

A Jolt For Our Attention Deserve

July 1

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people...if my people who are called by my name...” 2 Chron 7:13,14 ”

When someone has a heart attack, sometimes doctors will use a defibrillator in order to restart the heart. They do it all the time on ER. Someone yells, “clear” and then they put the paddles on the chest. A jolt of electric current flows through the paddles in the hopes of getting the heart to start beating again.

Preview

I wonder if God wants to do the same thing with your heart this morning. A once strong spiritual life can start slowing down or even stop beating. Something radical has to be done to restart a heart for God. That’s where God brings out His paddles.

We see this in 7:13, the verse immediately preceding our passage for today. God says, “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people...if my people who are called by my name...” God had to send a wake-up call to His people and so He sent the drought, the locusts, and the plague. Not because he doesn’t care but because He does. He knows it’s what it will take to bring the patient back to life.

Innerview

Maybe this explains some of the jolts you’ve been getting hit with lately. Maybe you’ve hit bottom because God has been trying to get your

attention. You’ve been asking “why” and God is answering, “Because I want to restart your failing heart.” Maybe you haven’t responded to gentler therapies so now He has sent these jolts to bring you back.

Maybe you have some pain right now...but please get the point. God loves you just the way you are but He doesn’t want you to stay the way you are. He wants you to return to your first love for Jesus. He wants you to re-establish your daily Jesus-time as the center of your life. He desires for you to be a pure child of God who has zero tolerance for sin. And, in order to reach you, He has allowed some situations like drought, locusts, and plagues that are totally beyond your power to fix. He wants you to surrender to Him by following His plan so that you can receive His promises.

Review

If you’ve been feeling some jolts lately, consider the possibility that God has sent them to bring you back to life.

Praise God for: His abundant kindness!

Thank God for: faithful servants!
Ask God’s forgiveness for: boasting about my good deeds!

Ask God to help: love motivate us!

Ask God to supply our need for : consideration for others!

Spiritual Tonic For a Sick Nation

July 2

"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 7:14

We have become a nation where the criminal is defied and the victim is vilified. Where evil is called good, and good is called evil. We are a nation marked by moral regression, sexual revolution, and spiritual rebellion. I predict that before America is conquered from without, she is going to corrode from within. America will not die by homicide, she'd going to die by suicide. We will not ultimately be destroyed by what someone else will do to us, but what we do to ourselves.

(Pastor Wright's prayer to Kansas legislation)

Preview

"We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.
We have ridiculed the absolute truth of God's Word and called it Pluralism;
We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism;
We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle;
We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery;
We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare;
We have killed our unborn and called it choice;
We have shot abortionist and called it justifiable;
We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem;
We have abused our power and called it politics;
We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition;
We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it enlightenment."

Innerview

America is a sick nation!

Since 1960 there has been:

- A 560% increase in violent crime
- More than a 400% increase in illegitimate births
- A quadrupling in divorces
- A tripling of the percentage of children living in single parent homes
- More than a 200% increase in the teenage suicide rate
- A drop of 75 points in the average SAT scores of high school students

Today, 30% of all births and 68% of black births are illegitimate. Even though the United States has only six percent of the world's population, we have 80% of the divorces. We lead the industrialized world in murder, rape, and violent crime. Eighty percent of all the whiskey consumed in the world is consumed by Americans.

America is a sick nation. There are three million, eight hundred and two thousand crimes committed every year in the United States. In this country there are five million people who are addicted to cocaine and twenty-five million who have at one time or another experimented with an addictive and deadly drug.

Daily Sunshine In The Son

Review

Seven serious crimes are committed every minute, and one murder is committed every forty-three minutes in this nation. An innocent woman or girl is raped every nineteen minutes, an aggravated assault is committed every two minutes, a robbery is committed every two and a half minutes, a burglary is committed every thirty seconds, one larceny is committed every 23 seconds and somebody steals a car in America every 49 seconds in this nation.

America is a sick nation. But necessity is laid upon me today to prescribe a spiritual tonic for A Sick Nation. It is called Revival. Over the next few days we shall discuss three things (1) The people that desire revival. (2) The pride that defers revival. And (3) The prayer that demands revival.

Praise God for: hearing our prayers!

Thank God for: praying people!

Ask God's forgiveness for: Taking credit for what He's done!

Ask God to help: us recognize His answers!

Ask God to supply our need for : dependency on Him!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

List the detractions that Satan has used in your life to create a stronghold. Write a prayer asking God to take your thoughts captive and keep you focused.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

The People That Desire Revival

July 3

"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 7:14

We need to understand something about revival. Revival is not for the sinner, it's for the saint. A sinner doesn't need revival, he needs regeneration. It is the people of God that need revival. The Psalmist was right when he said to God, *"Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in You?"* (Psa. 85:6)

Preview

We talk and live as if we are depending on the world to get right. We will say things like, "If only we could elect godly people to political office," as if politics was the answer. "If only we could get rid of the bars and the pool rooms," as if alcohol was the problem. "If only we could get a constitutional amendment outlawing abortion," as if abortion was the problem. As wonderful as each of those things are, they won't save America.

Innerview

THE CHURCH IS NOT DEPENDING ON AMERICA TO GET RIGHT. America is depending on the church to get right. Our biggest problem is that we have more of the world in the church than we have of the church in the world. *I would much rather look for the church and find it in the world, than to look for the world and find it in the church.* Jesus didn't pray that the Father would take the church out of the world, but that He would take the world out of the church.

Review

If we loved the world the way God loves the world, we wouldn't love the world the way we do love the world. It's not pagan America that needs revival. It's not the baby-killing abortionist that need revival. It's not the liquor-selling bartender that need revival. It's not the loose-living prostitute that needs revival. They need regeneration not revival. You can't relive if you have never lived. It is not the lazy, lifeless, lukewarm church that needs revival.

Praise God for: His positive outlook!

Thank God for: loving supporters!

Ask God's forgiveness for: grumbling and complaining!

Ask God to help: chronic complainers and negative thinkers!

Ask God to supply our need for : positive outlook!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Is God asking you to do something today? If you're feeling that it is too difficult or beyond your reach, tell Him about it and place it in His hands.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

The Pride That Deters Revival

July 4

"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 7:14

GOD'S PEOPLE WHO DESIRE REVIVAL ARE TO "HUMBLE THEMSELVES." The word humble literally means "to bend the knee." Humility is the one essential ingredient of revival. You see, the reason why we don't have revival in America is because we haven't gotten low enough. *"The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Psa. 34:18).*

Preview

In Proverbs 6 we are told of seven things that God hates. *The very first thing is "a proud look."* The reason why we don't have more faith in God in America is because there is not more fear of God in America.

We reek with pride, and the stench of our self-sufficiency is a nauseating odor to the nostrils of God. We are too good to hang The Ten Commandments on the walls of our state houses. We are too wise to hang The Ten Commandments on the halls of our schoolhouses. Do you know the real reason why we are rejecting the word of God? It's not just that we are a "pluralistic nation." It is pride.

Innerview

Pride leads to disregarding, dismissing, and disobeying the word of God. Listen to what Paul said in I Timothy 6:3-4, "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,

and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud."

It is pride that causes us to be prayerless, because the man who does not pray is the man who says, "I can do just fine without God. I don't need to call on Him, He need to call on me."

IT IS BECAUSE OF PRIDE THAT WE CAN'T GET ALONG AND WE HAVE FIGHTS AND ARGUMENTS.

Solomon said in Proverbs 13:10, "By pride comes only contention." Pride paralyzes, pride polarizes, pride politicizes. God hates pride, especially in the church.

It was pride that got Adam and Eve kicked out of the garden of Eden. It was pride that got Satan kicked out of heaven. Because pride is that attitude that says, "We don't need God."

Review

I was reading about Muhammad Ali. He got on an airplane, was standing up in the aisle, talking and laughing and entertaining the passengers. Finally, the stewardess came back to him and said, "Mr. Ali, you'll have to take a seat and fasten your seat belt because the plane is about to take off."

