover the sight of those who are blind. However, Jesus is showing us that blindness is not only related to the physically impaired, but also spiritual. Jesus referred to the religious people of His time 'blind leaders' and 'blind guides'. By following them, you will also be blind.

Blindness in the soul and spirit puts us in spiritual darkness, stumbling without clear direction. We live in dark times but Jesus came to recover the sight of the blind. Jesus is the light of the world. There is no need to sit in darkness. Jesus said, “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.” Our Heavenly Father desires that we have spiritual sight. He sent Jesus to open the eyes of the blind. Jesus fulfilled God's purpose for us all. “Jesus is the Answer, but what are the questions?” Jesus’ questions are more like invitations to more specific prayers. Specific prayers get specific answers.

Jesus already knew what the man needed. What about you? What do you want Him to do for you?

- Is it to be free finally of a sin we’ve been struggling with?

- Is it to let go of a fear that has held you back from an even deeper relationship with Jesus Christ?

- Is it to hear the truth, to BELIEVE the truth of how truly loved, truly precious you are in His eyes instead of the awful lies that the world continues to spew and have come to believe about what is “beautiful”?

Whatever it is, we’re challenged to take a moment and remember who it is who comes to us. Jesus who desires our fullness comes. Bartimaeus’ witness speaks thousands of years later that Jesus can be trusted - that we can be vulnerable, we can be bold, we can believe in Him and trust Him to listen to us, to be attentive to us, as He asks us: What do you want Me to do for you?

Jesus still heals, just as He healed Bartimaeus 2000 years ago and millions of others since then. Sometimes the healing is spiritual, sometimes it is emotional, sometimes it is physical, and sometimes it is all three.



*“Bold prayers honor God, and God honors bold prayers. God isn’t offended by your biggest dreams or boldest prayers. He is offended by anything less. If your prayers aren’t impossible to you, they are insulting to God” – **Mark Batterson***

*“The great thing about faith in God is that it keeps a man undisturbed in the midst of the disturbance” – **Oswald Chambers***

DAY 24

EMPTY TANK?

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:4

We all heard about the Azusa Street revival. On February 22, 1906 Seymour arrived in Los Angeles, California, upon accepting an invitation to preach at a Holiness mission pastored by Julia Hutchins. Seymour' preached on regeneration, sanctification, faith healing, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost with evidence of speaking in other tongues. Hutchins rejected Seymour's teaching and within a few days locked the doors of the church to keep him from preaching there. A council of elders rejected Seymour's teaching, predominately because he had not received the Holy Spirit baptism personally. Many were skeptical, therefore he was forbidden to preach for the congregation. Some felt that he should discontinue preaching about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues. Yet, in the midst of the persecution, Seymour continued to be steadfast and unmovable in his work for the Lord. Those in the congregation who were hungering and thirsting after the deeper things of God felt compelled to spend hours in prayer. Several received confirming visions that God was about to bless Los Angeles with a spiritual outpouring. Seymour then began participating in a Bible study and prayer meeting at the home of Richard and Ruth Asbery at 214 Bonnie Brae Street.

Soon several individuals were baptized with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. Others learned of the meetings and began to attend, including some white families of nearby holiness churches. Then, on April 9, 1906, a breakthrough occurred as Edward Lee was baptized with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues after Seymour had prayed with him; followed by Seymour's sermon using Acts 2:4 as a text. Following the sermon Lee raised his hands and began to speak in tongues. The Spirit of God moved upon those attending and six others began to speak in tongues that same evening. Jennie Moore, who would later marry William Seymour, was among them. She became the first woman in Los Angeles to receive the Spirit-baptism. She then began to sing in tongues and play the piano under the power of God, having never played the piano prior. A few days later, on April 12, William Seymour finally received his baptism at about four o'clock in the morning, after having prayed all night long. On April 14, 1906, Seymour, held a church service in an old warehouse on 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. That service was the beginning of a three-year revival at that location, which was characterized by the Pentecostal message of baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Pentecostal experience of speaking in tongues. "The Azusa St. Revival" ignited a worldwide movement, the growth of which has seldom been seen in the history of Christianity.

Notice He didn't say, "Try to allow a little more of the Spirit to operate in your life: if you get a chance; if you're in the mood; if you aren't too busy." No! It is a command of Scripture: every believer in Jesus should ever seek to be a man or woman "filled with the Spirit." Paul was certainly a man "filled with the Spirit."

BENEFITS OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Tongues edifies you: You have inside you a spirit man. “Praying in the Spirit” helps that spirit man grow stronger. You are building a spiritual legacy with your life. “Build yourself up” daily by praying in tongues.

Tongues increases your faith: It is a simple formula: Prayer + Holy Spirit (tongues) = built up faith! Praying in tongues builds your faith because every time you pray in tongues you use your faith. The next time you seem up against a mountain and your faith is weak, stop everything and spend quality time praying in tongues.

Tongues helps you solve mysteries in your life: The Holy Spirit knows the answer to every mystery. Every time you pray in the Spirit, you are allowing the Holy Spirit to help you “search” out the answer to your mysteries and Satan cannot understand you. The Holy Spirit and you can work together in the invisible to accomplish things in your life. So, partner with the Spirit in praying in tongues for at least 15 minutes daily and let Him search out the answer for you.

Tongues helps us pray most accurately: The Holy Spirit takes over when you pray in tongues and intercede “for” you. He carries the burden for you with “groaning.” Pray for something in English for a while as best you know how, and then follow with a time of praying in tongues. You are never praying more “on target” than when you pray in tongues

Tongues is a weapon of spiritual warfare: Prayer is listed as one of the tools we use to defeat Satan! When you pray in the Holy Spirit, you allow the Spirit to help you pray against his attacks! What a team: you, your tongue, and the Holy Spirit!

Tongues is a way to increase the Holy Spirit’s work in your life: If you want more of the Spirit in your life (His presence, His power, His guidance, His gifts, etc.), pray in tongues.

Tongues rests and refreshes your weary soul: Let your weariness drive you to your prayer closet and there, with the help of the Holy Spirit, contend in tongues for the promised “rest” and “refreshing” of Isa. 28:11, 12.

Tongues helps open the floodgates for “rivers of living water.” Jesus promised to fill those who “thirst” with His Holy Spirit to a very special group: those who “thirst.”

Tongues is one effective way that we worship the Lord: When you pray in tongues you are praying under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Why not stop and worship Him in the Spirit right now?

Tongues is a pathway to being prophetic people: God promised to “pour out my Spirit” is fulfilled by receiving the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues (Joel 2:28-29). The more you speak in tongues the more you can expect to prophesy. So speak in tongues; speak in tongues a lot; and start stepping out in faith to prophesy.

Tongues is a sure pathway to being a person through whom God can pour out His power to others: The primary purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and tongues is for POWER to do things such as witnessing, prayer, effective personal ministry, anointing and the operation of the gifts of the Spirit.

Tongues is a pathway to knowing the mind of the Spirit: Any revelation knowledge received has been revealed by the Holy Spirit. So, get in His presence and yield your tongue to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to begin to research the deep things of God and reveal some of them to you even today!

Tongues is the Secret to Staying “Filled with the Spirit: Live a Holy life, pray a lot and stay in the Word but speak in tongues also to stay “filled with the Holy Spirit.” It is the God given simplest way to be a Spirit-filled believer!



“Trying to do the Lord’s work in your own strength is the most confusing, exhausting, and tedious of all work. But when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then the ministry of Jesus just flows out of you.” - Corrie Ten Boom

“If we rely on the Holy Spirit, we shall find that our prayers become more and more inarticulate; and when they are inarticulate, reverence grows deeper and deeper.” - Oswald Chambers

DAY 25

A RADICAL APPROACH TO TRIALS

²Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything

James 1:2-4 NIV

That sounds crazy! What? Consider it pure joy? No way. All I want is for God to get me out of this! James must have been out of his mind when you wrote this. I am sure we all thought that at one point. If you think, “I don’t have to go through this, I am a Christian or I can’t be a Christian to have to go through this,” then think of Job and how at first he himself was spared but he lost family and property. Then God allowed his health to be touched, though his life were spared. God is in control of the degree of hardship at every stage. With Job it stops at the taking of his life, but with Stephen he even forfeits his life.

This is a command not a suggestion. It is our duty. It is just that it is common for Christians to meet trials. The Christian life is “the fellowship of His suffering.” Every single Christian is tested. You consider with your mind, not your feelings. You do it with your thought processes. James is not saying, “Feel joyful,” but learn to think joyfully in your trials. James says, that whenever it happens, “consider it pure joy.” Consider it 100% joy – all of it, nothing but joy, not a mixture. You cannot cut out 90% of a trial and count that part as joy. Every one of us can look back with thankfulness to some aspect of every difficulty we have experienced. We can think of the wonderful support we had from our family and friends, and count those memories as joyful. We can say, “It could have been worse, and you can always see someone in a worse condition.” That is not what James is saying here. He says, “Face up to the whole thing.” Do not leave any of it out. All of it is to be accounted as joy.” It is important to change our attitude regardless how painful the trials are. Otherwise, we are magnifying our trials and diminishing our God. He is bigger than what we are facing. We need to ask God to give us the strength to go through instead of praying to Him to get us out. “Consider it pure joy.” How can we do this? By thinking about trials from God’s perspective. You consider the God of providence, your Savior the Lord of love, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the promises of His Word. Pure joy does not just happen. It takes a deliberate act of will. It does not mean saying, “Well, Hallelujah anyway.” It does not mean no tears or sense of loss.

JOY WHEN TESTED

“Consider it pure joy when my worst fears are realized”? “Consider it pure joy when my heart is breaking? It is nonsense without a “**because**” and there has to be some massive explanation for considering it joy. Our trials are the testing of our faith. Everything important is tested. At school, we have test to see how well we understood the materials. Trivial things are not tested. However, shouldn’t a Christian’s faith in God be tested? Isn’t that worthy of testing? God is going to test our faith. God is going to do it by placing us in situations where it is going to be hard for us to go on as Christians, where discipleship is going to be costly, and where God’s own sovereignty and God’s shepherding and his own love is obscured and almost contradicted by the

circumstances of our day-to-day lives. Trials are necessary for our spiritual maturity. They develop our patience, endurance and perseverance. So often, we are impatient to get out of difficult, painful and/ or challenging situations that we miss what God wants to do. We fail to recognize that we grow through them and do not learn the lessons God is trying to teach us because we are so focused on the trials. Trials build our character, they change us. All we want is for God to get us out of them and missed the test. Our tests are turned into testimonies that can help someone later on. “Do you really believe that all things are working together for your good?” We are not sure.

Therefore, God tests us with a trial, and we did trust Him through it all! We passed the test! “Do you truly believe that you have a wonderful loving Shepherd who watches over and protects you in all that happens?” We are not sure, but when the test comes, we find we have looked to God for help and grace. We have passed the test and are stronger because of it. Such trials then become means of grace to strengthen us. It is that kind of testing James is concerned for here. Consider it pure joy because it is God Himself who is so concerned that your faith is genuine that He is testing it in all kinds of circumstances. Tests develop perseverance, and maturity and fulfilment. The test is an exercise, and every exercise strengthens. Troops go out on military exercises and they become tougher men. A young athlete runs for longer and longer distances, and he prepares himself for the marathon race. His exercises produce constancy.

