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What's really important

What is important in your life? Your job? Paying your bills on time? Making sure that you can go out and hang out with your friends? Your family? Your home? Your car? Christ? I look around so many times and I see brothers and sisters all around me who have their priorities so far from where they should be I can't help but be saddened. As a son or daughter in Christ do you not know that we are called to put Christ above EVERYTHING? **He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (Matthew Chapter 10 verse 37 KJV).** As I look around people are so consumed by the worries of this life that they have lost their way, they have lost the hope that every man, woman, and child so should in Christ... Jesus Christ loved us more than anything, the God of creation left His throne and comfort in heaven... lived a humble sin free life, and died a cruel death on the cross. Jesus Christ did not die for our sins because He had to, God died on the cross because He wanted us to be with Him. His mercy and grace are so beautiful not because they simply set us free, He has called us to be more than slaves to temptation and sin, He has called us to be His very own, His sons, His daughters, and we must put God above all things. As you enter in to day 12 of the 30 day challenge I pray you would examine your priorities, is God number one on your list? Why not? Did He not cry out for you even on the cross? **Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do... (Luke Chapter 23 verse 34 KJV).**

As I sit here now I know that ever man and woman could examine their heart and lives and find things that have become more important than the Lord even if we are to shamed to admit it, but God knows... God knows our heart, He knows our purpose, He knows all things and we should treat Him as such. Repent of the short comings in your life, grow strong in faith and in trust of the Lord. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to be merciful and loving towards you but you must confess and treasure in your heart the forgiveness and freedom He has given you. Even the most faithful Christian can take a note from the Apostle Paul: **But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (1 Corinthians Chapter 9 verse 27 KJV)** – never get comfortable in your salvation. Cry out to the Lord without ceasing: **Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. (Exodus chapter 33 verse 13 KJV)**

Daily Devotional

by: Pastor Richard Webster (abcpastor@bellsouth.net)

Bologna Wrapper

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. (Proverbs 31 :10)

One of the jobs that my dad had was hauling pine stumps to the local plant. Most days he left the house by 4:00 or 4:30 in the morning to go to work. Every day before he got up, my mom got up to make him breakfast. When she woke him up, he had biscuits, eggs, and bacon waiting on the table. She would fix his lunch for him and have it ready when he left. During the summer, as a young teenager, I was able to go with him to work, and was able to enjoy the same benefits as their son. One of the things that my mom liked to do was on occasion take the red wrapper from the bologna and put it in the middle of the sandwich. We would look and look for the wrapper and just as soon as we didn't look, that would be the day she had put it on the sandwich. We would bite into it and pull it and the mayonnaise out with our teeth. We always laughed because it was her way of saying not only I got you, but also saying I love you.

What is the helpmate of the home? It is the equal partner of the man in the home that helps the home to function. A man and woman must work together. The helpmate helps to ensure that the home is a God centered home where everyone's needs are met. They help to ensure that the home is a place of love and happiness. While my dad was the one that went to work, my mom was the one who made sure he had the nourishment, and support to do the job. They were a team. Are you and your spouse on the same team? If not, ask God today to help you get on the same team.

Food for thought

by: Daniel Higginbotham (dhigginbotham@myemanuel.com)

As we have talked about over the past three days we have established the basic role of the husband, of the wife, and of the parents of children as we have discovered just the surface of God's plan for you and your family. As we have discussed the past three days the truths we are looking upon are not the "world's accepted truths" but the Biblical, eternal, God given truths that are above all things, that were, are, and will always be the ONLY way, truth, and life that we all desperately seek. We have discussed again and again that fighting against God's plan is one of the greatest sources of our pain and suffering, it is only when we accept God and His plan for our life that we begin to pray not against it but simply that "His will be done", this should come as no surprise... Jesus Christ Himself commanded us: **After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.** (Matthew Chapter 6 verse 9-10 KJV) - which is to say "your will be done Lord in my life as it is in heaven", His will is His word, His word is true, it is eternal, and it is sufficient for all of life's questions and needs.