Well, Mohammed Ali looked at her with a snarl, and said, "Honey, superman don't need no seat belt." She looked at him and said, "You are right. But superman don't need an airplane either. Now sit down a buckle up." Pride can be a dangerous thing.

The Prayer That Demands Revival

July 5

"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 7:14

Prayer is the Christian's hot line to heaven, and it is so tragic that we don't use it more than we do. We think that revival *comes more from organizing that it does from agonizing.* The devil laughs when he sees the strongest saint standing on his feet, but he trembles when he seeks the weakest saint falling to his knees.

Preview

Leonard Ravenhill has well said, "The church is dying on its feet because it's not living on its knees." Now you can pray without having revival, but you cannot have revival without praying. As we pray, we ought to *"seek His face."* *The word seek there literally means "to search out, to look for with intensity."* We are to *"seek His face."*

The idea of seeking implies a desire for something of great value. It's like the woman who searched for her lost coin or the shepherd with 100 sheep who, having lost one, left the 99 and went searching for the one who had wandered off. It's like the man seeking a pearl of great price, who having found it gives all that he has in order to purchase it. It is like the person who has dropped a contact lens, he gets down on hands and knees searching and groping, until it's found. When you seek something of value, you rearrange your schedule and priorities until you find it. When we seek something, we are persistent.

Matthew 7:7 promises that when we seek we will find. Jeremiah 29:13 says that when we

seek God with our whole heart, we will find Him.

Innerview

Now, how do we seek "God's face"? This is what a baby does when they reach out to touch your face. They just want to feel your skin that's how they get to know you. It's when we say, "Lord, I want to touch you deeply, I want to get to know you in all your awesome splendor."

In the Bible, this phrase is used of someone desiring an audience with a prince or with God Himself. This is how it is used in Psalm 27:8: *"My heart says of you, 'Seek His face!' Your face, Lord, I will seek."* The idea is that we desire to align ourselves with His will and His kingdom purposes means simply to get our will in line with His.

Review

Are you actively seeking an audience with God so that you can do His will? Are you rearranging your priorities so that you can come into His presence? The good news is that we don't have to look hard to find Him, do we? Ephesians 2:13 says "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ."

And so, as God's people we are to follow God's plan by humbling ourselves, by praying, and by seeking God's face.

Daily Sunshine In The Son

Praise God for: His awesome power!

Thank God for: true light!

Ask God's forgiveness for: relying on my
own power!

Ask God to help: the powerless!

Ask God to supply our need for: the
power of the cross!

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Make a list of both short-term and long-term goals. Pray over them and ask God to help you fulfill each one.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need:

The Prayer That Demands Revival

(2)

July 6

"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 7:14

I pulled some interesting statistics from the Barna Research Group that state 4 out of 5 Americans believe that "prayer can change what happens in a person's life." (1994) 9 out of 10 adults agree "there is a god who watches over you and answers your prayers." (1991) The average prayer lasts under five minutes (1993)

Solomon records "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land". 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV)

Prayer is our communication link with God. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Philippians 4:6 (NLT)

Prayer is meant to be continual. Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people. Ephesians 6:18 (CEV)

His purpose in all of this was that the nations should seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him - though he is not far from any one of us. Acts 17:27 (NLT)

Preview

Because he is the solution to our problems. Some of our so-called "solutions" to the social ills of our day would be funny if they were not so tragic.

For example, we say we need more money for education, so what is our solution? Legalize and promote gambling. We say we need to stop teenage pregnancy. So what is our solution? Hand out condoms and open abortion clinics. We say we need to balance the budget. So what is the solution? Raise taxes.

We say we need to reform health care. So what is our solution? Let the government take over one-seventh of our economy in socialized medicine. We say we need to stop AIDS. So what is our solution? Practice "safe" sex.

Innerview

We need to quit re-arranging chairs on the deck of the Titanic and realize that without God all of our solutions only create bigger problems. That is why our only hope is God, and our only solution is revival, and the two are inextricably intertwined. Revival is the light of God that shines in our darkness. Revival is the love of God that breaks through our dullness. Revival is the life of God that flows through our deadness.

We are living in a nation that's...
More interested in gold than it is in God,

Daily Sunshine In The Son

More interested in riches than it is in righteousness,
More interested in health than it is in holiness,
More interested in prosperity than it is in purity.

We have switched God for gold.
We have switched grace for greenbacks.
We have switched homes for houses.
We have switched precious time for good times.
We have switched soul-sense for nonsense.
We have switched chastity for riotous living.
We have switched churches for taverns.
We have switched prayer for parties.
We have switched God's truth for Satan's lies.

to intervene in their lives. That is what God is waiting to hear.

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially:

Review

Prayer is Seeking God's Face. It is an urgency to enter into the presence of God. It is a desire for an intimate fellowship with the Lord. Seeking God's face is whole heartedly seeking God through believing prayer that is done humbly, diligently and regularly.

This seeking may begin with a simple desire to know Him better or it may be in response to adverse circumstances in a person's life that God may use to get our attention. Revival prayer is not for people who are unwilling to mourn, and be burdened. Revival prayer is when God's people get on their knees with tears and with hurting hearts asking God to intervene in their lives. That is what God is waiting to hear.

Today, Lord, I need:

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Is there anything in your life that seems too difficult for you? What action would allow you

To take a leap of faith and let God show you that He can give you victory in this area?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

The Purity That Demonstrates Revival

July 7

"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 7:14

We are so busy getting man's approval that we forget about God. It is not what folks think about you, but what God knows about you that ultimately matters. You cannot get God's approval until you turn from your wicked ways. God does not hate the sinner, but he does hate his sins. God doesn't hate us, but he does hate our wicked ways. So, he urges us to repent of our wicked ways, seek God's face, seek heavenly blessings, and seek the nod of approval from God.

Turning from our wicked ways is the true test of biblical repentance. Are we willing to turn away from sin and turn toward God? This is where our "wills" must engage and take action. The order here is significant. As we humble ourselves and pray and seek God with all that we have, our hunger will be satisfied by the sight of God's face and we will no longer want to hold on to those things that grieve our "Holy Abba Father."

Preview

The doctrine of repentance is a forgotten one.
Ezekial preached it in Israel.
Jonah preached it in Ninevah.
Peter preached it purposefully.
Jesus preached it passionately.

The Hebrew Word translated "Repent" is the word "Shoob" - "To Return, to turn back, to turn away." This word carries with it the thought of turning, both to and away from something. So to repent of something is both

turning from sin and turning to God.

That is the word most commonly used by OT writers to describe Repentance. It represents the "Volitional Aspect" of Repentance or the exercise of the will. Another word associated with repentance is the word "Nacham" - "To be sorry, to regret, to suffer grief."

That word describes the "Emotional Aspect" of Repentance. Sorrow over sin... not worldly sorrow because you got caught, but Godly sorrow because you recognize that it offends a holy God

Innerview

True Repentance is best defined as a combination of the two: "A sorrow over sin because of how it grieves God and affects others. Broken over his sin, the individual chooses to turn from his sin and turn in his heart to God."

There's really no way to soften the command to turn from our wicked ways. God accepts only one response to sin, not rationalizing, not excusing, and not comparing ourselves to others. He demands that WE TURN FROM IT! Do you want God's best? Then deal with the "wicked ways" that are holding you back from the very answers you're seeking. God is calling each of us right now to turn from our wicked ways.

Daily Sunshine In The Son

We do that by:

- Admitting our sin
- Abandoning our sin

Review

God says that as long as we're hanging onto that sinful practice or attitude, He can't open up heaven and bless us. Have you been playing around with sin? Recognize it and repent right now. Have you been doing some stuff that you know is wrong? Turn from it today. Have you been withholding forgiveness from someone? Stop acting as their judge and free them from ever paying you back. Do you have some dark secrets that you've been trying to hide from God and your loved ones? Bring them into the light. Have you been running your own life and not humbly and prayerfully seeking God's face? Surrender to Him right now.

Praise God for: reaching those who are hard to reach!

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Thank God for: His Guiding Word!
Ask God's forgiveness for: taking so many blessings for granted!

Ask God to help: provide guidance for every child!

