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In this storm

In this life it is so easy for us to get discouraged and angry at the Lord as we begin to blame Him for everything that is wrong and painful in our lives... we must fight against the feeling to do this and understand that it has never been God's desire that we suffer, it has never been the Lord's wish for anything but the very best in our lives, it is when we find ourselves walking by our own plan and going against God's plan and desires that we find ourselves alone and hurting. Should this be a profound saying? Does not the scripture say: **For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. (Jeremiah Chapter 29 verse 11 KJV)** – the truth is that the reason for the pain and suffering in life is because of our sin and our fallen state, not because of God. It is when we fight against the Lord and when we refuse to understand, accept, and embrace His sovereignty we find ourselves in desperate pain and hardship. Who can stand against God? No one. So why try? Let us instead embrace His love and guidance, let us seek it, let us desperately desire to please our Father and demonstrate our love, as the scripture says: **He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (John Chapter 14 verse 21 KJV).**

Do you love Jesus Christ? Of course you do, how could you not? How could you not desperately love the Lord who died a horrific death that you could live free and clear? How could you not thank Him everyday for the freedom and victory that you have because of His work, because of His grace and mercy? The scripture is very clear: **If ye love me, keep my commandments. (John Chapter 14 verse 15 KJV)** – at the end of the day we must never forget that actions speak louder than words, that talking the talk is not enough... we must walk the walk without ceasing, we must demonstrate our love for Christ through the pain, through the suffering, and even when we find ourselves desperately crying out trying to understand the path we find our self on we must remember the beautiful words of Job: **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).** As you enter day 27 of the 30 day challenge we must remember to praise the Lord, in good times and bad, for He is always good, He is always our hope, He is always our strength, and He will never leave nor forsake us! Amen.

Daily Devotional

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

A Mind to Work

So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work. (Nehemiah 4:6)

I grew up with a dad who liked to use one-liners to get his point across. He believed in teaching a good work ethic. He would say things like, “An honest day’s pay deserves an honest day’s work” or “Anything worth doing is worth doing right.” While I know that those are not original quotes, to me they might as well have been. When I got my first job, I carried his work ethic with me. When other people on the job were doing just enough to get by, I always tried to go above and beyond what was expected. It was just as if I was working for my dad. What he had done was instilled in me a “Mind to Work.”

A marriage takes more work than any job. Some people have the idea that when they get home, that their job is over. The reality is that their real work has just begun. We go to our other jobs to help us provide for our family, and we should do them faithfully. We need to ask ourselves, “What good does it do us to be successful in the world and a failure in our home?” For us to be successful, we are going to have to have a “Mind to Work.” Ask God to help you prepare your mind to do the work that needs to be done in your home.

Food for thought

by: Daniel Higginbotham (dhigginbotham@myemanuel.com)

What is the most important thing in your life? When you close your eyes and think about it... what is the one thing you can't live without? What is the one thing that daily you seek and desire to have? What is the one thing that you put above all others? As you enter day 27 of the 30 day challenge I pray you would examine your heart and truly understand, that one thing must be our relationship with Jesus Christ. Putting Christ at the center and making Him the first priority in our lives is not easy but is eternally rewarding. Everyday we must make a conscious choice to follow the Lord with all of our heart, all of our strength, and all of our mind, for this is the first and greatest commandment: **And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.** (Mark Chapter 12 verse 30 KJV).

Where is God in your list of things to do? If you thought about putting God first in your life, if you thought of the things someone who obeys the Lord and puts Him above all things and loves Him above all things what kind of relationship do you think they might have? Would they pray? Without ceasing. Would they seek to know Him more? Everyday. Would they share the love with those around them? All the time. Would they obey His commands? To the very best of our ability. We are called by Christ to give Him His proper place and it is so sad to look around and see the lost and dying world knowing the pain and suffering they feel is not by the result of God but by their own hands and sin... **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) – we must pray for strength and the ability to put Christ above all things and before all people. I love my wife, I love my son, and because I love them I know the difficult task this may be in our lives but all the same I understand I cannot love them the way God has intended until I love Him the way He deserves...