When we encounter trials, feeling emotional is inevitable but you need to see and think about trials from God’s perspective rather than men’s. We should adopt a radical attitude in trials

1. **Radical attitude accepts Trials as Expected, Not as a Surprise:** James made it clear. He did not say, “**If** you encounter various trials,” but “**when**”. Sometimes we think that because we obey God, we will be spared from any trials. When trials hit them, do not be mad at God and start questioning him. In **John 16:33**, Jesus said “In this world you will have trouble.” Trials are not necessarily the consequence of disobedience. Rather, God uses them to test our faith. They will be varied according to His sovereign purpose. We cannot understand why He sends the particular trials that He does, but whatever they are, we can know that they are from Him.

2. **Radical attitude does not Deny Emotional Pain:** Jesus was emotional too. He did not condemn Mary for weeping at the death of her brother Lazarus. Rather, He wept, too (**John 11:33-35**). When He faced the cross, He did so with “loud crying and tears” (**Heb. 5:7**). Paul tells us, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (**Rom. 12:15**). Hebrews 12:11 acknowledges, “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, yet sorrowful....” So James does not mean, “Put on your happy face and deny that you’re hurting.” It is ok to show your emotions.

3. **Radical attitude is Not Natural:** As believers in Christ, we do not grieve like those who have no hope. (**1 Thess. 4:13**). We need to maintain the confidence that God is with us. “Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning” (**Ps. 30:5**). “Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him” (**Ps. 126:5-6**). It seems to be weird to some to be joyful in times of trials, but we need to keep our hope and trust in God and His promises.

4. ***This Radical Attitude Results from a Deliberate Choice:*** The choice is yours to trust in God or not. As James says, it is our faith that is being tested. We do not know if our faith is genuine until it stands up under the test. When facing trials, you have the choice to either trust God or not. ***Proverbs 3:5-6*** says “⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to Him and He will make your paths straight.” This is the radical attitude that James commands us to adopt.

Do not give up. “Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” Every trial you pass through you must consider it joy because it can make you mature and complete. Are there any weak points in your life? Do you have an irritable spirit? Quick to retaliate? Not gentle enough? Then God will permit trials to come into your life to strengthen and exercise those graces. You do not pray privately as you should. God will send some trials into your life to cause you to pray. Paul says it in ***Romans 5:3-4***, “*we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance’ perseverance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.*” The result of the trial is new hope that does not disappoint. You have become a stronger and more useful person, with a closer relationship with the Lord and more loving relationship with other Christians. All this only comes when trials come into our lives and we respond to them as we should.



“Sometimes God delivers us from our problems; sometimes God delivers us through our problems”- Mark Batterson

“It is the trial of our faith that makes us wealthy towards God” – Oswald Chambers

DAY 26

NO EXPIRATION DATE

... *“The LORD remembered her”*

1 Samuel 1:19

Typically, when we are grocery shopping, we check the expiration date on products so we can be sure to purchase items with the longest “shelf life.” Like most people, we like to get the best deals when it comes to spending my money. When it comes to our prayer life, however, there is no “shelf life.” A prayer prayed in faith does not expire but it continues.

I was told that my grandfather used to give an offering to God each time a child was born into the family and that my grandmother was a praying woman. Although they are no longer here on this earth praying for me, I know the prayers they prayed did not expire when they died, but they continue because there is no “shelf life” when it comes to our prayers. I am sure we all had someone in our lives, relatives, neighbors who have been praying for you too. I do believe that we are saved by the grace of God and I am sure that God has used someone to “pray” us into the Kingdom. You may not be aware of that but we are a product of a prayer ... Prayers never die. God always remembers them and answers them. Our prayers are not limited to this realm and no matter how long it takes, God is never late. Maybe you have been praying for love ones, for healing or whatever it is and start wonder whether God will answer you or maybe He forgot about you. You asked yourself if God has written it on a sticky note and may have misplaced it. Does He has a string attached to His finger? Is He ever going to answer me? Why is He talking so long to answer me when everyone around me has already received their answers?

HE NEVER FORGETS

God remembered Hannah’s prayer. The word “remember” often refers to a response that occurs after something is called in mind. In response to Hannah’s request, God remembered and He answered. Out of His mercy, He opened her womb and she was able to conceive. God is not a microwave God. He wants us to be patient just like Hannah was. Likely, she prayed for many years before being blessed with a child. God upheld Hannah during all this time. He answered her prayer in His timing and when her heart was right. God always remembers our prayers and He always answers them. Sometimes, He says yes and sends us an immediate answer; sometimes He says no. All we have to do is to trust and seek His will Him because He knows what is best for us. Sometimes, God says “not yet” or “wait” because the timing is not right or we are not ready for the answer though we believe we are. In his book, *Draw the Circle*, Mark Batterson said “Prayer is planting. Each prayer is like a seed that gets planted in the ground. It disappears for a season, but it eventually bears fruit that blesses future generations. In fact, our prayers bear fruit forever. Even when we die, our prayers don’t. Each prayer takes on a life, an eternal life, of its own”

There are so many examples that tell us about our God who never forgets us. God remembered Noah and his family (Genesis 8:1) and sent a wind to dry the waters so that they could leave the ark. He remembers Rachel; He listened to her and enabled her to conceive. (*Genesis 30:22, NIV*)

.Jesus remembered the dying thief who said, “*Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.*” Jesus replied, “*Today You will be with Me in Paradise*” (**Luke 23:42-43**).

TRUSTING GOD’S TIMING

Are you discouraged today because something isn’t happening in your life and though that God has forgotten about you? God is working behind the scenes and also doing a work in you!

The struggle, the trials, the disappointment, the difficulty, the failures etc... that you go through in life will allow you to grow in God and get you ready for the next season. Don’t miss that and don’t abort what God is doing inside of you. All things will work together for your good. It might not seem like that at the time you are going through this valley. Remember He is your shepherd and He is guiding you. The process may be long but you will be amazed by the results. “²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (**Rom.8:28**)

God remembers us wherever we are. Our concerns are His concerns. Our pain is His pain. Commit your challenges and difficulties to Him. He is the all-seeing God who remembers us as a mother remembers her children, and He waits to meet our needs.

So don’t get discouraged as you pray. Just because the answer might delay, God is listening and God is working. Our food may have an expiration date but there is none on prayer.

So stay faithful in it. The power of prayer goes even beyond the grave. We challenge and encourage you to pray faith-filled prayers and trust God. God honors prayer because prayer honors God.



“Prayer delights God's ear; melts His heart; and opens His hand” – Thomas Watson

“God has perfect timing; never early, never late. It takes a little patience and it takes a lot of faith, but it’s worth the wait.”- Unknown

“God’s delays are not God's denials”- Robert H. Schuller

DAY 27

S.O.S.

²⁸ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. ²⁹ He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. ³⁰ Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.

Psalm 107:28-30

In the early 1900s, the German government developed a signal to be used in times of crisis or distress. S.O.S. stood for “Save or Ship”, “Save our Souls”, or “Send out Secours”. Whenever the S.O.S. signal was received, immediate assistance was dispatched.

Ironically, as Christians, we have an instantaneous connection through our Father to activate our S.O.S. signal. The bible clearly lays out directions for us to follow whenever we are in distress. Simply put, our S.O.S. signal that captures the attention of our Father is our ability and willingness to **CRY OUT** to the Lord. How quickly we cry out to others, when our distress can be relieved through an outcry to the Father.

King David wrote *Psalm 107* as a song of thanksgiving to God, based on his own trials and tribulations. King David knew that the only way to make it through life’s challenges was to cry out to God. Crying out to God is an act of desperation and total surrender. It is a fervent expression of faith in God and trust in His goodness and power to act on your behalf. Crying out to God expresses the following traits:

Genuine humility: It is hard for people to admit that they cannot solve a problem or overcome an obstacle; we need God’s help. He delights in a broken and contrite heart that humbly seeks His aid. “. . . *He forgetteth not the cry of the humble*” (*Psalm 9:12*)

Unconditional surrender: When a situation becomes so desperate that only God can deliver you, a cry represents total surrender. Don’t try to bargain with God; leave your life in His hands. “*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*” (*Psalm 66:18*)

A plea for mercy: Apart from Christ, we have no value that merits God’s favor. When driven to a point of despair, your unworthiness before God often becomes more apparent and should motivate you to cry out to Him for mercy. “*It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness*” (*Lamentations 3:22–23*).

Personal helplessness: Do you tend to believe that you need God’s help with only the really hard things? Remember, Jesus said, “*Without me ye can do nothing*” (*John 15:5*).

Psalm 107 reveals 4 critical moments that occur in our lives; the answer for each moment was to **Cry Out** and activate the S.O.S. signal in our lives.

(1) Wanderers Are Found.

⁴ Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. ⁵ They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. ⁶ Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. Are you lost? Do you run around in circles, ending up in the same place in life? **CRY OUT TO GOD!**

(2) Prisoners Are Released.

¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, ¹¹ for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High. ¹³ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains. Are you a prisoner? Are you trapped in your own mind? Are you in a deep, cold place in life? **CRY OUT TO GOD!**

(3) The Sick Are Made Whole.

¹⁷ Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. ¹⁹ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them from their distress. Are you sick? Do you have emotional, physical, mental, or even spiritual infirmities? **CRY OUT TO GOD!**

(4) The Storms Cease.

²³ Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. ²⁷ They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wit's end. ²⁸ Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress. Are you in a storm? Does life toss you all over the place? **CRY OUT TO GOD.**

Why does God want us to learn to cry out? God has created you for eternity. You were made to enjoy life. More important, you were made to enjoy God. When you cry out to God and He answers, then your enjoyment of a relationship with Him increases. God is getting you ready for your future.

Choose today to activate your distress signal. Choose today to cry out to the Lord. Sit back in amazement at what He will do through you, to you, and for you by simply being obedient, trusting Him, and crying out to Him.



“When all you have is God, you have all you need.” – Denise Fisher

DAY 28

SMALL BUT POWERFUL

“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed...”