As we have discussed the role of the man of the house, the woman of the house, and the man and woman in relation to their children we must also focus on the relationship between the man and woman. We already know that husbands are called to love their wives as Christ loved the church, we already know that women are called to submit to their husbands as he is the head of the home. We already know that when men are fulfilling the God given command that women will have no problem doing so as well. When both the husband and wife are doing as God has commanded then the children will follow as the Godly parents obey God's command to discipline and love their children, to bring them up in His ways, and to allow God to move freely and with power over the home. Today we are going to talk about the relationship between husband and wife, I know writing this even now that this is a hard issue and thus I will be straight forward as possible but I pray God would open your heart and soul to His truth.

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. (1 Corinthians Chapter 7 verse 3-6 KJV) – intimacy... it is a demonstration of your closeness to your spouse, it is the most physical way of demonstrating your love and relationship to your husband or wife. Countless marriages have been destroyed by temptation and destruction of affairs, pornographic addictions, unseemly obsessions, and unbiblical expectations. Let me be very clear here, husbands your body does not belong to you, it is your wife's. Wives your body does not belong to you, it is your husbands... what I am saying is simply what the Apostle Paul said not as a commandment but purely a strong suggestion, do not deny one another. Sex is not a weapon, intimacy is not be denied. Sex is not simply for procreation, God has created us as couples to share our bodies with OUR SPOUSE. Are you cheating on your spouse? Are you sure?

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew Chapter 5 verse 28 KJV) – stop justifying it. Stop trying to explain it away. Face it. The truth is that the ONLY person we are to experience a sexual relationship with is our spouse, we are to do so out of our love and our understanding that we all have needs we must fulfill and we must do it in a Christ honoring, loving, wonderful way as we show our emotional, spiritual love through our physical abilities. **Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.** - men and women are carnal creatures, our carnal needs are genuine physical needs. Those who are withholding intimacy from their spouse, those who are using it as a weapon, those who continue to put themselves before their spouse... why? Why deny your spouse knowing full well their desperate desire to have a healthy need for YOU. When a spouse longs for their spouse and longs to express love in the most intimate way how could you knowingly deny your spouse?

“Its my body” again and again I see the way the world's way has worked out. 50% of marriages in America end in divorce... porn addicts hide in their basements so helpless with a powerful addiction that is beyond your understanding until you find yourself there. Men and women lusting after all sorts of unseemly and sinful things... we have forgotten that our bodies are not ours... our bodies are our spouses, and we are called not to deny them but to embrace them. Talk about it! Share your expectations and problems with your spouse! Be honest! Face it together! I want you to understand something, **it is NEVER OK** to force your spouse to do anything. I have heard it said that a man cannot rape his wife for it is her duty, I say yes he can. A man and woman are called, not demanded to give their affections to their spouse. We do it out of our command to love each other and submit to each other as we become one flesh because we know God's plan is better than our plan. Please know that if your wife denies you, if your husband denies you, this is no just cause for divorce, this is no just cause for an affair, this is no just cause for fornication and immorality. Do you not know that it is written: **Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind (1 Corinthians Chapter 6 verse 9 KJV).**

I leave you with this, on day 12 of the 30 day challenge ponder and ask yourself: am I giving all I have to give? Am I doing my very best? Am I doing everything I can? I promise you as I know from experience, when you stop forcing the issue, when you pray, sacrifice your happiness for that of your spouse, love your spouse as Christ loved the church, submit to your spouse, and become willing to give up everything for them... they will willingly give up everything for you! Lead by example, show your love through actions, never forgetting that actions speak louder than words. It is not your “right” as I once thought it was to have sex with your spouse, but something that is given out of love. You must do all that you can do to grow close to your spouse, do everything you can possibly do to be open, honest, and Biblical about your relationship. Trust God's way, His way is so much better and leads to eternal life and joy, the path to destruction is easier but leads to destruction... God's way is the right way. Husband give everything for your wife, love her as Christ loved the church, wife give everything for your husband, love Him as Christ loved the church. Submit one to another knowing the scripture is clear: **Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. (1 Corinthians Chapter 7 verse 2 KJV).**

Meet the family

We will soon be hearing from the second family in the “meet the family” section and I pray that you would ponder in your heart God's vision for your own family. Think to yourself today, what has God done in my life? What has He done in the lives of my family? Praise Him and thank Him for every blessing and every second that He has always been by your side! Amen.