Ask God to supply our need for: life changing principals!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What holds first place in your life? In what ways have you tried to succeed and failed? What would it mean to you to give the Lord first place?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

The Promise That Describes Revival

July 8

"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 7:14

"If", is one of the smallest words in the English language, yet can have some of the biggest effects on or in a person's life. The dictionary defines "if" as the cause or reason or motive for something to happen. "If", is the word that evokes a response for action. The word "if" is considered the cause portion of the cause and effect in English grammar. When "if" statements are used, they are generally followed by "then" statements, which are the effect part of the cause and effect.

Preview

The "then" statement tell what can or will happen do to fulfilling the "if" statement. An example of this is seen in our text this morning. God said, *"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"*. Notice that the Lord said, "His people." And called by "His name." God was only stating that if anyone is going to turn around, it should first begin with those who consider themselves children of God.

The word "if" is a conditional word. It gives a condition that must be fulfilled before a result is seen. God's conditions were for his people to become humble, pray, seek his face and turn from their wicked ways.

Innerview

The result or benefit or gain was that then would God hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land. We must realize that God has conditions to be fulfilled before he does his work. One of God's conditions is humbleness. Pride only leads to destruction. Jesus says in Matthew 18:3, "unless you become as little children, Ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Humbleness, as defined by the new Webster's dictionary, is having or possessing the virtue of humility.

Humility, as defined by Nelson's Bible Dictionary, Is a freedom from arrogance that grows out of the recognition that all that we are and have comes from God. Some look at humbleness as a sign of weakness or worthlessness. But this is not the meaning that the Bible gives. Biblical humility is not a belittling of oneself, but an exalting and praising of others.

It is recognition that by ourselves we are nothing, but because we are recreated by God and in his image and are believers in Christ, we have infinite worth and value

Review

True humbleness does not produce pride but thankfulness. Humbleness is a condition that god requires. God also wants prayer. Prayer is how we communicate with god.

Daily Sunshine In The Son

James 5:16 says, “ the effectual and fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Prayer is our way of expressing our thanks, supplications, our adoration, and our confession to god. When we sincerely pray, bodies are healed, walls are torn down and people are lifted up. God wants us to be in constant communication with him.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “pray without ceasing”. God wants us to pray. God wants the people to seek his face. God wants total commitment. God wants to lead the path of the people. Matthew 6:33 tells us to “seek ye first the kingdom of god and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Yes, the things that you tried to attain but couldn’t; was God sought first? The decisions that were made but turned out to be the wrong one; was God sought first?

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

- Praise God for:** being a God of order!
- Thank God for:** daily glimpses of His glory!
- Ask God’s forgiveness for:** my overly crowded agenda!
- Ask God to help:** people dreading today!
- Ask God to supply our need for :** untangled days!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What holds first place in your life? In what ways have you tried to succeed and failed? What would it mean to you to give the Lord first place?

Today, Lord, I need

Journal for Digging Deeper:

The Promise That Describes Revival (2)

July 9

"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 7:14

When God's people follow God's plan they will receive God's promises. Let's look briefly at the three promises God gives in this verse. These promises come after the word, "then." If my people do these 4 things, then I will do these three things.

1. God will HEAR. When we pray the way God directs us to pray, He promises that He will hear our prayers. We don't have to worry about getting God's attention. He is on line 24/7 and delights in hearing the prayers of His children. Psalm 121:4 says, "Indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep."

He will Regard our Words "hear from heaven". Psalm 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:" The word "regard" means to approve. It carries the idea of joyfully looking on something.

Those who love good and hate evil will be delivered. But, those who condone sin, either in their own lives or the lives of others will not have their prayers heard and their land healed.

The believer is to attempt to live as cleanly as humanly possible. We should not allow known sins to go on in our lives or the Lord's church so that God will regard our words

2. God will HELP. The second promise is that God will help as only he can, by forgiving our sins. To forgive means to "send away" or "to let go." Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our

transgressions from us." God is the only one who can forgive our sins and make us clean again. As 1 John 1:9 states, when we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

There are at least two kinds of forgiveness taught in Scripture. Our initial forgiveness happens at conversion. I call this redemption forgiveness. The other forgiveness has to do with a daily cleansing when we confess our sins to God. I call this restoration forgiveness.

3. God will HEAL. The last promise has to do with national blessing for the nation of Israel. When God's people committed to God's plan, God sent healing to their land. During the reign of King Ahab the land experienced a bad famine, and only in response to the prayers of Elijah did the rains come. The word, "heal" means "to repair" or "to restore."

I know this particular promise is to the nation of Israel, but I see an application for us today. Many of us are in need of repair and restoration. We long for healing of our emotions, our spirits, and our bodies. Our country is certainly in need of healing.

Let me explain how I view our role in God sending revival. Here's how it works. While we are commanded to pray for our nation, we can't just complain and bemoan how bad things are in our country. You see, WE are the problem. America's problem is not so much in our system but in us. God always intends for revival to start with His people. It goes from the

The Hurrier We Go!

July 10

"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men" -Ephesians 6:5-8

What will your day be like today? Rushing to and fro? Trying to meet deadlines? Hustling to cover all the bases? And do you ever get a tension headache? Knots in your stomach? Pain in your chest? Ever find yourself sighing and feeling drained?

Preview

The epitome of our frantic pace may have been reached a while back. The New York Times told of a funeral home in Chicago that put in a drive-through so people could pay their respects without having to get out of their cars. "The working person doesn't have time to come in," said the owner. "They want to see the body, but they don't want to have to wait." A visitor drives to a speakerphone and pushes a button for service. An attendant asks whom he wishes to view. The person signs a register beneath the speakerphone, drives forward a few feet, and views a closed-circuit TV shot of the deceased in his or her coffin on a 25-inch screen.

Innerview

When we are so rushed that we have to pay our respects to the dead in the same way we buy fast-food hamburgers, we're just too busy! But when did the rushing begin? When we couldn't find time to be with our families just to eat and talk? When we became too busy to cultivate friendships? When we are too rushed to say a table grace at meals?

Some of us need to slow down dramatically. We will not stop, drop out or withdraw from responsibility only slow down the fevered pace!

Smell the roses. Nurture a relationship. Be alone with God in a secret place.

Review

Our culture promotes bigness, noisiness, hustle and bustle. But the metaphors of discipleship used by Jesus were frequently pictures of small and quiet things such as salt, seed, candles, or leaven.

If the pace of things in your life has become too hectic, ask God to show you the secret of peace, rest, and stillness this week. He is never too busy to listen to you.

"Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men" (Ephesians 6:5-8).

Praise God for: His touch!

Thank God for: all who touch my life!

Ask God's forgiveness for: my aloofness!

Ask God to help: us touch the lonely!

Ask God to supply our need for: a loving touch!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Do you have a growing desire to know God's will for your life? What, if anything, is keeping your heart from joy today?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

When Great Deals Go Bad

July 11

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” - Rom 6:23

More than thirty years ago, a Frenchman named Andre-Francois Raffray made what he considered a "great deal" that could only benefit him. He agreed to pay a 90-year-old woman \$500 a month until she died. In return, he would own her sought-after grand apartment in the south of France when she died.

PREVIEW

There was nothing illegal about Raffray's contract with Jeanne Calment. Buying an apartment en viager (i.e., for life) is not uncommon in France. The elderly owner receives a predictable monthly income from the buyer; the buyer gets a bargain in real estate, in most cases. Even if he pays the owner for only a few months, the buyer inherits the property upon the owner's death.

But this particular deal went sour. The Guinness Book of Records recently listed Ms. Calment as the world's oldest person able to document her age. She turned 120 last year! Mr. Raffray died on Christmas Day of 1995 ... after paying more than \$184,000 for an apartment he never lived in or owned. Under French law, his wife, children, and grandchildren will have to continue paying the elderly lady \$500 per month until she dies.

INNERVIEW

The apartment in question is valued at less than half the amount already paid to Ms. Calment. What looked like a sure thing became a misfortune of major proportion for Mr. Raffray and his family.