Matthew 17:20

When Angus Buchan, a white Zambian farmer of Scottish origin, emigrates to escape political unrest and worrying land reforms, he looks south for a better life. With nothing more than a trailer in the untamed bush, and help from his Zulu foreman, Simeon Bhengu, the Buchan family struggles to settle in their new homeland. Faced with ever mounting challenges, hardships and personal turmoil, Buchan quickly spirals down into a life consumed by anger, fear and destruction. Finally, his wife convinces him to attend a local church, where the religious testimony of other farmers influences his decision to give his life to Jesus Christ. His outlook takes a complete turnaround, and supernatural occurrences begin to happen when Angus prays in faith. He begins giving his testimony in different towns, and eventually gathers thousands of people in Kings Park Stadium for a time of unified prayer for the nation and for the land. Traditionally a maize and cattle farmer, Buchan decides to plant potatoes. Scientists had warned the farmers not to plant that season unless they had irrigation. Because of the unprecedented drought, planting potatoes would be a massive risk. Believing the Lord leads him, he plants potatoes in the dry dust. When harvest time comes, there is a crop of giant potatoes. I recommend that you watch the movie based on Angus Buchan’s life “Faith like Potatoes” (From Wikipedia)

LITTLE FAITH RESULTS IN MINISTRY FAILURE

And the disciples, at that moment, were counted among the faithless and twisted. So can we be. Our faithlessness is our lack of faith in God. But were the disciples really faithless? After all, they had tried to cast out the demon and disease. Wasn’t that faith? Perhaps. But whatever faith was present, while apparently well meaning, didn’t produce any results. That is why Jesus did not commend their effort; instead, he rebuked their failure. Later, when the disciples privately asked Jesus why they had failed, his explanation was succinct: “Because of your little faith” (Matthew 17:20). This was an unnerving answer. Jesus did not speak of God’s mysterious, inscrutable will in choosing not to answer at the time the disciples asked. Jesus put the blame squarely on the disciples’ shoulders. Their ministry failure was due to their little faith.

This account is included in the Scriptural canon in part to make us squirm and force us to ask the same soul-searching question over our ministry failures that the disciples were forced to ask: “Why could we not ____?”

Of course, not every unanswered prayer for healing, provision, conversion, etc. is a result of little faith. But we must not let ourselves off the hook too quickly when we don’t see prayers answered or when our ministry efforts fail. Being a Calvinist does not mean we always get to appeal to God’s mysterious inscrutability. Yes, God is sovereign. In addition, in this narrative, the sovereign God makes a clear statement: Little faith results in ministry failure.

But like all of Jesus’s rebukes to his disciples, his reproof is not intended to condemn us but to exhort us to press in further. If we currently have little faith, it is possible for us to have more faith. If we failed yesterday or today, we do not have to continue to fail. “Little faith” is not a permanent label. Jesus means it as a catalyst for

our transformation. For this is what he followed up with: “For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.” (*Matthew 17:20*)

If Jesus’s rebuke over our little faith makes our heads droop, his promise should make our jaws drop: “nothing will be impossible for you.” Those are not empty words. That phrase is a check to be cashed.

How would you live differently if you really believed that nothing would be impossible for you?

WHAT IF NOTHING WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU?

Unbelief is the number one hindrance for the manifestation of God’s power in your life. In *Matthew 17:17*, Jesus showed His frustration to His disciples not because they could not cast out the demon from the young man; but He rebuked them about having “little faith” because they doubted His divinity. The moment you let doubt find root in your mind, it hinders whatever God wants to do through you, in you and for you. God is not asking you to have a giant faith to move mountain but a faith like a mustard seed. So what does a mustard seed look like? A mustard seed is only 1 to 2 millimeters, which is about 1/64th of an inch! It is one of the smallest seeds, but when it is planted, it grows up to 20 feet tall and 20 feet wide. It becomes a tree that is larger than all the other garden plants; producing large branches for birds to nest in. Mustard seed faith is desperate, daring, demanding, determined, and deposited in Christ and His mercy and power alone. It is unconquerable faith; it is faith that will not quit. *Hebrews 11:6* says, “*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*” Faith moves God’s heart to release the impossible, the miracles, and the healing and more. In *Mark 11: 20-26*, Jesus talks about the faith that moves mountains. It involves 3 keys: (1) *Bear Fruit and not just leaves*: Don’t be fluffy, be fruitful (v.20-21); (2) *Bear Faith in/of God*: Jesus demonstrated faith in speaking to the fig tree about its future before it came to pass (v.22-23); (3) *Bear not a grudge*: Jesus insists that forgiving others is essential to moving the mountains! (v.24-26). Your faith is not just between you and God, it is a matter of you plus God plus others. So put your faith in God and trust in Him and you will see that nothing will be impossible.

Jesus talks about the **quantity** of faith that it takes to do the impossible. It is not the quantity of your faith but the quality of faith (confidence) you have in God and God's Word. Jesus compares mustard seeds to mountains. Jesus says that it only takes a mustard seed amount of faith (confidence) in the principles of the Kingdom of God to remove huge barriers such as mountains. Jesus said if you have a **mustard seed** amount of faith in the Word of God, nothing would be **impossible** to you.

The faith of God’s people is the channel through which God chooses to manifest much of his glory that results in the conversion of unbelievers. If we have little faith, then little glory is seen through us. We must not be content with this.

If we recognize that we have little faith, let us repent today and join the disciples in pleading, “Increase our faith” (*Luke 17:5*), and not let God go until he blesses us with an answer. It is a request he loves to grant.

Jesus really does mean for us to move mountains. He wants us to live in the bold joy of knowing that nothing will be impossible for us.



*“Quit talking to God about your problem and start talking to your problem about your God” – **Mark Batterson***

*“When you think about quitting, think about why you started – **Unknown***

DAY 29

LOOSE LIPS

¹⁸ *Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

Matthew 18:18

If you ever go through a 12-step program for any type of addiction, you learn that you have to replace something that you want to get rid of (which is negative) with something positive. Or perhaps you or a loved one has struggled with an addiction without a 12-step program. Have you ever tried to stop smoking? Drinking? Sinning? More often than not, you replaced the bad habit with something else. For example, smokers tend to chew gum or eat a lot when they want to give up smoking. Whatever the problem is, the person facing the problem tries to replace something for what was lost. Ironically, the scripture provides a foundation for how to tackle our problems. Simply put, we bind the negative and loose the positive. We speak to the situation, utilizing the word of God, in order to successfully handle the situation.

The scripture commands us to bind and loose things here on earth and in heaven. Binding” and “loosing” were common terms used by the Rabbis in biblical times. When the rabbis “bound” something, they “forbade” it, and when they “loosed” something, they “permitted” it.

In *Matthew 18:18*, Jesus gives us clear guidance on how we have authority to tackle the issues in life. Authority is defined as “The power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine, or judge.” In this small scripture, we learn how we have the authority to speak to a situation, in Jesus’ name, and command a positive outcome over the situation.

Christians are supposed to live and act as authorities for God in this world. We are not to be “know-it-all” or misuse the power we have in Christ. We are supposed to be helpful and courteous and offer healing and love in all situations.

FOR US TO HAVE AUTHORITY REQUIRES SEVERAL STEPS.

First, we have to understand that this is part of the responsibilities that come with our faith walk. (*Hebrews 11:8*)

Second, if we are living as God expects then we will automatically show it. (*Ephesians 2:8-10*)

Third, we must work on our understanding of the relationship God offers through Christ; we must be able to explain our faith. Faith in God not only means we rely on him, but we also depend on his reliability. Genuine faith is relying on God's direction and on who He is since He knows what we need, and he wants to meet those needs. Unfortunately, we think we know better. We think we have a better plan. We want to use our logic and

get to the answer in a way that makes us look good – and doesn't require risk. But God wants us to grow and be able to explain our growth to others. We have to realize that we are not God, but we are vessels that can be used by Him. (*Isaiah 55:8-9*)

And **finally** we must be willing to be an authoritative figure, to share what we know, to reach out and touch, teach and sometime heal with the authority of God. (*Romans 1:16*)

Putting our focus back on *Matthew 18:18*, we can then activate the authority we have to *bind* the negative and loose the positive in any situation. The cliché says *loose lips sink ships*. Why is that? It's because of inconsistencies in one's walk with Christ. The Bible clearly tells us in *James 3:10* that “*Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be.*”

If you have a woe is me attitude, your ship will sink. But if you have a Christ-centered attitude, you can speak to a mountain, through faith, and require it to move. You can bind up any negativity (like sickness, depression, poverty, low self-esteem, etc.) and loose the positive (health, wealth, wholeness, and Christ-esteem).

So instead of having loose negative lips, focus on *loose lips* that bind, deliver, and make you whole. This type of focus is needed in order to grow together as Christians. If you can effectively activate *Matthew 18:18* in your life, then this foundation will lead you to prayer of unity (*Matthew 18:19*)

CORPORATE PRAYER

Our *loose lips* lead us to corporate prayer. How important is prayer? How important is corporate prayer? Corporate prayer occurs in a group setting and following are some qualifications:

First is that it be a group of people. Jesus said “Where two or three are gathered...” In this passage, Jesus insists on at least two believers gathering in His name, gathering in unity. And when you have two or more, He is in the midst of them. The power of God is released in greater ways as we are in our mind in the spirit of unity.

Second is that we agree. We must be on the same page, praying for the same thing and agreeing that this is what we need to pray for. In other words, unity is crucial in prayer. If we are not in unity, prayer fails.

Third is that we pray in Jesus' name. A crucial aspect of prayer is that we glorify the name of Jesus and that we are totally dependent upon Jesus alone for our salvation. We gather in the name of Jesus to seek His will and His glory. If we are not praying with that in mind, our prayers are useless.



Agreeing with someone in prayer is like getting your prayer notarized” – Mark Batterson

DAY 30

RECOVERY AND RESTORATION ROAD

¹⁷“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ²⁰So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹“The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²²“But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

Luke 15:17-24

Most everyone has heard of the story of the prodigal son, which has been preached on hundreds of times. It is a story of a young man who had everything anyone could ever need: the security of a good home, a good father, and even an inheritance that would take care of him when his father passed on. But for some reason this young man decided he wanted his inheritance early. He couldn’t wait until his father died. He wanted out. He was tired of his father’s rules, tired of being told what to do, and tired of being dependent upon his father.

He wanted his own rules, he wanted to do what he wanted to do for change, and he wanted independence. He asked for and received his inheritance from his father. Verse 13 states that he gathered his belongings together and went to a country far away, where he wasted all his inheritance on an unrestrained lifestyle.

He was living it up. There was no one to tell him what to do so he partied all night and slept all day. He thought he was living the best life. Have you ever been in a similar situation? Have you been in a situation where material pleasures of life outshined eternal blessings through righteous living? If you can honestly answer ‘yes’ to this question, then no doubt you had to experience a reality check.

The prodigal son experienced a reality check in verse 14, which discussed how a famine swept the land. To survive, the prodigal spent what little money he had left. Because of the poor decisions, he made when he first received his inheritance, the prodigal son ended up spending his last dollar just to live.

He had nowhere to go and had too much pride to return home. Because of his pride, he sat homeless, hungry with no money, no friends, and no job; he experienced a famine in the land and a famine in his soul. He had come to the end of his rope. He was plain sick and tired of being sick and tired.

How sad when a person gets so far from God they lose all. They lose their joy, peace, satisfaction, and even their close relationship with God the Father.

The prodigal son was so down on his luck that he had to get a job feeding hogs. He was so hungry that he ate the husks the pigs were eating. At this point, the prodigal son experienced a reality check. He “came to his senses” and decided to jump back in the road of life. He decided to get on the road to recovery and restoration.