Prayer Suggestions

Today before you pray I would like you to understand the beautiful promise the Lord gives us about our prayer: **Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Matthew Chapter 7 verse 7-8 KJV)** – today God is giving you the opportunity to demonstrate His power and grace... while you take it? Bow your head, humble yourself before Him, open your heart and your mouth in prayer!

Today pray for:

- That God would give you victory over sexual immorality and free you from any ungodly vice
- That God would convict your heart of any darkness and drive it away with the Holy Spirit
- That God would heal your intimate life with your spouse and bless you to experience true love and joy with your spouse
- That God would bring you closer through honesty and love with your spouse and touch your marriage
- That God would remind you that His way is the right way and lead you down the straight and narrow

About

The My Emanuel 30 day challenge came about through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and we pray that God would be glorified and praised as a direct result of this program. It is the deepest desire of all those involved with this program that the healing grace of Jesus Christ would be abundantly felt throughout the families with a member participating in the challenge. The program is a direct result of the power of the Lord and a demonstration of His wisdom and foresight in bringing both the paths of Pastor Richard Webster, myself, and all those who have helped with the program together in a way to use us and our individual talents to profess the wonderful Good News of His salvation and wonderful grace, mercy, and abundant love.

Throughout our lives we have seen and directly felt the chaos and tragedy caused in the destruction of divorce. In interacting with brothers and sisters from all walks of life we have seen again and again the damage caused by the wedge the enemy drives in between a man and wife. It has been our greatest displeasure to see the tragedy, pain, suffering, and grief caused by the life altering decision in which so many couples make out of anger only to realize later that not only was it not what they wanted but so far from what they needed they couldn't even remember what they were separating for. It is our desire for all couples to understand the truth, God desires marriage to be a life long commitment and made us for this exact purpose: **Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Genesis Chapter 2 verse 24 KJV)** – to become one flesh as we will examine later on through the program is a physical alteration that to reverse would be a mutilation and a physical destruction of ones own flesh and is the furthest thing from God's desire for any family. It is our dearest hope that God will reveal His glory and that Jesus Christ will pour out His grace upon all those who participate in this program regardless of the purpose. The truth is that Jesus Christ is not “a hope” He is the ONLY HOPE and the only way for families to make it through the stress and destruction of today's society is through keeping Him always at the center.

Pastor Richard Webster is the Pastor of Adairsville Baptist Church in Adairsville, Georgia. Brother Richard has been a powerful influence in my own walk with the Lord and I pray that as God has used this brother for His glory and has shared much wisdom to me through him that you would pay special attention to the message God has blessed this brother to share. Pastor Webster is both a husband, a father, a brother, a son, a friend, and a pastor who is determined to serve the Lord and bring glory and honor to our Savior. I pray that you would understand that this brother has seen first hand the destruction of divorce, the pain and suffering that comes at the hands of the evil of the enemy as satan tries to relentlessly destroy families. Know that the daily devotionals are the ultimate inspiration of Jesus Christ and may the Lord be seen through every word.

It feels strange even now trying to write about myself, my name is Daniel Higginbotham and simply put I am a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is my desire and hope that the Lord God Jehovah would make His presence known and that you would feel the Holy Spirit interacting and interceding in your life. I thank God for this opportunity and I will pray for you and your family over this next 30 days that God would reveal the beautiful truth to you as He has me: **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John Chapter 8 verse 36 KJV).**