Satan offers us similar deals: a flirtation, juggling figures, misrepresenting a product or service ... the possibilities are practically endless. And who will ever know? What will it matter? Others do things so much worse! Well, you know the rationalizations that come to mind.

REVIEW

The problem is, you begin to pay and pay and PAY. First, goes your self-respect. Then comes reputation. Next comes job or family. It seems so wrong that one could be asked to pay so much for what amounted to so little. But those are the breaks of this game called life.

Integrity is better kept than recovered. So watch out for those tawdry deals that offer you what you have no right to possess. They exact too high a price in the long run.

Praise God for: His warmth!

Thank God for: the security of a father's love!

Ask God's forgiveness for: not letting go of the past

Ask God to help: His word flow to all people!

Ask God to supply our need for : security in Him!

Clearer Vision

July 12

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” -James 1:3-4

It was the poet Robert Burns who wished for humanity the power to see ourselves as others see us. What insights would come to us! But what if we could see our lives as God does?

PREVIEW

If we could see as God sees, we would know that most of our fears never materialize. The majority of things most of us spend the bulk of our time worrying over, are never going to happen. So we waste energy and weaken ourselves for today's task. Foresight and precaution are one thing, but worry is something else. Jesus said, "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

If we could see as God sees, we would realize that no problem will arise without resolution. In our gloomier moments of illness, financial stress, or personal problems, we muse over questions that seem to have no answers. But the Bible still promises: "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

INNERVIEW

If we could see as God sees, we would understand that no problem comes without an attached blessing.

He good end of a painful beginning can seldom be known in advance. So, in our anxiety, we tend to doubt that anything good can come from heartache. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds," said Jesus' half-brother, "because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance".

If we could see as God sees, we would know that pain always signals the possibility for growth. Although we sometimes sigh for a world free of difficulties, we know deep inside that such a world would create cold and unfeeling people. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

REVIEW

Through God's eyes, today may look very different from what you think you see. As my friend stated last week: "God's peace is greater than your pain, and his promise is greater than your loss." So trust the One with clearer vision.

Praise God for: directing my path!

Thank God for: life's disappointments!

Ask God's forgiveness for: doubting his guidance !

Ask God to help: the hurting!

Ask God to supply our need for : grace in every circumstance!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Make a list of the things that repeatedly tempt you. Choose one to pray about and ask God to break the stronghold of this temptation.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Daily Sunshine In The Son

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

Celebrating What God Sees In You

July 13

"Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord ..." - 1 Samuel 16:6

In 1 Samuel 16, we read the story of how David was anointed king. God spoke to Samuel, the prophet, saying... (v. 1) I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen of his sons to be king. " Samuel went to see Jesse and told him to gather his sons so they could join him in the sacrifice. When Jesse and his sons arrived, Samuel saw the eldest, Eliab, and thought... (v. 6) "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord."

PREVIEW

(v. 7) But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Samuel worked his way through the sons of Jesse---seven of them---and each time he knew "The Lord has not chosen this one." So Samuel said to Jesse...

(v. 11-12) Are these all the sons you have?

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

When David arrived, the Lord spoke to Samuel and said... (v. 12) "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

(v. 13) So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.

INNERVIEW

This passage of scripture teaches us some things about the grace of God, and how he chooses to use us for his glory. We are reminded here that when God looks at us, there are some things he sees and some things he doesn't see. Remember God doesn't see you as others see you. Others see you according to their limited knowledge and understanding; God sees you as you really are, and for what you can become. People may see you the same as David's family saw him, but God doesn't.

God promotes the David's of the world because they pursue Him. God said "I will promote him, because he promotes me". *I Promote Him Because He Promotes Me.*

He has no training, but I will make him a king.

He has not been groomed, but I will make him a king.

REVIEW

He didn't grow up in the palace, but I will make him a king

He's not one of the favorite people in the palace, they don't even know his name, but I will make him a king.

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His own daddy doesn't support him or encourage him, but I will make him a king.

His brothers don't think much of him, they see no potential in him, but I'm going to make him a king.

Go find him and when you find him, anoint him to be king. No matter how many people look over you, when you seek to know God intimately, God will find you and promote you for promoting him.

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

Praise God for: His peace!

Thank God for: steadying my heart!

Ask God's forgiveness for: my overwhelming fear!

Ask God to help: hearts turn God-ward!

Ask God to supply our need for : living faith!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What was your most recent temptation, and what way out did God provide? Did you see it? What can you do to be more mindful of the exit when you are faced with temptation?

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Today, Lord, I need

Lord, today I thank You for:

Seeing The You That Makes You, You

July 14

"Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord ..." -1Samuel 16:6

God doesn't see in you the same as others see. He sees what they can't see. He sees your heart. The world may judge you according to your looks, money or status but God looks at what really matters. He looks at your heart. And it's as simple as this: When your heart belongs to God, he can use you. "

PREVIEW

That insight is based on the assumption that you understand that man is a trichotomy comprised of body, soul and spirit. Through the **body** we communicate with the world without utilizing the five senses, giving us world consciousness. With the **soul**, which is comprised of mind, will, conscience, and emotions, we are able to communicate with the world within, giving us self consciousness. In addition, with the **spirit** (breath-life) we are able to communicate with the world above, giving us God consciousness.

The scriptures refer to man's soul as his heart, or his inner being. The invisible part (or real part) can only be seen by God. (1 Sam. 16:7). We have been created as rational beings (mind), volitional beings (will), moral beings (conscience), and emotional beings (emotions).

INNERVIEW

The **mind** is the center of our cognitive behavior. With the mind we think reason and understand (Proverbs 23:7 Mark 2:8 Matthew 9:4; Matthew 15:19; Romans 10:10). This includes knowing, remembering, perceiving, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. The **will** is the center for our volitional behavior. It is the mental faculty by which one deliberately chooses or decides upon a course of action (Dan. 1:8). The **conscience** is the center for our ethical behavior. It is the faculty of recognizing the distinction between right and wrong in regard to one's own conduct (Acts 2:36,37; Acts 5:33; Acts 7:54). The **emotions** are the center of our affective behavior. They are the manifestation of feelings as a result of the agitation of our passions or sensibilities (John 14:1). They include such complex feelings as love, fear, resentment, anger, compassion, and a wide range of other human emotions.

REVIEW

The ultimate challenge in making men whole and growing spiritually is to consciously nurture all four components of the soul, thus the goal of spiritual growth is not to make you happy but to make you whole and holy.

God Sees Your Value

July 15

"Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord ..."-1Samuel 16:6

During World War II, London was frequently bombed. During these trying months Leslie Weather was an air raid warden. He walked the streets ministering to those who may have been hurt after one of those frightening and frantic raids.

PREVIEW

Following one of those raids, Weather recalls finding a little eight year old boy sitting on a curb among the ruins, sobbing his heart out. With passionate concern and loving gestures, Weathers went to the child and inquired, "Son, where is your father?" "He away fighting overseas", the boy replied. "Where is your mother"? The child sobbed, "My mother, my brother and my sister were killed in the bombing". "Do you have grand parents"? Weathers asked. He said, "No!" "Do you have uncles and aunts?" The boy looked up and said, "No". Weather asked, "Well, son who are you"? The lad with piercing eyes and trembling voice said, "Mister, I ain't nobody's nothing".

You may thinking that you too are "nobody's nothing", but you are important to God. You are the crowning act of all God's creation and terrestrial developments. You are made in the image of Adam and the liking of yourself. And the unforgettable word is "God made you - And my God makes no junk".

1. You may look at me, but not know me.
2. You may know the house I live in, but you've never seen the bed I sleep in.
3. You see the smile on my face, but you know nothing about the ache in my heart.
4. You may know my presence, but not know my loneliness.
5. You may know my pleasure, but not see my pain.
6. You don't know me, but thank God, amazing grace has always been my song of praise.

REVIEW

I don't know why Jesus came to love me so, but I thank God he looked beyond my faults and saw my needs. He knows my weakness and he knows my strength. He knows my wants and he knows my needs (Psalms 24:1,2 Psalms 100:3).