This parable, an illustration told by Jesus with a spiritual lesson, discusses a place where unfortunately we all sometimes end. Due to our bad choices, we find ourselves all alone in unfamiliar territory with no one to turn to for assistance. When a person walks away from God, he or she can never find the joy, peace and satisfaction experienced while living for God. There will always be an emptiness and void in his or her life.

Just like the prodigal son, you do not belong in the pigpen; you belong at the Father’s table. So how do you get there? How do you get from the worst situation that you can imagine to the road of restoration through Christ?

STEPS TO RECOVERY ROAD

Simply, you have to conscientiously choose to get back on the road to recovery. The prodigal son, in these few scriptures, gives us parallel guidance to follow:

Step 1: Become aware. The prodigal son became aware of his situation. He began to realize the condition he was in. He was no longer in denial; he knew he was at the very bottom.

If you are away from God today, you must not be in denial. How do you honestly answer these questions: Are you in the hog pen? Have you lost all your joy, peace, contentment, happiness? Are you empty and void? You must realize where you are in order to move to a new level. The prodigal son came to a realization and you too must come to a realization.

Step 2: Make a decision. The prodigal son decided to arise and go back to his father, and tell him that he had sinned against heaven and his father. Regardless of the “size” or “type” of sin, you have to do the same thing. You must choose to arise and return to the Father. No one else can make that decision for you.

Step 3: Repent. The prodigal son rehearsed what he would say. He knew he had to tell his father that he had sinned against him and against God. He knew because of his actions, he was not even worthy to be called his father’s son.

Similarly, you must repent of your sins. Going back home does not end with just a decision. Your decision must be followed by repentance. If you have sinned against God, your family, or your neighbor, you must admit it through repentance. Going back home requires repentance in order for you to be restored.

Step 4: Return. The prodigal arose and went back to the father. He started on his long journey home. He knew the way, the direction of home. You too must return to God. You must go back where you started, where you

belong. God did not leave you; you left him so you must return to Him. Funny, “While he was yet a great way off, his father saw him.” This means the father was looking for him since the day he left.

Can you believe God is looking for you today? He is watching patiently for your return. But you must make that decision!

Step 5: Reconcile. This loving father saw him before ever reached home, and ran to him and fell upon his neck and kissed him. But it didn’t matter to the father. For his son that was lost is now found. What a great reconciliation! When you sin, God is there waiting for his arrival. He welcomes you with open arms.

Step 6: Put on new clothing. The first thing the father did was clean up his son and gave him new clothes to wear. He took off the filthy garments and washed away the dirt.

Oh, that’s just like God. When a sinner comes home, God replaces the old worn garment with a robe of righteousness.

He will clean away all those sins. He will restore you to the household of faith, with a place around the table of God with blessings and provisions. (*Isaiah 61:10*)

Step 7: Rejoice. After the son was cleaned up and received his new clothes, the father called for the servants to prepare food for a feast. This portion of the parable ends by stating, “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” Not only did the father rejoice because his son had come home, but the son rejoiced that he was received by the father with no repercussions. The son made it down the road of recovery and restoration. He was restored! He was given back his position, not as a hired servant, but as a son with full benefits. Some people may think that this devotional is not for you. You do not have “major” sins that require you to return to God. Do not let the devil fool you. A sin is a sin and must be handled like a sin. If you are away from the Father in any area of your life, it is time to take the journey back home. It is time for you to enter the road of recovery and restoration.

Just realize where you are, make a determined decision to go back home, repent of your sins, and God will bring reconciliation and will forgive you and restore you back into His presence.



“When God forgives, He at once restores.” – Theodore Epp

DAY 31

DISTRACTIONS, DISTRACTIONS

¹ *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Hebrews 12:1-3

In today's society, it is easy to get distracted. In fact, distractions are the cause of most accidents. How many of us have been driving down the road, maybe talking to the other person in the car, listening to the radio or just looking at a beautiful sunset, texting when we should never do that, when suddenly we realize we missed our exit? This is a classic example of being distracted. If this has not happened to you yet, don't worry—it will one day.

But what about our spiritual life? Can distractions get in the way there as well?

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL DISTRACTION?

As God's people, we have a responsibility to be good examples to those around us. If we lose sight of this responsibility even for a moment, we are in danger of having a spiritual accident. We do not have statistics for the leading cause of our spiritual accidents; but more than likely, it would be distractions.

SO JUST WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL DISTRACTION?

A spiritual distraction could be the boss that rides you harder than your coworkers. It could be the coworker who takes credit for the work that you do. Maybe it is the neighbor who makes too much noise when you are trying to sleep or lets his trash blow into your yard. You could probably add many more ideas to this list, but when these types of trials and distractions happen, are we focused on Jesus? The point is that when we allow these things to get to us, we are led into sin. Sin and bad attitudes are not good examples of how God wants us to be. Although it may often be difficult, we must maintain our composure and not allow ourselves to be caught up in what is happening around us.

HUMAN NATURE

Are we focused on the Kingdom and God's plan, or do we get sidetracked and become angry just like the world around us? It's human nature to retaliate when someone hurts us, but is that what we should do? As God's people, we have a responsibility to be good examples to those around us. (*1 Corinthians 7:35*)

FOCUS

The opposite of distraction is focus. We must focus to keep ourselves from becoming distracted. But what does the Bible have to say about being focused? (*Hebrews 12:1-2*)

While it is inevitable that we will become distracted in life, it is most important that we remember to stay focused on God and His ways. (*Psalm 86:11*), (*Romans 12:7*), (*Colossians 3:1-2*) and (*1 Timothy 4:16*)

DEALING WITH DISTRACTIONS IN OUR SPIRITUAL WALK WITH CHRIST THROUGH SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Whenever the idea of distractions is brought up in connection with engaging Scripture, there is almost always a lively response from people. Most of us have a difficult time slowing down and spending time with God, let alone reading the Bible. Distractions seem to pop out of nowhere, stemming from any number of things: external chaos, internal stress, tiredness, or simply an undisciplined mind. Whether these are a form of spiritual attack or just a battle with our own sinful nature, they stand between us and a meeting with God in his Word.

However, there are many things we can do to decrease their impact on our time in Scripture.

Find a time to engage when your mind is clear and you are less prone to distraction. Give the best time of your day that you can to your time engaging Scripture.

Designate a place that helps you focus. It is good to use the same place repeatedly because your brain will begin to automatically set itself to the proper mode when you go to that place. You have to figure out what works for you.

Journaling before you enter the Word can also be a good idea. Take a minute to write out your troubles, disappointments, frustrations, joys, whatever is going to take your mind off what you are doing. Do this to free your mind before entering the presence of the Lord.

Sit in quiet before they start and let their minds settle and calm down.

If your thoughts wander to things you need to do, you might consider having paper with you so you can jot those things down before you start.

Sometimes we get distracted because what we are doing becomes routine. Consider trying a new Scripture engagement practice when you have become too familiar with what you are used to doing. This could be a change in time, location, or order of your reading and prayer time.

If you are feeling distracted when reading the Bible to yourself, try reading it aloud.

Do not feel guilty about distraction. When it happens, just pray and ask God to redirect your thoughts to the Word.

After you finish with your time with the Lord, think about what distractions you faced. If you can identify specifically what things caused you to sway from your time with Him, you can combat them more effectively.

Practice. Do not give up. Scripture engagement, like all spiritual disciplines, gets easier with time. Disciplining the mind is hard work, but the chance to interact with God through His Word is definitely worth the focused effort.

While it is inevitable that we will become distracted in life, it is most important that we remember to stay focused on God and His ways. We learn to do this by studying His

Word and praying for His guidance. We then put it into action by following His Word and, whenever possible, steering clear of the areas and ways that lead us to distraction. It is not always easy, but we can have God's help.



*“You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks.” — **Winston S. Churchill***

DAY 32

IT'S NOT ALWAYS ABOUT ME

⁸and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. ⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹²and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:8-12

Throughout this time of fasting, we will focus on several aspects of the Christian walk which can enhance your relationship with the Father. We will discuss fasting, praying, deeper commitments, discipleship, revival, and other key disciplines that will grow us deeper in our relationship with Christ. But guess what? It is not all about you! To grow deeper in Christ also means that we focus on others and their development with Christ as well.

Every Christian can minister directly to the spiritual well-being of other believers without seeing or speaking to them. We can play a role in their spiritual growth and even secure God's blessings for them through the awesome power of intercessory prayer. Such a prayer can connect others into the spiritual pipeline of the Father.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Quite simply, intercessory prayer is the act of praying on behalf of others. The role of mediator in prayer was prevalent in the Old Testament, in the cases of Abraham, Moses, David, Samuel, Hezekiah, Elijah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Christ is pictured in the New Testament as the ultimate intercessor; because of this, all Christian prayer becomes intercession since it is offered to God through and by Christ.

Jesus closed the gap between God and us when He died on the cross. Because of Jesus' mediation, we can now intercede in prayer on behalf of other Christians or for the lost, asking God to grant their requests according to His will. (*1 Timothy 2:5*) and (*Romans 8:34*).

Intercessory prayer accomplishes amazing things and it is within our grasp. Any Christian can intercede on behalf of others. Though most Christians do not start out with a strong desire to pray for others, it will develop as the Christian grows in the grace and instruction of the Lord.

Others need your prayers if they are going to be all Christ has for them to be. Your pastor, your fellow church members, your family, your friends, and even your enemies need your prayers.

If you are ready to heed God's call to greater Christian maturity and service by standing in the gap for others, these scriptures provide six ways you can pray for anyone, even an unsaved person.

WHAT TO PRAY FOR...

1. *Pray That They Will Know God's Will for Their Lives* – verses 8 and 9.

Paul prayed for believers who were marked by love that has its origin in the Spirit. Sometimes we wonder how to pray for people we have never met. Paul had never met the Colossians, but he faithfully prayed for them. His prayers teach us how to pray for others, whether we know them or not. The best that people can hope for in this life is to know God's will and fulfill the purpose He has planned for them. Thus, we should ask God to reveal His will and empower them to fulfill it when we pray for others. We ask them to be filled with the knowledge of His will, which means it would saturate their thoughts, affections, purposes, and plans. The Apostle Paul set an example of praying that others would know God's purpose for them. He recognized that knowing God's will is a spiritual issue and that prayer is needed for people to seek, know, and understand God's will.

2. *Pray That They Would Do God's Will in Their Lives* – verse 10a.

The second petition in the first part of verse 10 is that after they know God's will they would choose to live out God's will. God desires us to live a life based on what He has done for us. Paul prayed that people would know God's will, but he also understood that knowing God's will did not guarantee doing God's will.

Living a life worthy of the Lord grows out of knowing God's will. The reason Paul prayed that they would know God's will is so the people would do God's will or walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. He prayed that they would act on what they learned. Only through action does a person fulfill the purpose God has for him or her. Only as we act on God's will can we please Him in greater and greater ways. The ultimate aim of knowing God's will and walking in a worthy manner is to please the Lord.

