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Just one of those days...

There are days in all of our lives when we can barely find the strength to drag ourselves to bed much less think about anything else. There will be days when the weight will bear so heavy on our shoulders that it is by God's grace and mercy alone that we are not crushed. There will be times in which we can't see hope or a way out of or through a situation. Regardless of how hopeless our circumstances may seem we must remember that we serve a God who gives and who takes away: **And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. (Job Chapter 1 verse 21 KJV)** – it is these days that our faith is refined, that our strength is evident in Jesus Christ for even when the weight of the world is falling down on us when must humbly bow before our Master Jehovah and trust that His understanding is much greater than ours. We must trust in Him and know that we will face the darkness and that we must be determined that even in darkness and pain: we will not stop! We will not give up!

Once a pastor described in a sermon that each day we face the “crucible of Christ” in which God uses this life and all the pain and suffering to refine our faith. In a crucible very precious metal like gold and silver is separated from the ore that is mined, the heat is turned up over and over again as the metal begins to boil it separates itself from the ore, the ore floats to the top and is scraped away, you can always tell when the separation process is complete because you can see your reflection! We are marked and sealed by the Holy Spirit and this life is our crucible, every day the heat is turned up over and over again as God exposes the darkness in our lives, we must allow the Holy Spirit to do a full work with-in us and drive the darkness away. Its hard, I know its hard, we fail, but we must get back up and trust the Lord for His way is better than our way. We must be faithful as Job and trust that God is in control and has a purpose in all things. We must trust in the scripture: **We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. (2 Corinthians Chapter 4 verse 8-10 KJV)** – can you feel the heat? Rejoice! Rejoice when the devil tempts you, rejoice when the crucible becomes fearfully hot and trust that as God has demonstrated again and again He will face the fire with us and will bring us through! Amen.

Daily Devotional

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

Tearing Down Walls

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalms 51:10)

In 1961, the East German government, under communist rule, erected a wall through Berlin that physically separated East Germany from West Germany. The Berlin Wall became a symbol of oppressive and divisive government, not only to the East Germans it contained, but to the rest of the world as well. And it remained such a symbol for twenty-eight years until November 9, 1989, when the wall was finally torn down. On that day, the decades-long symbolism of oppression was immediately and dramatically transformed into one of peace, unification, democracy and hope.

In our marriages we build many walls. Someone says something hurtful; we build a wall. Someone forgets something important; we build a wall. Every time our spouses do something to us and we leave it unresolved; we build a wall. We feel like we have to have these walls to protect ourselves from being hurt. The problem is that a marriage is supposed to be one flesh. It is impossible to be one flesh with walls built in our lives. As long as walls remain, a marriage is destined for destruction. How do we remove the walls in our lives? We start with prayer. We pray that God would create in us a clean heart without walls. We find a way to communicate the hurt to our spouses. We may have to have outside mediation for this to happen. What walls has God put on your heart to remove today?

Food for thought

by: Daniel Higginbotham (dhigginbotham@myemanuel.com)

As we enter in to day 20 of the 30 day challenge I pray that you would remember: the problems and bad habits in our marriage and in our walk with the Lord were not built in one day, they will not be FULLY changed in 30 days! As we march ever closer to the end of this program it is my sincere desire that God has showed up and showed out in your marriage and made His wonderful presence known. As we have talked about trust and forgiveness I have been humbled knowing that in my life I fall far short of God's commands and I know that if my wife were talking to you she would be saying "amen!". It is critical that we be honest with our selves even when no one else will be. It is vital that as men and women we realize the truth: **As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one (Romans Chapter 3 verse 10 KJV)** – why in the world am I talking about taking a closer look at our self? Change happens from the inside out, becoming one flesh is a constant war that we face each day, we must remember that we can only fulfill the commands of God when we are honest with our self, our spouse, and all those we love!

As we have remembered we must love each other as Christ loved the church, we must submit ourselves one to another understanding our bodies are not ours but our spouse. We must love our families above all except for Christ, we must provide for them, protect them, and be willing to sacrifice for them. The devil drives a wedge in between us and makes the process of becoming one flesh much harder than it needs to be. The constant struggle and battle against the devil can leave us feeling weary, hurt, exhausted, and like we will never have any rest. Have you ever wondered why so many men and women have affairs? It is because in their short sightedness that they listen to that voice that says "he doesn't love you" or "she doesn't care about anyone but herself" and day after day instead of being honest with our self about how we feel and honest with our spouse about how we feel... we hide it! Or as a spouse when our spouse tells us something that is important to them... its not important to us... so its not important! Again and again I see in my own marriage how wonderful marriage can be when my wife and I obey God, trust God, and seek God. Again and again I see how frustrating and hopeless my marriage can seem when I can't see past my pain and my wife can't see past hers...

As you enter day 20 of the 30 day challenge I ask you to ponder this question: are you being honest with yourself? I must admit that in my own life I can't always answer that question with a clear yes or no... thus I know that God calls me to continue to work tirelessly to ensure that I can say without doubt to the glory of Christ that I am fulfilling my God given command as a husband and father. **Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians Chapter 10 verse 31 KJV)** – my brothers and my sisters I know that this fight can be tireless, I know that as we struggle against the world, against our flesh, against the temptation, against satan, and struggle to work and fulfill all your commitments but we must not forget that the prize is worth the struggle! What is the struggle? Eternal life found by grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ! **And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Galatians Chapter 6 verse 9 KJV)** – are you tired? Are you still searching for the peace and strength that Christ has promised? Don't give up, don't stop, keep inching forward constantly fighting against the enemy and all the voices that say "give up".

As you enter this day I call for you to put away all the fruits of the flesh: **Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians Chapter 5 verse 19-21 KJV)** – let us declare war against our flesh, let us declare war against the enemy, let us trust in Jesus Christ, let us trust in the Holy Spirit, let us be renewed by the Spirit of truth and wisdom, let us seek to demonstrate His fruits in all of our life: **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Galatians Chapter 5 verse 22-25 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:

- **God to refresh your spirit and give you strength to continue this fight**
- **God to give you victory against the enemy and the struggle to give up and give in**
- **God to continue to give you peace and love in your marriage and in your home**
- **God to continue to bless your home with the Holy Spirit, His wonderful Spirit of truth, wisdom, peace, and love**
- **God to drive the darkness away and continue to purify and edify your faith**

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).**