Look through the crimson lens of Calvary and see how much you are worth to God. Rom. 5:8 "Greater Love has never been shown." Jesus came down from the heights of deity to the depths of humanity to die not just my sins, but the sins of the whole world (Isaiah 53:6-9).

INNERVIEW

God Sees Your Potential

November 16

"Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord ..." -1Samuel 16:6

You may not have had much to do with where you've been, but you **HAVE EVERYTHING TO DO WITH WHERE YOU ARE GOING**, and what you are becoming. It all depends on who you think you are.

PREVIEW

I don't know who you think you are?

To the merchant you might just be a customer.

To the airline you may be just a passenger.

To the doctor you may just be a patient.

To a lawyer you may be nothing but a client.

To the thief you may just be a victim.

To a robber, you're just a robbee.

To an entertainer you're nothing but a fan.

To a teacher you are a student.

To a counselor you are a counselee.

To an employer you are an employee.

To your child you are a parent.

To your family you are relative.

To the social security office you ain't nothing but a number.

To the government you're nothing but a citizen.

To the community you may be just a neighbor.

BUT TO GOD YOU ARE A SON OR A DAUGHTER, because you have been born again from above. **YOU ARE SOMEBODY SPECIAL....YOU ARE A KING'S KID**. You have **ROYAL BLOOD FLOWING THROUGH MY SPIRITUAL VEINS**. Your **DADDY** is "The Unmoved Mover" - "Eternal Energy". The Unknown Absolute - Life Essence - **THE GOVERNOR OF THE UNIVERSE**. As such, you have potential, the sky is the limit as to what you can become.

REVIEW

What lies behind you is history and what lies before you is future. These are both tiny matter compared to what lies within you. You may not be able to change your past, and your future is yet un-lived. The present provides you with opportunities to maximize your life and the ability that lives within you.

Potential is unexposed ability, reserved power, untapped strength, uncapped capabilities, unused success, dormant gifts, hidden talents, and latent power.

Potential is what you can do that you have not done. Where you can go that you have not gone. Who you can be that you have not been. What you can imagine that you have not imagined. How far you can reach that you have not reached. What you can see that you have not seen. What you can accomplish that you have not accomplished.

INNERVIEW

Daily Sunshine In The Son

Praise God for: His goodness!

Thank God for: spiritual teachers!

Ask God's forgiveness for: not encouraging others!

Ask God to help: those who feel friendless!

Ask God to supply our need for : realistic goals!

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal to you the person He made you to be. What thoughts did He bring to mind?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

God Sees You As Necessary

November 17

"Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord ..." -1Samuel 16:6

One of the most telling aspects of this story is the fact that Jesse brought his sons to Samuel to be evaluated as to which one would be the potential king, David wasn't included. He was left with the sheep. Apparently, in Jesse's opinion, David was so unlikely to be named as king that he was left out of the process completely. As far as his family was concerned, David was unnecessary.

PREVIEW

We see this attitude again in the following chapter, when Goliath was defying the armies of Israel. David came to the scene of the battle and was scolded by his brothers for showing up. His brother Eliab said to him, "Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle." (1 Samuel 17:28)

I think we have all been in situations where we have been told, directly or indirectly, by "those in charge" that we have nothing to offer the situation. We have been told, "Your help is not needed here; we can get by without you."

INNERVIEW

In God's eyes, you are not unnecessary. He doesn't leave you out. There is something you can do for him; there's a contribution you can make. God never puts you down; but He never lets you off either. He liberates you so that you can do His work. He motives you so that you can make a contribution. Once you're freed from the sins that would tie you down, trap and oppress you, you can really soar. You don't have to make it on your own power. When you slip, stumble and fall, there is someone who really loves you and He wants to help you. He will lift you up and set you free to become all that you can be.

I *can't* is a quitter;
I *don't know* is too lazy;
I *wish I could* is a wisher;
I *might* is waking up;
I *will try* is on his feet;
I *can* is on the way;
I *will* is at work;
I *did* is now the boss.

REVIEW

You can face ever challenge.
You can Bear every burden.
You can Climb every mountain.
You can Endure every hardship.
For when you are weak, he makes you strong.
When you are down he picks you up.
When you are empty he FILLS you up.
When you are lost he leads you.
When you are sinking he saves you. AND

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When you die he will make you alive.

Losers can become winners.

Sick folk can be healed.

Weak folks can be strong.

Blind folks can see.

Oppressed folks can be free.

Hungry folks can be filled.

Dead folks can rise up.

Broken folks can be fixed.

Delinquent folks can excel and succeed.

And estranged folks can be reunited.

Praise God for: His steadfast Word!

Thank God for: teaching me responsibility!

Ask God's forgiveness for: broken promises!

Ask God to help: trouble pass us by!

Ask God to supply our need for : follow-through n
commitments!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Are you more concerned about what people think about you than what God thinks about you? Talk to God about it.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

God Sees Beyond Your Limitations

July 18

"Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord ..."-1Samuel 16:6

After Samuel had seen Jesse's older sons, he asked... (v. 11) "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Jesse knew that one of his sons would be anointed king by the prophet Samuel, but David wasn't considered because of his age. As far as Jesse was concerned, David was too young to be king- - but he wasn't too young as far as God was concerned.

PREVIEW

In some ways today we allow our youth to grow up too fast; they're exposed to some experiences long before they should be. But in other ways, we allow them to grow too slowly; we are often guilty of telling them, "You're just a kid. What can you hope to accomplish at your age?"

Let me also quickly add that you're never too old to make a difference, either. Though there may come a time when we retire from our jobs, we will never retire from our true vocation in life-serving God. We never outlive our usefulness to him. John Glenn orbited space at the age of 70. Norman Vincent Peale preached until his death at 98. Strom Thurmond served Congress well into his 90's. You'll never outlive your usefulness.

INNERVIEW

Samuel asked about David and was told... (v. 11) "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Tending the sheep. That is all they thought David was good for. They didn't see his possibilities. They didn't see his courage or his leadership skills. They couldn't have guessed that in the very near future David would boldly stand before Goliath on the battlefield and win one of the greatest victories in Israel's history. They didn't know that David would lead a mighty band of warriors through victory after victory. They didn't know that David would govern his people with the hand of God on his life. All they knew about David was that he was the brother who took care of the sheep while they applied for the job of king.

You may be tempted to see yourself as "just a school teacher"; or "just a construction worker"; or "just a businessman"; or "just a student"; or "just a musician" or "just any self-limiting concept. But God doesn't see you according to your limitations. He sees you according to your possibilities.

REVIEW

We have a tendency to idolize rock stars however we realize rock stars serve a limited role in the human endeavor. They are good for riding in limos, posing for the camera, creating hair styles, and

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occasionally entertaining us for a few minutes at a time. Oh, and occasionally they will do a benefit concert and raise money for a good cause. However, we do not really see them as potential world-changers.

You can stretch beyond the limits of your job description, also. God can accomplish great things through your life.

Praise God for: His goodness!

Thank God for: the wonder of His love!

Ask God's forgiveness for: becoming an effective soul winner!

Ask God to help: me find words to praise Him!

Ask God to supply our need for : hearts stirred to praise!

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Ask God to show you areas of your life in which you still retain ownership. Ask God to make you willing to give up ownership to Him.

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Today, Lord, I need

Lord, today I thank You for:

Common Traits Of Winners

July 19

"An intelligent man aims at wise actions, but a fool starts off in many directions" - Proverbs 17:24

Losers see things as they are and ask why, winners see things as they could be and ask why not.

Losers look through every difficulty and see difficulty. Losers believe because they see, and believe only what they see, and because they don't see much, they don't believe and because their faith is unlimited, their sight is limitless.

Losers see as far as they go, but winners go as far as they see. Losers say, I believe because I know. Winners say, I know because I believe.

A loser is afraid that he'll make a mistake, so he doesn't try, the winner knows that if he doesn't make a mistake, it is not likely that he will make anything.

Winners work with a purpose - Winners have a sense of mission. They know where they are headed and have figured out how to get there. They are focused. They plan their work and work their plan. "An intelligent man aims at wise actions, but a fool starts off in many directions" (Proverbs 17:24).