Our lives should not be guided by expectations from our self or others. Do not be trapped into a life of trying to please others; always focus on pleasing the Lord. It is one thing to know God's will. It is another thing to be willing to change how we feel about it and accept it. Pray that God would reveal His will for other people with clarity and that they would understand and accept it. Then pray that God would enable them to change their behavior, so that they would align themselves with God's will.

3. *Pray for Productivity in Their Lives* – verse 10b.

What kind of life pleases the Lord? A life that continually bears fruit. To do good works without bearing any eternal fruit is tragic. Paul wanted those he prayed for to be wise but he also wanted them to use their knowledge. God wants us to learn more about Him and then put our belief into practice by helping others. (*John 15:16*).

4. *Pray for Them to Have a Growing Relationship with God* – verse 10c.

A Christian should not only bear eternal fruit, but should also spiritually grow through an increased knowledge of God. Most of what you learn about God will not be revealed to you until you know His will, live out His will, and begin bearing eternal fruit. God cannot really disclose Himself to us until we become obedient

children. This knowledge comes from life and study so that you can have an accurate comprehension of God. Paul knew that everything hinges on the health and vitality of our relationship with God. A genuine knowledge of Christ reveals itself in a transformed character. (*1 Thessalonians 2:12*).

5. Pray for Power in Their Lives – verse 11.

Following these great requests is a prayer for spiritual power and strength. Paul prayed that the people would receive power, which is the Holy Spirit. It is not given simply according to our need, but according to God's supply, according to His will. As Christians, each of us can be empowered by the Holy Spirit. If we are to do anything of value, we must have Him as the source of our power. Without the power from our Source, the Spirit of Christ, we cannot be effective. We may be able to do some things on our own, but they have no eternal value. When we really understand this, we begin to see ourselves as we really are. We realize that we need and must depend on God.

6. Pray for Them to Have a Right Attitude – verse 12.

Strengthened Christians are not to live a boring life, but one filled with joy and gratitude as verse 12 indicates. Paul was praying that they would have and maintain a positive, thankful, joyful attitude. Why pray for people's attitude? Our attitude influences nearly every aspect of our lives. It influences our behavior, our ability to learn, our contentment, and relationships including our relationship with God. It affects each person's life and Christian walk in a far greater way than you might think. Paul's prayer was for the full enrichment of lives. All believers have the same basic needs. Paul's pattern of prayer opens the door for God to meet them. As we pray for others to share in the inheritance offered through Christ, their lives will change. They begin to receive the greater gifts of God's grace. They will learn more about God and put their beliefs into practice by helping others. As they do, they will bear fruit and their attitude will change into one of continuous joyfulness and thankfulness. So realize that your prayers should not be all about yourself; it should not be all about you. Pray for others so that they can be blessed, which in turn blesses you.



“Worship and intercession must go together, the one is impossible without the other. Intercession means that we rouse ourselves up to get the mind of Christ about the one for whom we pray.” –Oswald Chambers

DAY 33

F.E.A.R. To F.A.I.T.H.

¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.³Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.⁶But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:1, 3, 6

Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “You gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face. You must do that which we think we cannot.” A Christian would expand on it by saying you must do that which you cannot do by exercising your faith in God. Unfortunately, we sometimes find it hard to exercise faith because of fear. “Fear not!” is the most repeated command in the Bible. In fact, it’s been said that there are 365 “Fear nots” in the Bible

Fear is the memory of danger. It serves a purpose, often keeping us out of danger like not touching a red hot stove top. Having fear is not necessarily a bad thing; it is one of the many emotions we experience in life. Our challenge is to separate healthy fear from unhealthy fear. This is part of the process of overcoming our fear through faith.

Everyone knows fear. It can come in an instant and throw you into chaos; or it can do the opposite by saving your life. Fear is a natural response to physical danger, but it can also be self-created, such as the fear of failure, being out of control, being different or being lonely. There is a fear of the future and of death. You may fear love because you fear being rejected; fear being generous because you fear you will not have enough; fear sharing your thoughts or feelings in case you appear wrong; and fear trusting because you are dominated by self-doubt and insecurity.

The main type of healthy fear is the fear of the Lord. (*Psalm 111:10*) and (*Proverbs 1:7*). A healthy fear of God includes the fear of the consequences of disobedience. There may be times of temptation or trial when we may forget some of the better reasons for obeying God, and that is when we had better think of the consequences. Moses said to the people, “*Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning*” (*Exodus 20:20*). In *Hebrews 10:26-31*, throughout the Word of God, He lets us know that there is such a concept of healthy fear. But there is another type of fear – one which makes you stagnant and paralyzes you from moving in the will of God. This fear is the darkroom where Satan develops negative thoughts and actions.

F.E.A.R.

This self-generated fear is found in its acronym: F.E.A.R. or **False Evidence Appearing Real**. It appears real, even though it is a fear of the future and is not happening now. Therefore, it has no real substance because it

creates untold worry, apprehension, nervous disorders and even paranoia. This acronym has been around for decades. The problem is that it makes one think that fear in itself is false. Remember earlier, fear was identified as an emotion. We all have seven basic emotions; some are good and some are bad. But fear is not necessarily something that is false. It is something that must be dealt with. How you may ask? You can only combat fear through faith.

BREAKING DOWN THE SCRIPTURE

Now: Looking at *Hebrews 11:1*, it reminds us that now faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Reviewing this scripture, there are several key words that must be fully fleshed out to understand faith. First, *now* is the type of faith that one should have. “Now faith” is faith that happens today, this instant, in the present.

Substance: Thus, today’s faith is the *substance* of things hoped for. Substance is the main ingredient of whatever is going to happen. Combining it, you see that today’s faith is the main ingredient of things hoped for.

Hoped: To have *hope* means you actually have confidence or faith that something is going to happen in your favor. Adding it to what has already been determined, today’s faith is the main ingredient of things that you confidently believe will happen.

Evidence: They say *the proof is in the pudding*. If you have evidence, you have proof. So today’s faith is the main ingredient of things that you confidentially believe will happen since you have the proof of things not seen.

Not Seen: When something is not seen, it is unknown. You may speculate about it, but its origin or destination is out of your reach. Putting it all together, you then know that today’s faith is the main ingredient of things that you confidentially believe will happen since you have proof of the unknown. How can you have proof of the unknown? Wow! It is circular. The proof of the unknown comes from having faith. A known cliché states that “there is nothing to fear but fear itself.” Fear is nothing more than an obstacle that stands in the way of progress. In overcoming our fears, we can move forward through faith in order to be stronger and wiser by focusing on God.

F.A.I.T.H.

When we put our problems in God’s hands, He puts His peace in our hearts. The only way we can move from fear to our destiny is through F.A.I.T.H., the acronym of **FORSAKING ALL, I TRUST HIM.**

In order to forsake all, you have to have trust in God. (*Proverbs 3:5-6*). In order to move from fear to faith, we have to practice our faith. A doctor practices medicine; an attorney practices law; a Christian must practice faith. The word practice means: to live out, to perform, to apply and rehearse and to act upon. We must use or practice our faith as:

1. A Worshipping Faith: (Hebrews 11:4)

Worship – this is what the Father is seeking. Hebrews 11:6 says it is impossible to please God without faith. We worship through our sacrifice. It is easy to go to church when everything is going with you. However, it is a little more difficult to give God your best when the bank account is low, the kids are sick, you are fighting with your spouse, or you lost your job this week. Practice your faith everyday by worshipping God.

2. A Walking Faith: (Hebrew 11:5)

Are you just talking the talk or are you walking the walk? Walking has to do with the way one lives his/her life. This is a life that is always rehearsing its faith, no matter what time of day or night. (**James 1:22**). Start living out your faith today by walking day by day in the faith of our Lord. Instead of telling people you are Christian, let them see it.

3. A Working Faith: (Hebrews 11:7).

Noah obeyed God and put into action the faith he had in God. God asked him to build an ark in the middle of the desert and it had never ever rained before. Yet, Noah's faith did not waver. He served God and believed in God enough to want to put in the work to do what God called him to do. Noah worked as God directed. He did what God said, the way God said it. Noah was the first man in the Bible to be called righteous or just. He put his faith in God into action. He lived out his faith. Begin to put action on your faith by working to serve the Father.

4. A Willing Faith: (Hebrews 11:8)

God called Abraham and he responded. He was willing to do anything God said. Abraham had faith in God's word. He made the right choice. He started out being willing his faith to God to listen and respond. God tested Abraham early to see if he was willing. Obedience is the test of faith. Are you willing to obey? The faith that pleases God is the faith that is lived out and put into action; it is the faith that is used in obedience to God's Word.

Through worship, walking, working, and being willing, you can turn your F.E.A.R. to F.A.I.T.H. For some, faith is one of the hardest aspects of the Christian life. For others, faith comes naturally. But “...*if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you*” (**Matthew 17:20**).

Do you have mustard seed faith? The mustard seed is one of the smallest of all seeds. The mustard seed is so small that you can hardly see it.

Choose today to use your mustard seed faith to forsake all and trust Him. This is the best way to remove doubt, fear, anxiety, and apprehensions from your life.



“Next time fear knocks at your door, send faith to answer! – Joyce Meyer

“The truth is we have nothing to fear and nothing to overcome because He is all in all and we are more than conquerors through Him. The recognition of this truth is not flattering to the worker's sense of heroics, but it is amazingly glorifying to the work of Christ” – Oswald Chambers

DAY 34

UNDERSTANDING THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON ON EARTH

“I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever. Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him, but you know Him, for He dwells with you, and shall be in you”

John 14:16-17

Every year, CNN airs "CNN Heroes: An All-Star Tribute", a show based on the global recognition of someone who had touched someone else's life by their efforts. Every year, major news magazines, such as Time, People Magazine and Newsweek, attempt to identify the “person of the year” or “the sexiest female or male of the year” or the Nobel Prize is awarded to someone based on their impacts.

How would you feel, if you were told you that you will be introduced to the person of the most important person on the planet? The smartest and most powerful person? I bet you will be very excited about meeting such an important person.

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Invisible but real. Described as a ghost, a force, and a second-class or replacement god, the Holy Spirit is probably the least understood person of the Trinity. It is vital for the church to know the Holy Spirit, to learn to relate to Him, and understand how He manifests Himself. In his book, *The Counselor*, A.W. Tozer said, “Spell this out in capital letters: **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON**. He is not enthusiasm. He is not courage. He is not energy. He is not the personification of all good qualities, like Jack Frost is the personification of cold weather.

Actually, the Holy Spirit is not the personification of anything. He has individuality. He is one being and not another. He has will and intelligence. He has hearing. He has knowledge and sympathy and ability to love, see and think. He can hear, speak, desire, grieve and rejoice. He is a Person.” The Greek word used here in reference to the Holy Spirit is *Parakletos*, (pronounced par-ak'-lay-tos) which means, “called to one’s side, especially called to one’s aid or to help”. It also means one who pleads another’s cause before a judge, a pleader, a counsel for defense, a legal assistant, an advocate, an intercessor, a helper, an aider, an assistant”. The Holy Spirit is destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after His ascension to the Father); to lead them to a deeper knowledge of the gospel truth, and give them divine strength needed to enable them to undergo trials and persecutions on behalf of the divine kingdom.”