To be a follower of Christ I am called to “pick up my cross and follow the Lord”, each day I understand more and more what the calling truly means. It means fighting the war against temptation and the fruits of the flesh, it means living my life for Him allowing Him to manifest His strength and perfection through my weakness. It means being obedient to His call: **And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.** (Matthew Chapter 10 verse 38 KJV) – some think that serving Christ is easy and to those I would say you may need to examine your relationship, serving Christ is the hardest thing I have ever done because I desperately want to make my Abba, my Father in heaven proud, I want to show Him my love and my faith through my obedience and walking by faith not by sight... the devil wars against me daily and I rejoice in this war because I know who wins. If the devil is not in your face, if the devil is not trying to destroy you you may need to look to your left and right because chances are he is walking by your side. When you serve the Lord God men and women will hate you, the world will try to consume you, the devil will try to destroy you... it is by His grace and mercy alone that we are protected. **Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.** (1 Peter Chapter 5 verse 8-9 KJV).

Today as you enter day 27 of the 30 day challenge I pray that God would pour out His mercy and grace upon you and your family. I know its hard brothers, sisters I can feel your pain, I know this fight is a war and this war seems like it will never end. I promise you that regardless of the pain of this life that the eternal peace we will experience in the arms of our Lord Jesus Christ is greater than anything we could suffer. Rejoice in your grace, draw close to the Lord and trust in Him to fulfill His word: **Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.** (James Chapter 4 verse 8-10 KJV).

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).**

Its so wonderful to know that God is using me for His kingdom and knowing that God truly uses the weak to lead the strong, He uses the dumb to confound the wise, He uses those who seem so incapable and unlikely to work for His kingdom and looking back to when God delivered me and saved me in September of 2011 I know He did so with a purpose. When God saved me one of the very first things that happened is my brother Timothy and I were blessed to be of one accord and with God's wisdom and grace we started the My Emanuel website. When we first started the website and facebook page I never imagined that God would use me to give others advice about anything... God has demonstrated over and over to me that all it takes to work for His kingdom is a willing heart, an open mind and the faith to take that first step. Over the past year My Emanuel has been blessed to grow in to a light for the Lord Jesus Christ and it has continued to be our greatest desire for Him to be glorified and known.

If you had asked me before September of 2011 what I would be doing in the year 2012 I never would have guessed it would be working for the Lord's kingdom. I never guessed that God would have blessed me to start seminary and to develop a deep, intimate relationship with Him in which He would begin to reveal His power and grace to me. I never thought that God would have mercy and bless me to teach a Sunday school class at church, I never imagined that God could change my life so totally and fully... and yet here I am typing this message now! Can you begin to understand that God is capable of anything? I used to put human limits on His power because I didn't understand He created all things, how could I ever limit the Lord who spoke the universe into existence? I can't. No one can.

Over the past year I have endured many hardships and have found myself on several occasions so tired from the fight that I just want to give up and yet His grace is abundant in every situation He delivers me from the hands of my enemy, He gives me strength to continue to fight the good fight, He gives me grace and mercy that I cannot begin to understand and that I am so far from deserving that His love is something my mind cannot fully comprehend. The Lord loves you, you are His creation... He loves you so much that He knew you before He created you... He knew you before He created the universe... He smiled at the day you might call on His name and come to trust Him, Jesus Christ truly is the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning and the end. He is willing and capable of pouring out His great mercy and love in your life, the only question that still remains is... are you ready? "God can't forgive me, you don't know what I've done", you don't know what I've done... my God doesn't say He wont forgive the truly awful sinful mistakes... He said "**my grace is sufficient for thee**". Won't you turn to Him? Won't you trust in Him? Won't you find the freedom you so desperately seek? In the name of Jesus Christ you are saved... its your turn.

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 continue to pour out His grace and mercy on your life, that He would give you strength to draw close to Him**
- **God to give you strength to overcome any sinful vices or habits in your life that you may fully serve Him**
- **God to continue healing in your marriage and in your heart, giving you strength to forgive and forget**
- **God to give you wisdom and understanding as you seek to know Him more**
- **God to pour out His power in your life and give you victory in the name of Jesus Christ**

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).**