Winners insist on Integrity - Nothing lasts without integrity. Winners tell the truth - - then they do not have to worry about being caught in a lie.

"Dishonest gain will never last, so why take the risk?" (Proverbs 13:11)

Winners never make excuses - Winners never play the blame game. They accept responsibility for their mistakes. People who are good at making excuses are rarely good at much else. "The lazy man is full of excuses" (Proverbs 22:13).

Winners never stop learning - All leaders are learners. The moment you stop learning, you stop leading. Dinosaurs became extinct because they couldn't adapt to a changing environment. Can you? "The intelligent man is always open to new ideas -- in fact, he looks for them" (Proverbs 18:15).

Winners economize time and energy - We all have the same amount of time, but winners manage it better. They realize that time is more valuable than money. They work smarter, not harder. "There is a right time and a right way to do everything" (Proverbs 2:9).

Winners stick with it - Winners do not know how to quit. They keep on "keeping on". They learn from their failures. Winners realize that discouragement is a choice. You can get up and start over. "For if a righteous man fails seven times, he rises again" (Proverbs 24:16).

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Ask God to help you build these six qualities into your life "In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success." Proverbs 3:6 (Living Bible)

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

Praise God for: His excellence!

Thank God for: taking no shortcuts in building my character!

Ask God's forgiveness for: taking shortcuts!

Ask God to help: people pressured by deadlines!

Ask God to supply our need for : a commitment to excellence!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

How do you feel about your spiritual life? What does it mean to you that Jesus bought you with his life?

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

Knowing Who To Please

July 20

"I do not try to please myself but him who sent me"- John 5:30

Have you been caught in the trap of trying to please everybody? Or at least caught in the dizzying trap of trying to please too many people? Or maybe just trying to please only two people — people with obvious conflicts of interest?

PREVIEW

Companies make this mistake with boards whose focus is unclear or conflicted. Small businesses often try to make too many people happy. Clubs, mothers, teachers, restaurants, politicians, children of divorced or fighting parents — all are subject to the stress of trying to please everybody. You just can not do it!

God can't please everybody. The farmer is praying for rain on his fields the same day a Scout leader is praying it will not rain out a camping trip. The autumn enthusiasts are praying for extended periods of fall color while those of us with debilitating allergies can't wait for the first couple of killing frosts. The elderly man who hopes for a mild winter without heavy snows because of his heart condition is counterbalanced by a fifth grader who prays for snow so he can miss school.

INNERVIEW

If God himself can't please everybody, should it surprise us that we can't? Only

a fool thinks he or she can do what is beyond God!

So whom should you try to please? Family members who want more of your time or a boss who wants more hours at the office or on the road? Your company's shareholders or your clients? Your quota or your conscience?

Maybe we should all take our cue on this one from Jesus. He said, "I don't try to please myself but him who sent me" (John 5:30). Everybody watched Jesus, and every pair of eyes had an expectation. Yet he kept his life in balance by honoring one supreme obligation, one highest overseer. His one boss was God. He had an audience of one and was dedicated to pleasing him above all else — and all others.

If my first question is "What does God want of me in this situation?" then my focus has been automatically centered. If you commit to doing the right thing above the pressing or politically correct thing, you have defined your moral duty to be more critical than any competing selfish interest. If you settle your heart on what God wants you to do, it will always be right to do that — no matter what anyone else thinks of it.

REVIEW

This rule of thumb does not settle every hard case, but it sets the right tone for a life well-lived. It solves more cases than

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we might want to admit. And it frees one of an overwhelming need for the approval of others that can dominate and destroy a life. Jesus was never stressed out over the fear of rejection, for he always knew he was serving an Audience of One.

In the end, it is only God you want to hear say, "Well done!" His opinion is the only one that matters. Are you clear about whose approval you will seek today?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

Praise God for: His generosity!
Thank God for: keeping me company!
Ask God's forgiveness for: avoiding strangers!
Ask God to help: the lonely and alone!
Ask God to supply our need for : compassion for the lonely !

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Examine your reasons for wanting to grow spiritually and list them. Do your reasons honor God? Pray and make any changes that are necessary to follow God's command to honor what is His.

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

Know God Intimately

July 21

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...” -Psalms 27:4

Preview

We catch a hint of how to know God intimately, from God’s dealing with Elijah. Remember the command to Elijah was to hide thyself. (1Kings 17:2-6) It was a command to **go hide thyself** in some narrow gorge uninvaded by human footsteps, fenced in by nature to form a prophet's chamber. Go into silence. Go where no depleting distractions prevail. Retire into a lonely place for meditation. Generate power before you try to impart power. Forsake the crowd for the closet. Leave the street for secrecy. Give up your hurry for the hush. *“Be still and know that I am God.”* (Psalms 46:10)

the solitary place in order to have the sanctifying place. After the hiding comes the showing. After the silence comes the speaking. After the closet, comes the conflict. After Cherith, Carmel. You must have praying power, before you can have witnessing power.

Review

How do you begin to know somebody intimately?

- (1) You must spend time with them.
- (2) You must talk to them.
- (3) You must listen to them.
- (4) You must study their ways.
- (5) You must seek to please them

Innerview

After the command to HIDE THYSELF came the commandment to SHOW THYSELF. (1Kings 18:10) *“And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.”* We must go to the private place WITH God before we go to the public place FOR God. We must spend time in the closet WITH God, before engaging in the conflict for God. We ought to see the face of God before we see the face of men. We need to get the discipline of the private place, to know how to prepare for victory in the public place. We need

- Praise God for:** victory over boredom!
- Thank God for:** setting me free!
- Ask God’s forgiveness for:** making do!
- Ask God to help:** the spiritually dead to find life!
- Ask God to supply our need for:** more intimacy with Him!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Is there anything in your life that seems too difficult for you? What action would allow you to take a leap of faith and let God show you that He can give you victory in this area?

Talking To God Frequently

July 22

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...”-Psalms 27:4

You can talk to God, because God listens. Your voice matters in heaven. He takes you very seriously. When you enter his presence, he turns to you to hear your voice. No need to fear that you will be ignored. Even if you stammer or stumble, even if what you have to say impresses no one, it impresses God, and he listens. He listens to the painful plea of the elderly in the rest home. He listens to the gruff confessions of a death-row inmate. When the alcoholic begs for mercy, when the spouse seeks guidance, when the business man steps off the street into the chapel, God listens intently and carefully. He is interested in what interests you.

Preview

When a friend told Jesus of Lazarus' illness he said, "Lord, the one you love is sick". He did not base his appeal on the imperfect love of the one in need, but on the perfect love of the Saviour. He didn't say, "The one who loves you is sick." He said, "The one you love is sick." The power of the prayer, in other words, does not depend on the one who makes the prayer, but on the one who hears the prayer.

We can and must repeat the phrase in manifold ways. "The one you love is tired, sad, hungry, lonely, fearful, depressed." The words of the prayer vary, but the response never changes. The Savior hears the prayer. He silences heaven, so he won't miss a word. He hears the prayer, because he has invited us to come boldly to the throne.

Innerview

You may muzzle a man so that he cannot articulate a syllable, but you have not made it impossible for him to pray. You may cast a man into a dungeon and load his limbs with chains, keeping him from all manner of communication with his fellowmen, but you cannot keep him from having conversation with God. The door has never yet been forged, the dungeon never yet constructed, the adversary never get so mighty that one can keep God from His people.

If the world is ever again, to get on it's feet, the church will have to get on its knees. If we are too busy to pray, we are busier than we ought to be.

Review

Remember, it is not the ARITHMETIC of our prayer, how many and how often. It is not the MELODY of our prayers, how sweet they sound and how rhythmic they are uttered. It is not the LOGIC of our prayers, how argumentative they appear. It is not the MECHANICS of prayer, how orderly they are arranged. IT IS THE FERVENCY OF SPIRIT WITH WHICH THEY ARE OFFERED, and the power of the God to whom they are offered.