He is a person, and just as you and I experience different emotions and express ourselves, so does the Holy Spirit. However, He never moves outside of God's Word, or exalts or calls attention to the flesh. Imagine that the Holy Spirit was taken away from us, how could we even live a victorious life? We will become just like the unbeliever, the unsaved. If we think of Him as an essence or an impersonal force, then we do not know Him. He

is the promise, the answer of Jesus' prayer to the Father. Why? Because without Him, we can ABSOLUTELY do **NOTHING**. The Holy Spirit is always with you, to help you, to teach you, to strengthen you and to empower you for any good work! *Acts 1:8* said "***But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you***". None of us knows how electricity works but we need its power to function, and we are not afraid to plug in our devices (phones, computers, TV etc.). Just like we need electricity to function, we need the power and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in our lives if we want to reach our families, and communities. How will they know that Christ lives in us if we do not have the power of the Holy Spirit? We need His power to witness to others (in Jerusalem, in Samaria and everywhere else we will be), to advance the Kingdom of God and reinforce the victory won on cavalry. He desires to help us. In fact, He comes and takes up residence inside of us. Take a moment and think that the most important, smartest and powerful person on earth has moved into your life. He has now taken a personal interest in your well-being. He is symbolized in the Bible as a dove (His gentleness), oil (anointing), wind (invisible power that changes you), and rain (open heaven over your life)

It is by the Holy Spirit that God reveals truths to us because He knows the deep things of God. "The Spirit searches all things, the deep things of God." What we do not know, the Spirit knows. We have received the Spirit of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. As you get to know Him, the Holy Spirit will choose to move through you, as He desires. The Holy Spirit has a will: In the disbursement of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, He gives His gifts to every man, as He will (*1 Corinthians 12:11*).

THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN THE LIVES OF BELIEVERS.

Jesus emphasized on the Holy Spirit for He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it does not know or see Him. In Jesus's life, the Holy Spirit plays an important part, how much more so in our lives! He was there from the beginning of creation, moving about the surface of the waters. Today, the Lord Jesus is in heaven, but the Holy Spirit is with us on earth. He is with us anywhere, everywhere, at all the time. The disciples did not have this privilege before the death of Jesus; they could not "take Jesus home" in them. When the Holy Spirit came, He took the place of the ascended Christ.

Now, we do not miss Jesus because the Holy Spirit makes the presence of Jesus real to us. He is the reason you can believe the Word of God. It is so important that you recognize the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life. To have a successful and supernatural life in Christ, you need to know Him and walk with Him. Let Him be part of your life, talk to Him, call upon Him, invite Him to invade every aspect of your life and change the atmosphere in your home, car, workplace, and everywhere you go. Recognize the Holy Spirit that He is a real person. Without the Holy Spirit, there would have been no Christ and Jesus would not be all that He was (the revelation of God; the expression of His nature, love, character and grace that you find in Jesus is all revealed to you through the Holy Spirit. Everything you love or admire in Jesus is in the Holy Spirit. He simply desires to be part of your daily life. Jesus told his disciples; "**It is to your ADVANTAGE that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.**" (*John 16:7*). Jesus reassured His disciples that the Holy Spirit will be ENOUGH for them and He has instructed them to wait in Jerusalem. Just like the disciples could not do it without the Holy Spirit, so do we. We need Him in every area of our lives.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BUILD THE BODY OF CHRIST WITHOUT A LIFE FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the New Testament, there are many occasions of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit: John the Baptist was full of the Spirit in his mother's womb (*Lk 1:15*); Elizabeth, when Mary greeted her (*Lk 1:41*); and Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, when he prophesied (*Lk 1:67*). The same Spirit led Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, into the desert (*Lk 4:1*). The disciples were filled with the Spirit in the upper room, and Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, stood up to preach on the day of Pentecost (*Acts 2:14*). The young Stephen, full of the Spirit, saw the glory of God when he was stoned (*Acts 7:55-56*); and Paul, inspired by the Spirit, rebuked a sorcerer (*Acts 13:9-11*).

There is no doubt that we need the Holy Spirit in our lives and our churches for sure. Without Him, the work of God will be limited in our lives, our churches, as well as in our communities. In other words, we need the Holy Spirit.

Are you feeling overwhelmed? Do you feel like life has handed you more than you can handle? Jesus never intended you to do it on your own. He has sent the Holy Spirit to help us. Partner with the Holy Spirit and you will feel and see the difference in your daily life.



“The Holy Spirit is humanity’s bridge to the home kingdom” – Dr. Myles Munroe

*“If the Spirit lives within you, then wherever you are, the heavenly government is present.”
– Dr. Myles Munroe*

DAY 35

YOUR BEST LIFE NOW...IS HIDDEN

³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

Colossians 3:3-7

Once you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you don't have to worry about who you used to be. The old you is dead and when the Father sees you, He only sees Jesus in you. Our new identity is in Christ, in God. Although it may not look like it, our real self is to be found with him. Your new life have to reflect God in everything you do for Christ has brought you into the divine life, into the fellowship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You belong to God, and that the way you should think and act like it. Our true identity is hidden. A.T Lincoln said "By no means is everything about Christian living apparent, not only to outsiders, for whom much of it appears foolish, but also to Christians themselves, for whom there remains mystery and much questioning until the final revelation.... Its hiddenness necessitates that Christians live by faith and not by sight and, therefore, without all the answers to the meaning of many events in their lives". You are in permanent and unbroken communication with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There is no longer a separation between Christ and you

OUT WITH THE OLD

Paul listed five vices that need to be put to death, eliminate for your life. They need to be out of your life. God is a jealous and just God and God does not want you to fall into His wrath. Stop looking back to your old life and embrace the new life you have in Christ Jesus. Pau continues in verse 8 by saying that "You must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips". As ambassadors of Christ, your attitudes and words should conform to a new standard. Stop referring to your old life as if you were regretting leaving it behind. When you follow Jesus, you can no longer walk in darkness for He is the light. You need to make choices in the light of who you are and become more and more like Chris. "No system of 'dos and don'ts' can create the image of God in humans.... The new life of obedience does not depend on your own feeble moral resolve but comes from being united with Christ" (*David Garland*)

IN WITH THE NEW

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." **2 Corinthians 5:17**. One of the biggest challenges of life as a Christian is struggling with the same sins year after year. You start asking yourself this question: "If I'm STILL struggling like this... am I even a Christian? Your first reaction is to freak, and renew our commitment to fight harder. The problem is that this approach....

doesn't work because you got it backwards!!! You have been taught that your new actions are what give you a new identity; rather than your new identity causes you to have new actions. In 1 John 1:7, the Bible says that “⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” No longer are you the old “you” but you have been bought with a high price, you are washed, sanctified and justified. You have a new identity in Christ. Therefore, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience”.

THREE PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

(1) You Have a New Identity: You are no longer the porn addict, the arguing jerk, the girl obsessed with her body image, the depressed cutter, the outcast loser. You have a new God-given label! Beloved. Precious. Redeemed. Adopted. Justified. Accepted. Approved in Christ. So be defiant! Laugh at your feelings. This new identity is true NO MATTER WHAT YOU FEEL. Use it to introduce yourself.

(2) You Have a New Power: God gives you a new identity by GRACE, and that makes your behavior change. So walk in that power, walk with swagger and confidence in the Holy Spirit at work in you. You have been set free by the VERY power that raised Christ from the dead. You now walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:4**). Rejoice!

(3) You Have New Actions: Because of your new heart, new identity, and new desires, you will have new actions.

How can you not? You've been completely remade in Christ! Start studying the Word to see what kind of new actions those in Christ have, start using your body and mind and emotions for righteousness (**Romans 6**). The old sinful person is dead. The new person in Christ has been reborn. Your sin is nailed to the cross, and is breathing out its last. A new day has dawned, and you have been raised to new life in Christ. Walk in it, Christian.



“Jesus came to announce to us that an identity based on success, popularity and power is a false identity- an illusion! Loudly and clearly he says: 'You are not what the world makes you; but you are children of God.'” — Henri J.M. Nouwen

DAY 36

ASSURED OF HELP

²⁶ *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.* ²⁷ *And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.*

Romans 8:26-27 NIV

Douglas Moo summarizes Paul's thought as "Paul is saying ... that our failure to know God's will and consequent inability to petition God specifically and assuredly is met by God's Spirit, who himself expresses to God those intercessory petitions that perfectly match the will of God. When we do not know what to pray for—yes, even when we pray for things that are not best for us—we need not despair, for we can depend on the Spirit's ministry of perfect intercession "on our behalf." In other words, Paul wants us to rely on the Holy Spirit especially in our weakness. But most of times, when we are weak, we tend to stop praying. We need to know that the Holy Spirit is praying for us and we need to keep pushing and praying regardless the obstacles we face.

IN OUR WEAKNESS, WE NEED TO PRAY:

It is perfectly ok to acknowledge that we are weak. Paul never estimated himself more spiritual than anybody, or put him on a pedestal; he rather sees himself as the least of all. "***For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.***" (*1 Corinthians 15:9*). One of the reasons we do not pray as frequently or as fervently as we should is that we do not recognize how weak we really are. If we knew ourselves to be weak, we would constantly be coming to the Lord and crying out for His strength.

When we read about the giants in the Bible, we think "Wow, they were strong!" Let look at Elijah! He called down fire on his sacrifice and then slaughtered 400 prophets of Baal. Twice he called down fire to consume a commander and fifty armed men who were sent to arrest him. Do not mess with Elijah! And ***James 5:17*** tells us, "*Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed*" Elijah was weak, just like we are. But he prayed to the God who is strong.

What about Moses. He was so brave that he stood up to Pharaoh by calling down miraculous plagues on him and his kingdom. He parted the Red Sea so that the Israelites could pass through on dry ground and then he brought the sea back over the heads of the pursuing Egyptian army. However, in ***Psalms 90:17***, he pleaded for God's favor ¹⁷ *Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us yes, establish the work of our hands!*" It shows that Moses was aware of his own weakness, which is why he prayed.

Now, Jesus himself, the Son of God. In ***John 5:19***, he said ¹⁹ ***Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*** He often slipped away to the wilderness for prayer (***Luke 5:16***). In His

humanity, Jesus knew that He must depend on the Father for all things. He is a model for us of praying at all times and for all things (*Luke 18:1*). Our weakness should cause us to cry out to God in prayer.

God knows that we will not be able to make it by ourselves and He does not condemn us from being weak; that is why He sends us the Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness. Every time you feel your weakness, call out to Jesus.

Are you overwhelmed? Do you feel like life has handed you more than you can handle or that you have been called to accomplish more than you are able to?

THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR HELPER

The Holy Spirit is a person, not an impersonal force. He helps us in our weakness by praying for us when we cannot do it ourselves. Following are four ways the Holy Spirit helps us:

1. **The Holy Spirit helps in our weaknesses:** One weakness of humans is in our limited knowledge. We do not know everything or what people are planning to do, but the Holy Spirit knows everything. He will help us to pray accurately and effectively. He helps us by providing us with spiritual strength on a daily basis, if we would just ask Him. In *Ephesians 3:16*, Paul prayed for believers in the Church to be strengthened with might (power) by the Holy Spirit in their inner man. The power to grow up in Christ, live for him daily and to do the work assigned to us by him cannot come from any other source. It must come from God through His Holy Spirit.

2. **The Holy Spirit intercedes for us:** He helps us in prayer. In *Romans 8:26-27*, we understand that when we do not know what prayer to pray and how we ought to pray, He comes to our aid by interceding before God on our behalf according to God's will for our lives.

3. **The Holy Spirit testifies of God:** He will always point us to Jesus. By His work in us, we are convinced that Jesus is who he says he is (*John 15:26*). This assurance by the Holy Spirit gives us the boldness to testify about Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Therefore, His revelation from the Father to us will always be rooted and grounded in the Word and bring HONOR and GLORY to Jesus in our lives (*John 16:13-15*)

4. **The Holy Spirit teaches us:** He will help us tremendously as our teacher if we allow Him to fulfill this role in our lives. In *John 14:26*, speaking to his disciples Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will teach them all things and will bring to their remembrance all that he had spoken to them. In *Luke 12:11-12*, Jesus told his disciples not to be anxious over what to say whenever they had to speak in defense of the gospel because the Holy Spirit will teach them what to say. On the same note, Paul made it clear in *1 Corinthians 2:13* that God's Word cannot be taught by human wisdom, instead the Holy Spirit interprets spiritual truths to those who are spiritual (believers).

5. **The Holy Spirit guides us:** The Holy Spirit will, if allowed, guide you in every area of life; from the words, you should speak, to the spouse you should marry, to the investments you should make. It is important we fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Today, if you see Jesus, what would you do? Embrace Him, bow to Him or fall at His feet in worship? You will try to express your love for His to the best of your ability. It should be the same with the Holy Spirit who is in you, and with you every single day.

6. **The Holy Spirit Convicts us:** The Holy Spirit keeps His finger on what is wrong until the issue is settled. Jesus explained the role of the Holy Spirit to his disciples in **John 16:8**. He works in the world to convince and convict unbelievers of sin; drawing them to Christ and helping them realize how desperately they need a Savior. His work continues after salvation as He constantly works in the lives of believers to help us grow up and mature spiritually (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

7. **The Holy Spirit cleans us:** The Spirit of the Lord rises up within us and causes you to hate the sin that destroys the people of God and to take authority over the devil.

8. **The Holy Spirit counsels us:** He is our counselor and He is compassionate. He not only gives advice but also exchanges opinions and ideas with you, helping you to reach a decision or set a direction.

11. **The Holy Spirit gives us the authority:** to issue a command in His power. We do not have to ask for it or demand it; it is ours by virtue of the Spirit of God.

12. **The Holy Spirit gives us victory:** He is the overcoming power of the Lord that not only gives us victory but the joy, triumph and exultation that comes forth when you know a victory has been won.

13. **The Holy Spirit moves through a melody within your heart:** He will bring His fruits such as comfort, joy, peace, direction, guidance, songs in times of grief and victory.

Be encouraged and keep praying even when it does not make sense to you. We are commanded to pray and we have the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

**Don't let the fact that you do not know how to pray, as you should discourage you from praying.*

**Don't let the fact that prayer is not easy discourage you from praying.*

**Don't let the fact that your prayers do not seem to be answered keep you from praying.*



“The Holy Spirit is the first power we practically experience but the last power we come to understand” — Oswald Chambers

DAY 37

COMMITTED TO GROW

⁷ *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you*

John 15:7 NKJV

The verb “abide” or “abide in Me” appears at least 6 times from verses 1 to 8. It emphasizes the importance to abide, to continue, to remain, to stay to dwell, in the presence of God and to depend on Him at all times. It is imperative that we continuously stay in the Word of God and keep a close relationship with Christ. To abide in Jesus means to keep His commandments and to keep His commandments means to love God with all our hearts, souls, and minds and to love our neighbor as ourselves. As we abide in Him, we will bear the fruit of righteousness. This does not add to our salvation by grace alone through faith alone, yet it confirms our transformed heart. Abiding in Him will keep our lives clean through His Word, resisting all sin and yielding to the direction of the Holy Spirit. As we abide in Him, we are protected from the hand of the enemy and we will bear fruit. By not abiding in Him, though we may live in the flesh, we will die in our spirit and we will not bear fruits. He explains that by not abiding in Him we are like my pitiful plants — we will soon fall off the vine — our roots where we receive nourishment were never truly planted. The fruit of the vine is proof of our faith. Not perfection — but fruit, even if a small bud.

- Abide means never stop pursuing the *truth*, and never putting any other truth above it.
- Abide means never stop being attracted by its *beauty* and *value*, and never seeing anything as more beautiful or more valuable or more attractive than the word and the Lord it reveals.
- Abide means never stop resting in His *grace and power*—never turning away as though greater peace could be found anywhere else.
- Abide means never stop eating and drinking from the word as the *bread of heaven and living water*, as if life could be sustained anywhere else.
- Abide means never stop walking walk in the *light* of the word, as though any other light could show the secrets of life.

In his book, “*Draw the circle*” Pastor Mark Batterson gives five reflections of meaning of abide word abide:

To stay overnight: To press on into the presence of God a little longer just like Jesus did before the crucifixion

To hold fast: Every time we pray, we gain a position on the spiritual real. It is the way we take enemy territory and hold our ground

To stand still: Stay in the Word of God and trust His promises

To be moved: When we abide in His word, new passions are conceived within us.

To tarry: To press into His presence and getting in His Word.

THE TRUE VINE

Jesus said ***“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in Him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”*** (John 15:5). Jesus describes Himself as the true vine and His Father as the vinedresser. The true vine was a way to contrast Jesus with Old Testament Israel. The hearers would understand that He was saying that He was *the* Messiah and the fulfillment of the covenant because of the Old Testament references to a vineyard. (*Isaiah 5:1–7; 27:2–6*). Jesus explains that the branches that do not bear fruit are taken away, but the branches that bear fruit are pruned to bear more fruit. To bear fruit simply means to grow in character — to become more like Christ and reflect the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22–23*). In addition, this is where we come to his command to abide ***“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me”*** (John 15:4).

THE SECRET PLACE

The Secret Place is God’s reality. It is a private, intimate place of personal relationship with God; the inner court. ¹*“He that dwelled in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”* (*Psalms 91:1 KJV*). It is like being at home with God. It is not the reality of the world, but a place of peace, protection, power and love. The Lord calls you to dwell in His place and count on Him for everything in your life. When you do this, the rewards are great. He will protect and guide you; and send His angels out to care for you. You will be surrounded by His power and might so that **nothing** can harm you. Therefore, it is important to dwell in this place. Living in the Secret Place does not happen overnight, it requires diligently seek Him and you need to invest your time and energy in meeting with the Lord in prayer and studying His Word.

The enemy will try to interrupt you and might bring situations in your life stop you in your tracks. Declare what *Psalms 121* says ¹*I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?* ²*My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.* ³*He will not let your foot slip—He who watches over you will not slumber;* ⁴*indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.* ⁵*The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand;* ⁶*the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.* ⁷*The LORD will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life;* ⁸*the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”*

Make Jesus your number one in everything you do. Talk with Him because He is as real as the person next to you. Walk with Him. Bring your every issue to Him. Spend time with Him in His Word. Find a daily time that you can praise and worship Him. You will realize and enjoy His deliverance in your life. Make a move “up town” to the Higher Place and call the Secret Place of the Almighty your permanent home.

THREE KEYS TO ABIDING

Abiding has a continual, hour-by-hour nature to it, a constant looking to Jesus through the Scriptures. If we could avoid gospel-amnesia and remember his grace, we could barely stand an hour’s absence from him. These saints give incredible definitions to help us grasp abiding in Christ. Here’s mine:

To abide in Christ daily requires dependence upon the Holy Spirit in which we do three things:

- Walk by faith
- Spend focused time
- Engage in intentional actions



*Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees." – **Corrie ten Boom***

DAY 38

STAY ON YOUR LANE

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Matthew 7:2

Imagine driving down the highway. There’s a car in front of you, one on the left, and one on the right. The car in front of you is driving below the speed limit. Yet, because there are cars on both sides, you have no choice but to stay in your lane. This happens with driving as well as with our everyday interactions with others.

Often times in life, we tend to drift out of our lanes when interacting with others. As believers in Christ, we feel the need to compare ourselves to others. If someone does something extremely well, we tend to be envious. If someone makes a mistake, we tend to be overly critical of their actions. As we grow and develop our Christian walk, there must come a time when we celebrate the successes of our brothers and sisters as well as pray them through their difficult times through love and not condemnation.

Throughout the New Testament, several scriptures warn us about judging others. The two most quoted of them come from Matthew and Luke. These disciples spoke from experience. As they walked with Jesus, they saw many “sinners” but had the greatest Teacher as an example of how to properly handle the sin.

The familiar cliché tells us to love the sinner and hate the sin. Jesus himself did this for us by dying on the cross for our sins and being resurrected for our eternal life. His example did not show us to ignore the sin, but to love someone through their sins.

It is ironic how we are more apt to judge others for their sins and ignore our own. We are even bold enough to condemn others for the same sins that we secretly commit. We have compassion for our own sins and no tolerance for the sins of others.

Matthew and Luke advise on what happens when we focus on the sins of others instead of working on our own sins. We put ourselves in a circular bind, where we are judging or being judged at all times. We are condemning as others are condemning us. This leads us to a focus on problems instead of provisions and people instead of the Provider.

Choose today to stay in your lane by loving, not judging; praying, not gossiping; and forgiving, not condemning. Remember, it is the charge given to you by Jesus Christ as the second greatest commandment (Matthew 22:39), which is to love your neighbor as you love yourselves. Treat your brothers and sisters the way you want to be treated. Remember to love them through their pain, situation, and even their sin.

THE BLIND OPHTHALMOLOGIST

Have you ever had someone attempt to help you remove something from your eye? If so, you can readily understand the amount of gentleness and tenderness that is required. The eye is very sensitive. It takes a compassionate hand and a delicate touch to do surgery in the eye. When you have eye trouble, you need a doctor who knows what he is doing because even the slightest mistake can have catastrophic consequences. Jesus had a great sense of humor, and I am sure He did not say this with a straight face. He must have been smiling and giggling as He said this. Imagine there is a man with a huge beam protruding from his eye attempting to perform delicate surgery on your eye. His beam keeps smashing into your face—and everyone else around him—but he’s oblivious to his own problem. It is funny or imagine a man with a plank in his eye walking through the lobby of the church trying to find a person with a speck of sawdust in his eye that he might remove it!

