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## You are free!



Over the past three weeks we have looked at “the foundation”, the “roles and responsibility of the family”, and “trust and forgiveness”, today we enter the fourth and final week of the 30 day challenge. Over the next 7 days we will talk about the most important part of this program and indeed the most important part of life: keeping Christ at the center. Jesus Christ is the anchor that keeps us grounded, He is the Lord who protects us, loves us, blesses us, and if we would only trust in Him, if we would only love and obey Him, if we would only keep Him above everything we do as our first priority our lives would be changed eternally! Jesus Christ must be everything, He must be in every thought, He must be in every action, He must be in every word and we must shine the light we have been blessed with everyday, with no fear, and without ceasing for we have truly been blessed! **If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John Chapter 8 verse 36 KJV)** – in Christ we have something truly amazing, something so powerful that it shatters the walls built up around sin, it destroys darkness, and it gives hope to those who had none: freedom.

As you begin this last week I hope that you understand this entire program has been dedicated to one purpose: drawing you closer to Christ and opening your heart and soul to His plan for you, your marriage, your family, and the lives of everyone you love. This program is not some new profound truth but the ancient truths God has blessed us with are profound, they are eternal, they are unending, and the scripture is always fully sufficient! Who is Jesus Christ to you? Is He King? Is He Lord? Is He friend? Is He your first love? Is He your most important relationship? Is He the strong hand that leads you? I pray today that Christ would be all that and more. Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God came to do what we could not: live a perfect life. He lived a perfect life, sin free, fully in obedience with God's law, He died a perfect death after taking our beating, our torture, our humiliation and shame, He drank in our sin, after three days in the belly of the earth taking the Gospel to the lost souls before Him, Jesus Christ rose from the dead by the power of the Almighty Father who had accepted His sacrifice! O' Halleluiah our Father accepted the final sacrifice as atonement and forgiveness for our sins and we have been made free by our personal relationship and His grace! **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John Chapter 3 verse 16 KJV)** – as we enter day 23 of the 30 day challenge is Jesus Christ at the center of everything you do? What do you need to do to make Him your first priority?

## Daily Devotional

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

### Trust

***Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. (Jeremiah 17:7)***

Have you ever watched a kid jump from a high area into someone's arms? It takes a blind leap of faith. Have you ever stopped long enough to consider what the evaluation process must have been for them? They examine their surroundings. How high am I? What will happen to me if I fall? How far do I need to jump? Who is going to catch me? Can I trust them? If the answer to the last question is answered with a yes, then the child takes off in a blind leap of faith into the arms of the awaiting person.

A marriage must be built on trust. Trust is a belief that the person that you are married to is going to do what he/she is supposed to do. The opposite of trust is jealousy, and jealousy will destroy a marriage. I am not saying that you turn a blind eye to the surroundings. The kid had to determine how high he/she was before he/she could jump. So how do we build a relationship of trust? We must build a relationship with our spouses. We should treat them so good that they don't want to break our trust. We must try to create environments of trust. A compromising position can not only make us fall but destroy the trust relationship in our homes. What do we need to do today to create an environment of trust?

## Food for thought

by: Daniel Higginbotham ([dhigginbotham@myemanuel.com](mailto:dhigginbotham@myemanuel.com))

Who is Jesus Christ in your life? For many centuries since Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day I know that many men and women have spent their entire lives searching for the answer to that question. Who should Jesus Christ be in your life? In order to know the answer to that question you must first think about what Jesus did for you... Jesus the only begotten Son of God left His throne in heaven, in His kingdom in which He was above all things and in command of all things, the comfort and beauty of heaven must be breath taking, yet the only begotten left His throne in heaven to be born by a virgin, Mary. After leaving His throne in comfort and joy in heaven Jesus Christ lived a life struggling the same struggles, fight the same fight, facing the same temptation that we all face everyday. One must wonder how desperate God must love us to have left His throne in glory to come and face the harsh reality of this world and yet not only did He come and face this world and its temptations, at the age of 30 Jesus Christ begun His earthly ministry to bring all of mankind to know Him. After just 3 short years on earth Jesus Christ had healed countless men and women, He had demonstrated over and over and over again that He was truly the promised Messiah, and after coming in to a world He did not have to... He was accused, tortured, slapped, kicked, punched, spit on, whipped relentlessly, shamed, marched through the streets as a common thief or murder, and crucified to die in our place. He drank in the darkness and sin of this world... He spent three days in the belly of the earth... He rose again... why? Love.