The LORD hears His people when they cry out to him, and he saves them from all their troubles. Psalms 34:17

Pursuing God Regularly

July 23

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...”-Psalms 27:4

How long since you gave the LORD a portion of undiluted, uninterrupted time listening to his voice, studying his ways and seeking his will? If you spent time reading the Gospels, observing the spiritual life of Jesus, a distinct pattern would be observed. He spent regular time with God, praying and listening. Mark says, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mark 1:35 NIV). Luke tells us, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (Luke 5:16 NIV). Let me ask the obvious. If Jesus, the Son of God, the sinless Savior of mankind, thought it worthwhile to clear his calendar to pray, wouldn't we be wise to do the same?

PREVIEW

Not only did he spend regular time with God in prayer, he spent regular time in God's Word. We don't find Him opening a leather-bound personalized copy of the Bible, but we do however, see him in the throes of the wilderness temptation, using the Word of God to deal with Satan. Three times he is tempted, and each time he repels the attack with the phrase: “It is written in the Scriptures” (Luke 4:4,8, 12), and then he quotes the verse. Jesus is so familiar with Scripture that he not only knows the verse, he knows how to use it.

INNERVIEW

I am aware that many of you are experiencing a difficult challenge to have a daily meditation and devotion. Some of you have tried before and were not successful. Others have a hard time concentrating. And everyone is busy. So rather than spend time with God, listening to his voice, we are tempted to let others spend time with Him and allow us to benefit from their experience. Would this rational work in any other areas of your life?

You don't say, “Vacations are such a hassle, packing bags and traveling. I'll send someone else on vacation for me. When he returns, I'll hear all about it and be spared all the inconvenience.” Would you do this? I, didn't think so! Do you allow someone to eat on your behalf? Do you say, “Chewing is such a bother. My jaws grow so tired, and the variety of tastes is so overwhelming. I'm going to hire someone to chew my food, and I'll just swallow whatever is given to me.” Have you ever entertained such a thought? Probably not!! There are certain things no one can do for you and spending time with God is one of them.

REVIEW

Love God Dearly

July 24

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...” -Psalms 27:4

My determined purpose is that I may know Him—that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly.

loving God. God is not mad at you; he’s mad about you, and he will do whatever it takes to bring you back into fellowship with him. But there is an easier way to regain your passion for God: Start asking God to give it to you, and keep on asking until you have it. Pray this throughout your day. “Lord, more than anything else, I want to know you intimately.”

Preview

The truth is—you are as close to God as you choose to be. Intimate friendship with God is a choice, not an accident. You must intentionally seek it. Like any friendship, you must work at developing your friendship with God. It won’t happen by accident. It takes desire, time, and energy. If you want a deeper, more intimate connection with God you must learn to honestly share your feelings with him, trust him when he asks you to do something, learn to value what he values, be interested in what he’s interested in, care about what he cares about, and desire his friendship more than anything else.

Perhaps you were passionate about God in the past but you’ve lost that desire. That was the problem of the Christians in Ephesus—they had left their first love. They did all the right things, but out of duty, not love. If you’ve just been going through the motions spiritually, don’t be surprised when God allows pain in your life.

Innerview

Rick Warren, correctly insists that pain is the fuel of passion—it energizes us with an intensity to change that we don’t normally possess. C. S. Lewis said, “Pain is God’s megaphone.” It is God’s way of arousing us from spiritual lethargy. Your problems are not punishment; they are wake-up calls from a

Review

God told the captives in Babylon, “When you get serious about finding me and desire me more than anything else, I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed. Jeremiah 29:13 [Msg].”

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, more important than developing a friendship with God. It’s a relationship that will last forever.

Praise God for: life’s adventures!

Thank God for: family!

Ask God’s forgiveness for: fear of new things!

Ask God to help: feel His protection!

Ask God to supply our need for : a sense of adventure!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What holds first place in your life? In what ways have you tried to succeed and failed? What would it mean to you to give the Lord first place?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Love God Dearly (2)

July 25

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...” - Psalms 27:4

Preview

When it comes to resting your soul, there is no place like the Great House of God. “I’m asking Yahweh for one thing,” wrote, “only one thing: to live with him in his house my whole life long. I’ll contemplate his beauty, I’ll study at his feet. That is the only quiet secure place in a noisy world.” (Psalms 27:4-5 MSG)

What is this house of God which David seeks? Is David describing a physical structure? Does he long for a building with four walls and a door through which he can enter but never exit? I think not. Our Lord does not live in temples built by human hands (Acts 17:24). When David says, “I will live in the house of the LORD forever” (Psalms 23:6), he is not saying he wants to get away from people. He is saying that he yearns to be in God’s presence, wherever he is!

Innerview

If you could ask God for one thing, what would you request? David tells us what he would ask. He longs to live in the house of God. I emphasize the word **live**, because it deserves to be emphasized. David doesn’t want to chat. He doesn’t desire a cup of coffee on the back porch. He doesn’t ask for a meal or to spend an evening in God’s house. He wants to move in with him...forever. He is asking for his own room...permanently. He doesn’t want to be stationed in God’s house, he longs to retire there. He doesn’t seek a temporary assignment, but rather a lifelong residence!

Review

“One thing I desire,” not many things. I’m not after fame and fortune, power nor position. I’m not looking for titles. I don’t want to be in a click or club. One thing I desire, one thing I thing I want bad enough to get out of my comfort zone, and go after. That is to know God intimately and to love him dearly. I want it bad enough to extend myself, to pursue it rigorously, to go after it. I WANT TO KNOW GOD INTIMATELY AND LOVE GOD DEARLY.

- Praise God for:** His knowledge!
- Thank God for:** wisdom born of experience!
- Ask God’s forgiveness for:** not honoring seasoned saints!
- Ask God to help:** the world’s youth!
- Ask God to supply our need for :** the gift of years!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What holds first place in your life? In what ways have you tried to succeed and failed? What would it mean to you to give the Lord first place?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

To Know Him Is To Love Him

July 26

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...” - Psalms 27:4

The “one thing I desire”, serious enough to get out of my comfort zone and pursue is to know God intimately and love him dearly. I desire this enough to extend myself and pursue it rigorously. I WANT TO KNOW GOD INTIMATELY AND LOVE GOD DEARLY.

Since love is the energy of life, the motive of praise, the heartbeat of worship, the center of joy and the life of faith; we should love Him enough to please Him. His will must become our will. I WANT TO OBEY A PLAN THAT PLEASES HIM. I WANT TO BELONG TO A CHURCH THAT PLEASES HIM. I WANT TO WEAR A NAME THAT PLEASES HIM. I WANT TO WORSHIP IN A WAY THAT PLEASES HIM.

Preview

For after all, He’s the...
FOUNDATION that never shakes
TRUTH that never lies
FRIEND that never forsakes
CONQUEROR that never loses
SUPPLY that never quits
FOUNTAIN that never clogs

We love him because he first loved us. How do you know God loves you? He gives us many evidences: God loves you; you’re never out of his sight. He cares about every detail of your life. He has good plans for your life. He forgives you; and is lovingly patient with you. God loves you infinitely more than you can imagine.

Review

The greatest expression of God’s love was the sacrifice of his son. “God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). If you want to know how much you matter to God, look at Christ with his arms outstretched on the cross, saying, “I love you this much! I’d rather die than live without you.”

LIGHT that never dims
DELIVERER that never
disappoints
KING that never ages
LORD that never berates
SHEPHERD that never overlooks
BEGINNING that never ends
BEAUTY that never pales
COMFORT that never departs
PHYSICIAN that never 'charges'
STAR that never falls
HELP that never hinders
PRIZE that never withers
JOY that never subsides
MASTER that never intrudes
WAY that never deceives
HOPE that never fades

Innerview

Daily Sunshine In The Son

ROCK that never moves
STRENGTH that never weakens
WISDOM that never misleads
GLORY that never ceases
BRIDGE that never collapses
REWARD that never depreciates
ANCHOR that never fails
JUDGE that never misjudges

Praise God for: making His Spirit available!

Thank God for: eternal results!

Ask God's forgiveness for: trusting my own wisdom!

Ask God to help: our power come from God!

Ask God to supply our need for : more of His Spirit!

