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It has been a long day...

We work all day, we come home exhausted and try and muster up the strength to eat dinner and to take care of our families... some nights we just sit down hard in our chairs or lay quickly down in our beds ready for the rest, ready for peace, ready to just be done with all the work of our day. In this life it is important for us to remember that we will walk through the valley, the Lord never once promised that it would be all good, He never promised that we wouldn't face hardship, He never promised we wouldn't face more than we could bare, He simply and beautifully promised that He would always be there with us, walking by our side waiting for us to reach out to Him and trust in Him. As you enter in to the 6th day of the 30 day challenge I ask you this question: when is the last time you just let go and trusted God? The past five days we have studied and understood that God has a plan for us, a wonderful plan, that He loves us so greatly, that He always knows every path and is taking us down the one that will make us better, stronger, and more faithful... so why are we still fighting it?

Today I want you to take a second and examine the road your walking down, when can you feel the Lord? When do you feel His hand active and guiding your way? Are you listening for the Lord's guidance? Are you watching for His rebuke and trying desperately to obey and love Him? Are you seeking Him with all your heart knowing that He requires that of us to truly know Him? Are you putting in the time to pray, study, and faithfully serve the Lord in every way He deserves? I need you to understand me fully, never think that we are justified by our works for as scripture says: **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians Chapter 2 verse 16 KJV)** – I say that to say this, even know we are not justified by the works of our hands... does that mean the Lord doesn't deserve our very best? Does that mean the Lord doesn't deserve a full and dedicated heart? Did He not do a full and dedicated work as He cruelly died on the cross in our place? Of course He did! As you enter in to day know that God suffered tremendously because of us... He suffered the cross, the torture, the shame, the humiliation... are we seeking Him and desiring to grow closer to Him? Are we ready to give it all for Him? Is that not what we are called to do? Enter in to this 6th day seeking to know God's plan more, to trust in Him more, and to know that we are freely redeemed by His mercy and grace and though we could never repay it, that doesn't mean we don't owe Him everything!

Daily Devotional

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

The Secret Weapon

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)

Growing up in South Mississippi, my brother and I spent many of days outside playing. Some of our favorite games to play was either Cowboys and Indians or War. One day while watching TV, we were introduced to the concept of a secret weapon. It changed how we played. If one of us was losing our game, we broke out the secret weapon. Because our secret weapon was make believe, we could make it anything we wanted it to be. It didn't take us long before we had to start putting a limit on what our secret weapon could do, and how often we could use it.

For a Christian, prayer is a secret weapon. What makes me say that it is a secret weapon? Because God has given us the greatest weapon that has ever been introduced to mankind and it is seldom ever used. With prayer we have direct access to God Himself. We have the ability to unleash the kingdom of heaven against the forces of Satan. Can you imagine going to war and not using your best weapon? That's what happens when we don't pray. How many marriages could be saved, and how many battles could be won, if we just prayed. I challenge you to unleash the secret weapon. Who knows? The person that it saves just might be you.

Food for thought

by: Daniel Higginbotham (dhigginbotham@myemanuel.com)

When is the last time you cried to the Lord? When is the last time you came before Him broken, hurting, desperately crying out for Him to fix what you know you cannot? Time and time again the Lord has broken the walls I have built up, He has broken the illusion I have crafted, He has destroyed the traps the enemy has laid before me, and I remember how desperately I need the Lord when He reveals to me just how painfully lost and going down the wrong path I truly was. As we enter into the 6th day of the challenge I want to ask you: how is your prayer life? I mean truly, how is your prayer life? Do you talk to God every morning? Do you talk to God ever night? Do you talk to God all day long? Do you sneak away to tell Him thank you or ask for His guidance and strength? Do you find yourself praying constantly all throughout the day? No? Why? Does not our enemy who is satan desperately try and lead us astray all day long? Does our flesh not war against our spirit trying desperately to have us sin against God and forget our master that we serve? Today I want you to know that the greatest power God has given us, the one thing that can never fail, the one thing that gives us direct access to the Lord God Almighty who created all things: prayer.

Prayer, that is what this program is truly all about and building upon this weeks theme which is the foundation we must understand God's purpose, prayer is not something new, it is not some New Testament creation, it goes back to the fall of man and the Word has many beautiful passages to remind us of the importance, let us look:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles Chapter 7 verse 14 KJV)

I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. (Psalms Chapter 34 verse 4 KJV)

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)

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. (John Chapter 16 verse 23 KJV)

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. (Luke Chapter 22 verse 41-42 KJV)

There are thousands of examples of God's children reaching out to Him in prayer, and God tells us that if we will pray, if we will seek Him out, if we will trust in Him, if we will walk by faith He will hear our prayers, heal our wounds, and for His glory and out of His mercy He will not only hear but answer our prayers! So the question I have is, have you prayed about it? What do you feel like God is saying to you? Have you lifted up your cause or your problem to the Lord? Is it not possible for God to fix or guide you in this darkness and pain? The answer

is that through prayer and because of His love and grace anything is possible. God has not given us limitations in prayer, instead He beautifully tells us: **Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Philippians Chapter 4 verse 6 KJV)** – even now I feel lead to remind you not to fall in a trap, God is not going to simply start handing out earthly mansions and wheelbarrows full of hundred dollar bills, God answers our prayers for His glory and purpose, not ours. He knows best and knows the prayers we need answered even when we don't and can't possibly begin to understand why He is not answering them.