**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John Chapter 3 verse 16 KJV)** – I wonder after you begin to try and understand what Jesus Christ did... does your answer about who He is in your life change? Should it? What kind of love must it have taken for not only God to send His only begotten Son in to the world knowing full well the pain and death He would endure, but also our Lord Jesus could have quickly protected Himself: **Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? (Matthew Chapter 26 verse 53 KJV)** – what love is this? That our God would leave His throne, die our death, eat our sin, and give us a way back to Him... what a wonderfully amazing thing that Jesus Christ has done for us! Truly His grace and His love is so amazing, it is greater than any love I know, it is truer than any truth I know, He put me above everything... He put you above everything... and so as we enter day 23 of the 30 day challenge I pray you would begin to put Christ where He belongs: high and lifted up, exalted, first, 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)** – it is only after you've understood what Jesus really did for you that you can accept this verse of scripture. Jesus makes very clear where He must come in our list of importance: first. His love for us was greater than the love of us His own life. Jesus did not have to die for us, He did it because of His great love, His mercy, His grace, and His wonderful hope that you would be reading through this message today and understand He is waiting for you. After thinking of the suffering and pain He endured because of you, because of me, because of every man, woman, and child, knowing He died to give us the ONLY way back to Him could

you imagine putting anything before Him?

How do you keep Christ at the center? Daily you celebrate and remember the gift of salvation and grace He has given for you! **Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (Habakkuk Chapter 3 verse 18 KJV)** – you keep Christ at the center by every morning when you wake up, praise the Lord for keeping you safe through the night! When you eat breakfast, praise the Lord for giving you food! When you put on your clothes, when you get ready for the day, in all things understand you are not deserving. We are deserving of one thing: **For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans Chapter 6 verse 23 KJV)** – we deserve death and yet Christ has given us freedom. We deserve the desolate hell fire and damnation that has been created for the devil and his demons, and yet we are given countless blessings and mercy. We deserve to suffer endlessly for the sinful lives we live, and yet we are given grace and eternal life! You keep Christ at the center by remembering and humbly accepting daily the gift and freedom He has given you!

Today as you start day 23 of the 30 day challenge I pray you would understand: Jesus Christ is **YOUR ONLY HOPE!** So many people scratch the surface of their relationship with Christ but it is only when we humbly accept who we are and what we deserve compared to what God has given us that we will put Him at the center of our lives and above everything! As you start this day I pray you would ponder the question once again: is Christ at the center of your life? What do you need to do to make it that way?

## Meet the family

Over the next 7 days we will be looking at God's wonderful grace and mercy as He has demonstrated in my life and my marriage and I pray that as God has blessed me to share with you the powerful works He has done in my life you would understand the only reason I am here now proclaiming the truth with you is because of His love and mercy. God's grace has saved me from countless darkness and evil and I pray you would know and accept the truth as God has demonstrated in my life: **Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians Chapter 5 verse 17 KJV).**

In September of 2011 God forever changed my life and saved me from the darkness and evil that had filled my life. Its funny looking back now, for 25 years I thought I was a Christian and if you ever asked me I would have told you "yeah, I believe in Jesus" but sitting here now I know that had God chosen to take my life before that faithful night I would have burned in the pits of hell in separation from God. Being "saved" is something that once you've experienced the hand of Jesus Christ you truly know that you have become His and everyday since even through darkness and hardship I know that I am His. The 25 years before I met Christ I never thought I was a bad guy, I never really felt like I did anything "sinful" but looking back now I know that the devil had hardened my heart because I was the worse of the worst and I can honestly say I have done things in my life that no one but Jesus Christ could forgive. It took total desperation and brokenness for me to finally "get it" and it was by God's grace and mercy alone that I am able to say praise the Lord I am saved!

Growing up my mom and dad where in and out of church and at a very early age I begun to learn to bad habits that would plague me in my early relationship with the Lord. As early as I can remember I used to pray at night "thank you Father for not abandoning me even when my father has" which was to say, thank you God for not leaving me when my dad abandoned me. I really had no idea what I was saying then but 10 years or more after I started praying that prayer every night God would demonstrate just how true He is to His word. Let me tell you right now that we serve a God who is true and wonderful. Those who hate God simply don't understand His great compassion and love for us. Those who don't accept Jesus Christ simply don't understand who we are before a perfect and holy Lord and the gift that Christ has really given us. Many people as I once did call themselves Christians but being His servant, being saved, being humble in knowing that He has chosen us since before creation is something totally different than going to church. I can say now that looking back I think I knew on the surface who God was, I knew that Jesus was His Son and though I had never experienced His power and His presence I can say I knew He existed. Knowing He exist and having a personal relationship are two totally different things.

As God has demonstrated over the past year knowing Him and having a personal relationship with Him are a HUGE difference, a eternal difference, and over the next 7 days I pray God would bless me to share my detailed testimony about how He not only saved my marriage, my relationship with my wife and son, but also how He saved my life, again and again, physically bringing me through the darkness of life! 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 remind you how important it is to keep Him at the center of everything you do**
- **God to reveal His wonderful grace and mercy in your life**
- **God to continue healing your heart and bringing you and your spouse closer to together**
- **God to show you the importance of keeping a daily relationship with Him through prayer and study**
- **God to reveal just the begging of what Jesus Christ really did on the cross at Calvary for you and for me**

## 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).**