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What holds first place in your life? In what ways have you tried to succeed and failed? What would it mean to you to give the Lord first place?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

Lord, today I thank You for:

Trust God Fully

July 27

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...” -Psalms 27:4

Preview

God could trust David because David trusted God. Therefore, God promoted David, because David promoted God. So, we are not at all surprised to find that in David's life no honor was denied him.

No tribute was withheld from him. Every vault or every band in the nation was open to him. Every piece of paper currency had his picture on it. Every man was ready to defend him. Every woman was ready to gratify him. Every newspaper published his exploits, and magnified his face on the front page.

Innerview

GOD TRUSTED DAVID, BECAUSE DAVID TRUSTED GOD! David learned well the lesson his father taught him “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

The Hebrew word for “trust” is BATACH, meaning “to rely on”. Another word akin to trust is the Hebrew word for lean “SHAAN”, meaning to place confidence in”. At the root of this original Hebrew term is the idea of throwing oneself down and lying extended on the ground, casting all hopes for the present and the future upon another thus finding shelter and security there. We are *commanded*

by our Lord to cast ourselves fully and absolutely at His feet.

Throw yourself completely upon the Lord-that is, cast all your present and future needs on Him who is your intimate Savior-God...finding in Him your security and safety. Do this with all your mind , feeling and will. In order to make this possible, you must present your concern in each of your circumstances. Then He (having taken full control of the situation) will thoroughly smooth out and straighten your paths, removing each obstacle along the way (Proverbs 3:5,6 THE LANE'S TRANSLATION).

Review

IF GOD FOR SOME REASON, HASN'T given you your miracle, keep trusting him. If he has not supplied your need, keep on trusting him. If he has not solved your problem yet, keep trusting him. If he has not removed your burden, keep trusting him. If he has not calmed your crisis, keep trusting him. If he has not answered your prayer, keep trusting him.

GO AHEAD AND TRUST HIM...

He has never failed a test
He has never lost a battle
He has never told a lie
He has never misunderstood
a situation
He has never broken a vow
He has never refused an individual
He has never disappointed a soul

Daily Sunshine In The Son

Praise God for: keeping us today!

Thank God for: spiritual traditions!

Ask God's forgiveness for: days that I fail
to commune with Him!

Ask God to help: babes grow in faith!

Ask God to supply our need for: His daily
protection!

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What holds first place in your life? In what ways have you tried to succeed and failed? What would it mean to you to give the Lord first place?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

Partial Obedience

July 28

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...”-Psalms 27:4

To obey God requires a believing and submissive spirit. You must believe that whatever he says is motivated out of love for you. If you are to obey, you must also believe that whatever he commands is for your best interest. This requires a submissive spirit.

Preview

In today's competitive culture we are taught to never give up or give in therefore we don't hear much about surrendering and submitting. If winning is everything, surrendering is unthinkable. We would rather talk about winning, succeeding, overcoming, and conquering than yielding, submitting, obeying, and surrendering.

Submit comes from the Greek word “hupotasso”, which means, “to get in order under”. If you go to a military parade, each soldier gets in order under his officers. In a common sense, submission means to “yield authority”. When you approach an intersection with a stop sign or a yield sign, you must submit to cross traffic. To submit literally means to “voluntarily get under someone else's mission”.

Innerview

Surrendering and submitting to God is the heart of worship and obedience. We give ourselves to him, not out of fear or duty, but in love, “because he first loved us”. God is not a cruel slave driver or a bully who uses brute force to coerce us into submission. He doesn't try to control our will, but woos us to himself, that we might offer ourselves freely to him. God is a lover and a liberator, and surrendering to him brings freedom, not bondage. When we completely surrender ourselves to Jesus, we discover that he is not a tyrant, but a savior; not a boss, but a brother; not a dictator, but a friend.

Review

The opposite of a submissive spirit is rebellious spirit. To fail to do what God says because you do not know what he wants you to do is bad enough. But to know what he wants and fail to do it, is called rebellion. Read again 1Sam. 15: 20-23 to see the seriousness of rebellion.

1Samuel 15: 23 God calls partial obedience rebellion and he says that rebellion is as great a sin as witchcraft.

Praise God for: reaching those who are hard to reach!

Thank God for: His Guiding Word!

Ask God's forgiveness for: taking so many blessings for granted!

Ask God to help: provide guidance for every child!

Ask God to supply our need for: life changing principals!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Daily Sunshine In The Son

What holds first place in your life? In what ways have you tried to succeed and failed? What would it mean to you to give the Lord first place? *Journal for Digging Deeper:*

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

Partial Obedience (2)

July 29

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...”-Psalms 27:4

We surrender and submit to God out of appreciation not intimidation. Surrendering is demonstrated in obedience. You say “yes, Lord” to whatever he asks of you. To say “no Lord” is to speak a contradiction. You can’t call Him Lord when you refuse to obey him.

Preview

Write in bold letters on the screen of your mental awareness. There is no such thing as partial obedience. **PARTIAL OBEDIENCE IS TOTAL DISOBEDIENCE.** To obey means to do what God says, when God says, like God says, for the reason God says.

A doctrinal application of this principle must be made for us to adequately appreciate the difference between obedience and partial obedience. What does it mean to do what he says? First, it means to do what he says, **WHEN** he says. The scripture reveals in Acts 20:7 that the New Testament Church met for worship on the first day of the week. Are we following the New Testament pattern of worship, if we choose to worship on Saturday the Sabbath Day? I think not. By doing so, we have not obeyed God, even if we are worshippers and regular in worship on the Sabbath Day. To obey God is to do what he says **WHEN** he says do it.

Innerview

Acts 20:7 teaches us that the early church met for worship on the first day of the week and communed, partook of the Lord’s Supper weekly. Why, weekly? Because “for as often as we eat the bread and drink the cup, we show the Lord’s death until he comes”(1Cor. 11:26). Some churches partake of the Lord’s Supper monthly, but the scriptures say weekly. Other churches partake bi-monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually and some never, but the scripture example is still weekly.

Second, to obey means to do what he says, **HOW** he says do it. The command and example for music in New Testament Worship is singing. In Eph. 5:19, the command is to sing. To sing and play, sing and beat, sing and pluck, sing and blow violates that command. Whenever specificity (when something is specifically required), the law of exclusion goes into effect. When someone tells you specifically what to do, he does not have to tell you what not to do. Therefore, when God commands us to sing, he does not have to tell us not to play, beat, pluck or blow. To obey is to merely, sing.

A Desire To Know Him Better

July 30

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life...”-Psalms 27:4

I KNOW HIM, BUT I WANT TO KNOW HIM BETTER

I KNOW HIM AS...

A journeyer of time and the convener of eternity. (But I want to know him better)

The object of history's gaze and the bridegroom of the church. (But I want to know him better)

My Grandmother's God and my Grandfather's friend. (But I want to know him better)

My soul's full hope, my Anchor Sure and steadfast (But I want to know him better)

The light of my life and the hope of my days. (But I want to know him better)

Our purchase price at the gates of hell. (But I want to know him better)

I KNOW HIM AS...

- My Comfort in Crisis
- My Help in Helplessness
- My Friend in Loneliness
- My Joy in Sorrow
- My Peace in Perplexity
- My Salvation in Sinfulness
- My Solution in Problems

My Glory in Grief
(But I want to know him better)

- My Wealth in Poverty
- My Strength in Weakness
- My Wisdom in Decisions
- My Stability in Stumbling
- My Victory in Battles
- My Light in Darkness
(But I want to know him better)
- My Deliverance in Defeat
- My Forgiveness in Faults
- My Assurance in Adversity
- My Hope in Heartaches
- My Song in the Night
- My Faith in Fears..... I know him,
BUT I WANT TO KNOW HIM BETTER!

- Praise God for:** His grace!
- Thank God for:** deep contentment!
- Ask God's forgiveness for:** worrying!
- Ask God to help:** the discontented!
- Ask God to supply our need for :** grace in every circumstance!

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Have you studied God's commands and plans for your life? What does He want for your life?

Journal for Digging Deeper:
