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Falling in to place

Like domino set in place by the most skillful of builders as we begin to accept the role of Jesus Christ in our life as not only savior and redeemer but leader and Father we begin to understand all other things will fall in to place! Those who serve Jesus Christ may not always be the winners in life, they may not be first at everything, they may be poor and without much but those who have accepted Jesus Christ will be exalted and have an eternal inheritance better than anything this world has to offer. **And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (Romans Chapter 8 verse 28 KJV)** – those who faithfully walk with the Lord and are obedient unto the Spirit can trust in one thing: God will lead them down the best path. Those who enjoy the riches of this live and forsake the Lord have received their reward in this life and I grieve for those who don't know that true riches can only be found in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I saw a bumper sticker that once said “don't let this car fool you, my treasure is in heaven” and I truly believe that if more Christians understood the wonderful gift the Lord Jesus Christ has in store for us we would gladly rejoice in the dark valleys as we serve Him and walk in obedience.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John Chapter 14 verse 2-3 KJV) – those who have a personal relationship with Christ should understand that Christ died that we may be forgiven and He has promised and will fulfill His promise to come again. When we die or after His return rest assured the riches of heaven will be poured out upon us. Can't you see the wonderful home that Jesus went to prepare for you? Can you imagine a world free of pain and suffering? A world free from pain and tears? Can't you just see it now, a smiling savior waiting for you with arms wide open as we return to Him as the prodigal children?? Through all of life's valleys and pain we must hold on to the truth: **For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians Chapter 4 verse 16-18 KJV)** – in the name of Jesus I pray you would rejoice! O' hallelujah Christ is risen and will return! Amen.

Daily Devotional

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

The Road to Hope

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (Romans 5:3,4)

When Paul wrote to the church at Rome, he said that we can glory in tribulations. I don't know about you but it is hard for me to find glory in the difficult times of my life. Let me share some difficult times that I have had with my children. My oldest daughter turned two years old in Scottish Rites Hospital in Atlanta. She was in a bicycle wreck and cracked her skull to the base of her brain. She had to receive CPR at the time of the wreck and was in a coma for three hours. My middle daughter was in a car wreck at 14. She broke her back in 3 places and had to have back surgery to repair the damage. My youngest daughter was born with sleep apnea and had to wear a monitor for the first 6 months of her life. She also fell out of a window at 18 months and fell 9 feet to the ground.

In every case I have been blessed. God has taken care of them and today you would never know that any of them had experienced tragedy, but as a parent, I still remember. Did I glorify God in the tribulations? Yes! Did I want to go through them? No! So let me explain what Paul is saying. As we go through tribulations that only God can fix, we learn to become patient and trust God. Every time we wait on God, we gain more experience. Because of my experiences, I know that God is capable of doing great things; therefore my hope in God is greater because I have had tribulations. Your marriage will have tribulation, but when you wait on God to help fix the problems, our marriages can have hope. So while it may be difficult to be happy about your tribulations, rejoice because there is a God who wants to bring you hope.

Food for thought

by: Daniel Higginbotham (dhigginbotham@myemanuel.com)

Are you happy? Do you have joy? "Wait, those are the same things"... as we enter day 29 of the 30 day challenge I pray you would consider this question: are happiness and joy the same? Is happiness not the experience you have when something good happens, when you receive a nice gift, or eat a good meal, or maybe see a friend or family member? Does that feeling fade away? Yes it does... do you have happiness or joy? When the good things stop happening do you still have something to rejoice in? Chances are if you can say that you have joy you have so only by the grace of God. I am joyful because through the trials and tribulations of life God is with me, Jesus Christ is walking faithfully with my side giving me the strength and confidence to overcome the enemy. I have joy because my life will never end and I will never again be separated from my God. I have joy in my Lord and savior Jesus Christ knowing that He has died to give me a way back... His love is great and His mercy is abundant for those who seek Him and I will take joy in my Lord!

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (Habakkuk Chapter 3 verse 18 KJV) – if you read through the short book of Habakkuk you will see in chapter 3 where the author states "no matter what I will joy in the God of my salvation" the author clearly states that through pain, suffering, hunger, hardship, and darkness He will still praise and serve the Lord. What does it say about you that you can praise the Lord when everything is easy? Can't everyone do that? What does it say about you if you can worship and praise the Lord even in the darkness? Take joy in the Lord! Love the Lord and pray without ceasing that He would protect you and guide you and even when things aren't going your way and even in the darkness know that His way is the best way! **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)** – we must dedicate ourselves through prayer and walking by faith to the task of ensuring that regardless of the circumstances and through the pain that we allow God to guide us, use us, and that we trust Him even when we can't understand how or why.

As you enter day 29 of the 30 day challenge this is the last day before we end the program and this day completes our "putting Christ at the center" component and I pray that you would understand that it is only when we put Christ at the center of our marriage and that we trust Him through even the darkest moments that our faith is refined and strengthened in the fire. **That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter Chapter 1 verse 7-9 KJV)** – just as gold, silver, or any precious metal is refined in the boiling crucible so is our faith refined and purified through every hardship and suffering. "Why do I have to suffer?" We suffer because of sin... we suffer because we are incapable of never sinning again... we are only capable of accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and savior and desperately warring with our flesh and sin to effectively honor and serve Christ.

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) – the reason we suffer is because we are fallen... we sin... the wage of sin, the result of sin, the only result without Jesus Christ is death, the grave and eternal hell fire. The result of accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and savior is that we will be covered with His righteousness and forgiven for every sin. Not only will we be forgiven but God will forget our very sins that would have separated us from Him. It is when we realize what we deserve and know what Jesus Christ has given us that we can rejoice and take joy, not happiness, always rejoicing in our faith! Today as you enter day 29 of the 30 day challenge I ask you again: do you have happiness that will fade away when the storm comes or do you have joy that will never fade away? Its time to face the fire and know that the Lord Jesus Christ walks by your side... are you ready?

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).**

You've accepted Christ, your spouse has accepted Christ, you've welcomed Him in to your home, your in church, your praying, your studying, the war is almost over, right? Wrong. After I gave my life to Christ as was blessed to see my wife give her's to Christ as well I have been surprised everyday at the constant war satan wages against us. Again and again the war has spilled over and overcame me, satan is stronger than I am but he is desperately weak in comparison to the God I serve. If you have both you and your spouse given your life to Christ please know it does not get easier, it does get so much more wonderful because you share in the joy of Christ together BUT you are a target for satan. Know that when you suffer hardship and pain in your marriage satan relentlessly wants to break you apart and destroy one of you or both of you. The coward thrives on death and destruction, God Almighty wonderfully protects us, restores us, teaches us, guides us, and gives us more wisdom that we could ever understand!

After I gave my life to Christ and was blessed to see my wife do the same it is wonderful knowing that regardless of what happens to me, my wife and I are both saved. I can face tomorrow because I know today that we both serve a God who loves us, a God who has saved us, and I pray one day I can see my children give their lives to Christ. If you are struggling today with your spouse not wanting to walk the walk with you don't give up hope. Keep living as a light in your home, don't hide your light, constantly let Christ shine through you and walk faithfully with Him, you never know just how close your spouse or children may be at making that eternal decision with you. Rejoice when you are tempted and face adversity knowing that Christ faced it before you, and trust in His strength to deliver you always!

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 open your eyes and heart to His plan for you and your life
- God to feel welcome and for Him to present in your life and in your marriage
- God to give you strength to face the storm and comfort knowing He is there with you always
- God to give you peace and healing in all of your relationships like never before
- God to draw you close to Him through prayer and study

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).**