Our God is a God of mercy and grace and as our heavenly Father I believe He desperately wants a relationship with us in prayer. Remember that prayer is not for show, God wants our prayers between us and Him: **And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (Matthew Chapter 6 verse 5-6 KJV)** – as you understand and truly know the power and importance of prayer I would remind you that God not only hears our prayers, He not only answers our prayers, but our prayers are so very precious to Him that He keeps them! God loves us so much that He keeps every prayer lifted up in faith and trust to Him, can you begin to understand that? **And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. (Revelation Chapter 5 verse 8 KJV).**

So as you enter in to this day, do you have something you need to go do? Something much more important than my words, something much greater than the guidance God has blessed me to give, seek Him out! Don't depend on men or women to be your guide, go straight to the source! Go straight to the greatest secret weapon in the history of creation: prayer. Lift up and make your concerns known to the Lord knowing full well He already knows but doing so to demonstrate your lack of control and His all powerful ability to sway and walk us through even the darkest valley!

Meet the family

As we were introduced to our sister in Christ Kim last time we ended with God bringing this sister to her knees. Today we will continue to learn more about the circumstances in which God brought her to her knees and truly how God touched this sister in a power, unmistakable way.

“Jason and I had been fighting all day and I was screaming and cussing at him and all the sudden I had a inner struggle happen. As I was screaming at him I felt like I was moved back in my head and a curtain was moved over, I heard the voice coming out of my mouth and it wasn't mine! Instantly I asked Jason if that sounded like me and I explained what had happened and again God blessed me because Jason believed me. He went with me to a friends house who is a retired preacher and we talked and prayed and I realized my relationship with God wasn't right. What if I only talked with others that I loved at night or when I needed something? So I again asked God to come into myself and my life and my home. God has shown me over and over how much he loves me by giving me multiple blessings. And he blessed me by giving me time and continued life to try and make Him proud and be worthy of my many blessings. How much God loves me is Awesome. And by keeping me and Jason together we can glorify Him together I hope for a long time!”

Today we will also continue with brother Jason's testimony, completing both of their testimony tomorrow:

“Then I married for the 2nd time my wife now Kimberly. I still didn't realize the harm I was doing and the things I was doing. I continued sinning, lying, cheating, stealing. I loved my wife but didn't know how to treat her. I tried to change who I was. But it didn't work because I have lived my life in sin with the devil and I didn't know what I needed in my life to make me, my daughter, and my wife happy. Neither one of us knew how to make a marriage work and how to truly love. We decided to have a baby. The doctors said they don't know why I am still alive and I should be dead, there is no explanation for it. After our first miscarriage the doctors told me and my wife that my wife would never be able to get pregnant and carry and baby and even then living our lives in sin without being saved with God in our lives me and my wife knelt at the foot of the bed and prayed for Him to bless us with a miracle: a baby.”

“And after several more devastating losses God gave us the miracle we prayed for. A baby boy, Jason Jr. I still didn't change the way I was living my life and couldn't understand why we were miserable. Me and my wife almost got divorced on several occasions but love always brought us back even though we didn't how how to love each other. Finally I started going to church looking for help and answers. At first my wife was reluctant and thought I was doing it as a ploy or scam. To try and to keep her from leaving me for good. The church we were going to was not the church we needed. They didn't help lead us or counsel us. So we stopped going. Something kept telling me that God kept me here for a reason and that I should find Him and thank Him everyday for the miracles he has bestowed on me. We were without a way of going and struggling everyday and unhappy so I decided to walk to the United Methodist Church a couple of blocks from my house and my wife was unwilling to go at first but that's where I found God.”

Through the testimony of brother Jason and sister Kim I hope today you have understood that God is always with us, God is merciful and loving to those who don't even know Him yet only those who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ can expect that mercy eternally and on the day of judgment. I pray that you would know that God makes all things new and even once a family has found Christ it is not a magic one stop shop, it will take hard work, dedication and rededication to the cause: knowing and making Christ the center of your family. Tomorrow we will finish the testimony of this brave brother and sister and I pray the Lord would speak to you and your circumstances, that He would give you hope and have mercy on you as you continue to seek Him more! If you would like to know Jesus Christ and accept Him today please visit www.myemanuel.com/iamready.html

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:

- Pray that God would continue to heal old wounds and give you strength to forgive your spouse and family of all transgressions
- Pray that God would give you strength to see things from not just your perspective, but His, and your spouses
- Pray that God would give you the wisdom on how to put Him above all things
- Pray that God would teach you how to more effectively pray
- Pray that God would allow you to pray with your spouse and family

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).**