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I'll make time

Today before we left for church my wife asked me “will you unload the dishwasher before you go, you know I hate to do that” it was a about 2 hours before we had to go and I told her I would... about 5 minutes before we needed to walk out the door to go to church I realized I had forgot so I started to unload it, “we don't have time for that” she said as she started down stairs, I told her “I'll make time”... I made an extra five minutes to do this to make my wife happy and thinking about it right now I know that I have often refused to afford the Lord that same time. “I don't have time to pray” or “I'll do that later” instead of making time we tend to make excuses, its hard sometimes to understand that God is our Father in heaven and just like we want to have a wonderful relationship with our earthly parents we must desire to make the time each day to spend with the Lord in prayer and in study. Why? **And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (Jeremiah Chapter 29 verse 13 KJV)** – it is important that we understand that our relationship with the Lord requires that we put in effort, in truth it needs the most effort of anything we do because the fruit of our relationship with the Lord is greater than any. Have you “made time” for the Lord lately? As we enter day 28 of the 30 day challenge is it time to start putting Him first?

As we draw close to the end of the program it is my deepest hope that you would understand our purpose over the last 30 days is not just to give you advice on your family, on your marriage, and on your life but also to introduce you to the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE and refresh your relationship with the Lord through prayer and Bible study. We will fail you, you will fail yourself, if you depend on a man or a woman for happiness you will fail in all things, the only infalliable, unshakable, un mistakeable joy in our hearts is the Lord God of our salvation. To seek Him is to pray, to seek Him is to study the Word, to seek Him is to talk by faith and to understand that even through the storm we must praise Him, honor Him, and thank Him in all things. **Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments. (Habakkuk Chapter 3 verse 17-19 KJV)** – as we enter day 28 of the 30 day challenge let us strive to worship and praise the Lord even in the heart of the storm, ensuring we MAKE TIME each and every day to do so!

Daily Devotional

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

An Eye to Watch

Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. (Nehemiah 4:9)

Several years ago I had a church member whose house was broken into. To this family it was a devastating feeling of knowing that someone was able to get inside what should be the most secure place for a family. After their break-in, they began to take drastic measures to ensure that it wouldn't happen again. They installed a complete security system with monitors and alarms. They fenced in their yard and put a guard dog inside the fence. They asked me to come by and pray that God would help protect their house from intruders. If there was something they could do to protect their house, they were willing to do it. They had an "Eye to Watch."

Satan is doing everything he can to destroy your home. He doesn't care how he destroys it. He just wants it destroyed. Unfortunately most people are not looking for Satan to attack their home, and they wait until it is too late. We need to set an "Eye to Watch." We need to look for anyway that he can get in and do all we can to prevent it. Don't turn a blind eye. Ask God to show you what you can do to help keep Satan out of your home today.

Food for thought

by: Daniel Higginbotham (dhigginbotham@myemanuel.com)

I've seen it again and again... a man or woman tries to fill themselves with alcohol or drugs, or sexual immorality, or all kinds of evil and sinful things desperately seeking to feel "whole" and so day after day they attempt to satisfy the need to feel loved and complete only to fall short again and again. People tend to misunderstand our relationship with God, we were created to worship Him, to fellowship with Him, to love Him, to walk with Him, and to know Him. I hear people say "I'm searching for something and I just don't know what it is" and days go by, days turn to weeks, weeks turn to years, years turn to a lifetime searching desperately for that thing to give them peace. It is sad that some people truly go a lifetime searching for what has been put in front of us again and again in the last 28 days: Jesus Christ. That empty place in their heart? The dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. That peace that they seek? The peace that Jesus Christ freely gives: **Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.** (Matthew Chapter 11 verse 28-30 KJV) – some people tend to say they know the truth, they say they are a Christian and yet they desperately seek to do things by their own strength and power...

Life has been created in a way that we can do things on our own but again and again we will find failure and we will discover the hollow achievements of our live mean nothing in comparison to the freely given peace and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we work to put Christ at the center of our lives understanding He is the bond that holds it all together we must be ready to admit the truth: we can't do it alone. Not only must we admit that we can't do it alone we must understand that we can only do it by His strength! **Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.** (1 Peter Chapter 5 verse 6-7 KJV) – its sad to see a person who thinks "the world is wrong, I am right", the graves are full of lonely old men and women who died thinking they were right, that they didn't need anything or anyone, and hell is full of those who thought they were good enough on their own. Jesus Christ has made it clear: **Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.** (John Chapter 14 verse 6 KJV) – notice that Jesus Christ doesn't say "if you are a really good person and you do a lot for people then your OK, its just the bad guys that need me", He says "you will not enter in to eternal life and the presence of the Father but by me".