With this illustration, Jesus tells us how idiotic we are, but He does it with warmth and humor. He could have shown contempt for the contemptuous and hated those who hate, but that would have accelerated our wretched pattern of judgment. Instead, Jesus threw the wrench of mercy into our hate-filled cycle, causing it to sputter and then slowly stop. Just stop and think for a moment. Are you notorious for criticizing the media? Politicians? Your teachers? Your pastors? Your boss? Your coworkers? Your neighbors? Your friends? Seriously, can you even watch a football game without being critical of the quarterback, the coach, or the referee? Most Christians are critical. Some are even bold enough to boast that their spiritual gift is criticism.

Jesus gives two exhortations dealing with judicious judgment.

1. Judge with humility not superiority: In *Matthew 7:1*, Jesus said: **“Do not judge.”** No sentence in the Bible is more familiar, more misunderstood, and more misapplied than this one. “Do not judge” does not mean you cannot say anything critical or pointed to another person. We are to refrain from hypercritical, condemning judgment. As the old saying goes, “People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones.” Again, Jesus did not say that Christians are not to judge under any circumstances. His warning was against hypocritical judgment—someone with a “log” in his eye passing judgment on someone with a “speck” in his eye (7:3). He was warning disciples not to make the mistake of the Pharisees! Jesus’ concern was making sure that we are qualified to judge. This is why He said, “First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (7:5). We naturally tend to exaggerate and often inflate the faults of others while at the same time underestimating our own. Remember, *be slow to judge others and quick to judge yourself*.

2. Judge with wisdom not independence: In Jesus’ day, dogs lived in filth, running the streets and scavenging for food and pigs were despised because they were unclean animals (*Matthew 7:6*). Today dogs are loved as well-groomed household pets that are called “man’s best friend.” and pigs are loved as breakfast. Can you imagine giving holy food from the temple to an unclean dog scavenger? Of course, not! The pig in the ancient world is far different from modern cartoon characters like “Porky Pig.” Although pork was a highly prized food among many people in the ancient Mediterranean world, Jews rejected it, probably because pigs were often dangerous because they ravaged fields (*Ps 80:13*). You do not have to be a Bible scholar to recognize that these

terms “dogs” and “swine” are figures of speech for people. But exactly who are these dogs and pigs? There are people who openly reject the gospel of Christ, enemies of the gospel. Jesus is advising us not to waste our words on those who will not listen. Rather, go to those who are receptive and hungry for hope. The descriptions “what is holy” and “pearls” most likely refers to the message of the gospel (**13:45–46**), meaning that this holy message must not be defiled by those who are unreceptive to, or have rejected, Jesus’ invitation.



“Judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating. By judging others we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are.”

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

DAY 39

FAR MORE THAN YOU THINK

²⁰ *Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,*

Ephesians 3:20 NKJV

Do you know it's possible to limit God in your life? Many people have unconsciously placed limits on what the Lord can do in their lives. For example, there is a young guy who wants to get a job and all he prays is, "Oh Lord, please let my application be accepted in so and so company." He places so much emphasis in his prayer on his letter of application, thinking that God must do it that way. Unknown to him, he is limiting God, because he fails to realize that God could give him that job any other way, or even a better one.

Now -at this present moment, in this present circumstance. *Unto him* - God, Jesus, Holy Spirit. *Who is able* - has the ability, the power, skill, resources and qualification. *To do* - to perform, to bring to pass, to execute, to accomplish. *Exceedingly* - to go beyond, to surpass. *Abundantly* - present in great quantity, well supplied, richly supplied. *Above all* - higher than anything, everything, totally, the whole thing. *That we ask* - request, inquire of, seek information. *Or think* - imagine, to consider something as a possible action. *According to* - in agreement with, in proper relationship or proportion. *The power* - the ability to do or act. *That worketh in us* – exertion or effort directed to produce or accomplish something, labor, toil. *Worked* - means continually works in us.

EXCEEDING + ABUNDANTLY+ BEYOND ALL

"Exceedingly abundantly above" are three words that describe something other than wealth. They describe something beyond the natural and ordinary. They are characteristic of those things we are incapable of doing or possessing on our own. More importantly, they illustrate the magnitude of God's amazing love for His chosen people. Think of the immeasurable ability of the Lord. "***Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You***" (***Jeremiah 32:17***). He created the entire universe. Certainly, by His power He is able to strengthen us. "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?" (***Jeremiah 32:27***). Our Lord rules over all of humanity. Surely, He is able to manage our lives. Actually, our God is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think." Everything we could ask concerning His will, He is able to do far beyond that. Whatever we might, contemplate but hesitate to ask, He is able to surpass that.

GOD'S ABUNDANT PROVISION

As our loving Heavenly Father, God knows and abundantly provides for all our needs - - material, emotional, and spiritual.

1. ***God provides abundantly for our material needs:*** Providing for our material needs is different from prosperity but do not feel guilty about the material things God provides for us. However, we need to remember that everything we have belong to God and we are His managers not owners. Just like ***Luke, 12: 48*** says, “To whom much is given, much shall be required”.
2. ***God provides abundantly for our emotional needs:*** He wants us to be emotionally whole. He does not always do it instantly or when we think He should. He often does it by bringing healing to relationships with family members and others who have hurt us. Nevertheless, even if they never respond, the Lord teaches us how to forgive and to have our emotional needs met in Him.
3. ***God provides abundantly for our spiritual needs:*** God’s ultimate goal is always spiritual. Things do not just “happen” to you but God is shaping you so that He can use you to be His channel to convey His blessings to lost people. To do that, He has provided abundantly in Christ for all of your spiritual needs, even when you are not aware of them.
4. ***God provides for our needs in His timing, not ours:*** His ways are higher than our ways. Sometimes, He lets us come to the point of lowest despair, where we are beginning to wonder, “What happened to God?” Then He comes through. He works all these things together for your good.
5. ***God provides in ways we would never expect:*** God delights to surprise His children in ways they never would expect because He loves us. The best gifts are usually the unexpected ones, aren’t they? Except that, His resources are infinite with an unlimited creativity. He delights to provide in ways we never would expect, so that we will revel in His abundant goodness.
6. ***God provides for us through grace, not through merit:*** God does not bless us because we are such deserving people. He loves us and blesses us because of His Son, Jesus. In Him, we have heavenly connections! Even when we were sinners, He died on the cross for us and provided a way for our salvation.

GO AHEAD...ASK!

When Joshua was plotting how to overthrow Jericho, a city whose walls were almost impregnable, God showed up and said, “Boy, get rid of all those calculations; we will do it my way. March around the city for seven days and shout, and the walls will fall down flat (***Joshua 6***). What a strategy! God did not say, “Now, Joshua, let’s roll out the bulldozers and tractors”; He had to get Joshua out of the box he was in, and everything went as God had said.

Do not ever place a limit on God! You limit Him when you think that the only way He can get something done is the way you think He will do it. He is too big to be tied down to man’s way of doing things. When He does His thing, He does not need to do it according to your plans. Trust Him, because He is God Almighty, and He is able to do “...exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worked in us” (***Ephesians 3:20***).

Imagine what you could do if:

You truly knew Him...

You truly believed that He is able – above anyone, anything else...

You aimed high enough...

You dared to ask...

You were connected to the right Power Source...

You made sure it is all about Him...

You submitted to the headship of Christ...

You realized the magnitude of the impact you are having on the next generation...

He has promised to give good things to those who ask (*Matt. 7:7-11*).



“You can ask God for anything. He will answer you. Be patient to wait and expect the answer.” — Lailah Gifty Akita

DAY 40

WE ARE AT WAR

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Ephesians 6:10-11

Every Christian is called to pray: it is our responsibility because God says so. Most of the time we do not pray because we do not value prayer as a privilege to talk to our Heavenly Father. Jesus' life priority was to talk to His Father. Talking to His Father all night (Luke 6:12), and sometimes alone (*Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12*) was more important than His social activity; even His physical appetite. He fasted for long periods, withdrawing from physical food to release spiritual power (*Luke 4:2; Matt. 6:18, 25.31; Heb. 7:25*). He even admitted that He could not do anything with His Father when He gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." (*John 5: 19*). Every major event and every minor decision in Jesus' life was shrouded with prayer. He is our best example when it comes to prayer and we ought to follow that. He did not pray because He had to but out of obedience to our Father. Now that we have been seeking God for the past 40 days, let us not take it as an excuse that we stored enough prayer to last until next year.

BECOME AN INTERCESSOR

It is a very great privilege to be allowed to pray for our fellow men. Prayer can cause God to relent. The fate of the world is in the hands of intercessors not the government, the politicians, or kings. We are the ones who can bring the changes just like Abraham and Daniel and others in the Old Testament (*see Gen. 18:17-30; Num. 14:11-23; 1 Sam. 7:8-13; 2 Kings 20:1- 11; Dan. 9:2,3*). Moses prayed on the behalf of his people to God so that He will turn His anger away. The Bible says, "*So the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people*" (*Exod. 32:11-14*). Being an intercessor is a sacred job because God trusts you with His secrets revealed during prayer and share them without having His permission. He told *Jeremiah* in chapter *33:3* "*Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and mighty which you do not know.*" The more you pray, the real His will becomes to you and you will see the miracles He will do in your life. Jesus said that "these signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (*Mark 16:17,18*). Embrace the things He wants to show you and do not be afraid to believe God for the miraculous.

WE ARE IN A WAR

In fact, the war we are in is as if no other war that any of us have ever known, heard about, or could even conceive. Its implications are further reaching and its casualties are more devastating than any conflict in the history of mankind. Strangely, though, most people walk around completely unaware that it is taking place. Most people do not realize they are a warrior. What about you?

A major difference between this war and other wars, beyond its sheer magnitude and scope, is that this war is fought in a place we have never seen.

Spiritual warfare is defined as *the cosmic conflict waged in the invisible, spiritual realm, which is simultaneously fleshed out in the context of the visible, physical realm*. To put it another way, you cannot see the root of the war. Nevertheless, you can certainly see—and feel—the effects.

In fact, there is a spiritual root behind every physical disturbance, setback, ailment, or issue we face. Too often, we restrict our battles to the physical realm. We battle the physical temptation to sin, the physical occurrence of relational drama, and the physical challenges at work or home, to name a few. However, if we restrict our focus to the physical realm, victory will only be temporary and shallow. It is a little like putting a Band-Aid on a wound when there is internal hemorrhaging.

If we really want to get in the fight, we need to engage a kind of spiritual sense that allows us to fight not just the effects of the war but also the root of the conflict. In order to do that, we have to understand more about the location of the battle.

As we see from today's passage, our battle is not against our neighbor, spouse, coworker, child, or even our own propensities or weaknesses in our flesh. People are simply a conduit for the spiritual battle taking place in another realm—the heavens. The “heavens” simply means in the spiritual realm. You are a warrior in a spiritual battle-taking place in the spiritual realm. To wage this warfare well, you must fight with spiritual weapons.



Prayer: An open invitation to call home anytime

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