As we enter day 28 of the 30 day challenge I am curious: have you been trying to get to heaven another way? By the works of your hands? Our works are like dirty rags before the King. By being a nice guy? There is no one righteous, no not one. By helping those who need help? Jesus Christ is the only hope and no one comes to the truth and peace but by Him. By talking about Jesus and sharing the Gospel? You must have a personal relationship with the Lord, you must accept Him, confess Him, obey Him, and love Him. The scripture tells us: **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) – we must love the Lord enough to desperately seek to obey Him and serve Him in a way that glorifies Him and makes Him known but we MUST

understand we are not justified by our works, we are justified freely by His grace. **For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans Chapter 3 verse 23-24 KJV).**

You can't do it alone... I can't do it alone... no one, NO ONE can enter in but by the blood and redemption of sins by Jesus Christ. You have a choice to make, will you put Christ at the center of your life? Will you put Christ above all things? Will you love Him and obey Him? Or will you keep doing what you've been doing? That thing that finds you here... "Daniel I thought this was a marriage counseling program" or "I thought this was a program to give hope" it surely is. It is a program designed to give you the truth, Jesus Christ is the ONLY hope! Jesus Christ is a blessed and wonderful hope! Jesus Christ is more wonderful and His blessings, mercy, and grace have totally and forever transformed my life, my marriage, my relationships, my outlook on life, and I now have a eternal joy that no man can take away. As you enter day 28 of the 30 day challenge I pray you would prayerfully seek the truth: do I live my life for Christ? Have I given my life to Christ? Then put your burdens where they belong... **Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. (1 Peter Chapter 5 verse 7 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).**

I have said many times over the past few days that "Jesus Christ is not a magic fix all pill" and I hope as you read those words you understood the truth: in time through faith and trust Jesus Christ does make all things new, yet we must be ready to surrender it to the Lord, we must be ready to make war with our flesh and sinful desires, we must be ready to commit it and suffer as the Lord's plan is the best plan for our lives. After I gave my life to Christ in September of 2011 things didn't get easier and even in my marriage things only got harder. After I gave my life to Christ I had to make one hard decision after another as I struggled to put Christ in His proper place. Its hard when you go years without knowing Christ then understanding how far you have fallen from who you thought you were. When we begin to put Christ where He deserves others in our lives may feel replaced or unimportant. I love my wife and it was one of the hardest things I ever had to do to refuse to give in to her demands knowing that it would dishonor my Lord...

After I had been born again a few months God led me to make a decision in which my wife and I had a harsh conflict and after many hurt feelings and many hurtful words my wife and I almost found ourselves in another situation where a divorce was likely. Unlike before I was not willing or ready for a divorce to take place and I was not going to be a willing participant. I had made up my mind that I would not dishonor the Lord and that no matter what I would not make it easy for a divorce to happen. After a few weeks of fighting and trying to help my wife to understand the change in my life was genuine, it was total, and it was complete. I was not going back to who I was, this was making me a better person, and surrendering to Jesus was the only hope that I had to be the person I desperately wanted to be... slowly my wife and I began to grow closer, God began to do a mighty work in our lives, and through much hardship and continued pain I can truly say that my wife and I still endure hardship and struggle but no matter what we both know: divorce is not an option. We both understand our love for Christ and our love for each other can bridge any gap, and through every pain and every struggle we complete one another after Christ has healed our heart and our marriage.

Accepting Jesus Christ is only the begging, faithfully walking with Him will create many struggles and hardships but we must trust He is all powerful, He is all knowing, He is all caring, and He will never fail us nor forsake us. Are you following Christ? Is your spouse not walking faithfully with you? Are they persecuting and attacking you? Don't give up hope. Let the light of Christ shine through you, God will win them over, remember Saul? On the road to Damascus they may think they are going to destroy us and the light with-in us, then the Lord will shine forth and protect us and show them the truth! Know that the unbelieving spouse can be sanctified by the believing spouse and never give up hope!

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 give you strength to make time for Him everyday in worship and fellowship
- God to show you the power of prayer and His wonderful grace and mercy in your life
- God to continue to give you healing and peace in your marriage and your relationships
- God to give you courage to do what is right, not what is easy
- God to continue to give you wisdom on how to teach your children and continue to give you strength to be a light in your home

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).**