



My 2024 Fasting Devotional

My Year of Impact

Kenyatta D. Simmons

Senior Pastor

The Church of Uncommon Favor

We Love God and Serve Others

Hey Life Changers...

It's 2024 and this is your year of IMPACT. God will use you this year to do BIG things for HIM. 2023 was your year of Increase and God did that. HE provided Increase in many areas of our lives and now it's 2024... God wants to make an IMPACT. Impact on the lives of others. Impact the places we work and visit on a regular basis. Impact our families. Impact our community. Impact! Impact! Impact!

As the Church of Uncommon Favor, we challenge you to walk in Boldness and Authority as Big Things will begin to manifest themselves in your life. It may not happen in January or February but be assured that it will happen!

We believe that as we come together during the next 21 days of fasting and re-dedication, God will position you be IMPACTFUL in 2024. As you've heard me say over and over – there is awesome Power through Prayer and Fasting.

I've included a Prayer and Fasting Journal. I encourage you to make this Prayer and Fasting Journal a part of your daily routine. Here are some tips that I believe will help you reap the greatest spiritual benefit from this prayer and fasting journal.

1. Select a specific time and place each day that is free from distractions.
2. Read each day and pray.
3. Purchase a separate journal or notebook to record what God is saying.
4. If you miss a day (You might) don't stop! Just pick up where you left off.
5. Drink water and/or juice during the fast to maintain your strength.
6. Commit to attending LIFE Institute (Virtually) on Tuesdays and Worship on Sundays as you will receive resources and encouragement from others who are fasting as well.
7. Lastly, commit to being faithful in your financial giving as you are looking for the Bigness of God

As we go through this time of prayer and fasting, let's pray as a church family for God's plan and purpose. During this time with God, our corporate prayer is that we continue to impact families for Jesus Christ in the Katy and West Houston area.

Be Blessed! - *Pastor Kenyatta D. Simmons*

Life Changer Community Church

LIFE Fast

January 8th -January 28th

Fasting is one of the most powerful weapons God has ever given us for our daily lives.

We all go through times when we feel like we are not living up to our full potential. Sometimes we lose our energy and our spiritual sharpness. This causes us to lose our edge. What does it really mean to lose your edge?

Although fasting lasts for a short season, it brings long-term results, which sharpens us, enabling us to face the challenges of life in His strength.

Why should I fast?

1. Are you in need of clarity, direction, peace, financial stability, and comfort for 2024 and beyond?
2. Do you need healing (physical or emotional)?
3. Do you need the tender touch of God in your life?
4. Is there a dream inside you that only HE can make possible?
5. Is your heart in need of a spiritual transplant?
6. Do you desire a deeper, more intimate & powerful relationship with the Lord?
7. Are you ready to have heightened sensitivity to the desires of God?
8. Do you need to break away from bondages that are holding you hostage?
9. Is there a friend or loved one that needs Salvation, Healing or Deliverance?
10. Do you desire to know God's will for your life?

Types of Fasts

Full Fast: Drink only liquids (you establish the number of days).

The Daniel Fast: Eat no meat, no sweets and no bread. Drink water and juice. Eat fruits and vegetables. **(THIS IS WHAT LC3 IS DOING)**

Partial Fast A partial fast is from 6:00 am to 3:00 pm or from sunup to sundown. You can select from three types of fasting —a Full Fast, Daniel Fast or give up at least one item of food.

Scripture References: Matthew 6:16-18, Matthew 9:14-15, Luke 18:9-14

Details of Our Daniel Fast

Daily Prayer

Prayer should be offered to God numerous times a day

Daily Devotionals

Every day during the fast, there is a devotional that will include scripture and a reflection to guide us through the week. Use this as a guide; you may also use other devotional materials as well.

THE FAST WILL LAST FOR THE ENTIRE 21 DAYS—this includes Sundays!!!! You may have fruits and vegetables in any form i.e. 100% fruit juices, vegetable soups, and smoothies with no yogurt. Refrain from all spirits i.e. beer, wine, etc., during your fast.

Dietary Restrictions does not prevent you from participating in our church wide fasting and praying. God does not expect for you to jeopardize your current health in order to fulfill the call to fast. On the following page are alternatives to fasting from food for those with dietary restrictions.

DO NOT FAST FROM YOUR MEDICATION!

Fasting Option for Those With Dietary Restrictions

Fast #1 – REMOVING CERTAIN FOODS OR ITEMS FROM YOUR DIET OR LIFE

One type of fasting is to remove certain foods from your diet such as fried foods, coffee, sweets, sodas, refined sugar and/or flour, wine, beer, spirits, etc.

Fast #2 – REMOVING ITEMS OF HUMAN PLEASURE

Another type of fasting is removing the pleasure of items that can result in a non-communicative moment with God such as television, telephone, surfing the Internet, etc. You can set aside time to not engage in these pleasurable items. Refraining from wine, beer, spirits, etc, is required.

In Addition To The Food Fast, You Should Be Fasting From:

Refrain from gossip and idle chatter

No secular music (This is all day for the entire fast, including Sunday.)

YOUTH!

This year, we are excited because we have added a youth component. We are asking that youth in grades 6th-12th also participate.

- The Youth are to memorize one of the following scriptures:
 Psalm 23 Psalm 100 Psalm 150 Isaiah 40:30–31 John 3:16
- **The Youth are to refrain from:**
 - Secular Music between the hours of 6am-8am and 3pm-6pm
 - Tic Toc, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat (all forms of social media) between the hours of 6am-8am and 8pm-10pm
 - Fast Food

The Goals of My Fast

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Week #1 Focus – Trust God for The Impossible

Week #2 Focus – Do The Internal Work

Week #3 Focus – Get In Position

Day #1 – Monday, January 8th, 2024: Why Fast?

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:16 (NIV)

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.”

It is time to get a new outlook on fasting. When practiced the right way, fasting is something that everyone should enjoy. That’s right...enjoy! Fasting is for every follower of Jesus. Too many people fast with a strict mindset that focuses on abstaining. The fasting I am talking about is different. Of course, it involves abstaining from food, but the mindset is completely different. It is possible to have minimal physical emptiness with maximum spiritual fullness.

Fasting is one of the most powerful spiritual weapons believers can use. Maybe you’ve never done it before. There is a serious misconception that fasting is for serious, super Christians, or only for times of crisis. Some even think fasting is only an Old Testament thing. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:16, “When you fast.” He did not say **if** you fast!

There is a closeness to God that you simply will not experience from prayer or personal devotions alone. You must fast. You get a revelation of God’s Word when you fast that you simply cannot get any other way. Disconnecting from the distractions of the world through fasting and connecting into the power and presence of God through prayer, brings a supernatural freshness and newness to our souls.

TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT

What will you be fasting over the next 21 days? Your fast doesn’t necessarily have to be food. You could fast from social media or anything that would help you be more intentional in your focus on God and His Word.

PRAYER FOCUS

Please take 5-10 minutes and pray for your neighbors, family members, and those who don’t have a relationship with Jesus.

Stovall Weems - Writer and Pastor

Day #2 – Tuesday, January 9th, 2024: Believing God for the Impossible

Lynette Kittle

*“All things are possible for those who believe. “Jesus replied, ‘What is impossible with man is possible with God’” - **Luke 18:27***

Do you have a desire to go beyond praying prayers that ask God to answer only the things you think He can answer? Are you tired of feeling limited in your petitions, requesting God to move only in the ways you've decided he can move?

Many of us pray only when we can see a plausible path forward. But what if you stepped out and began praying and asking God to accomplish things that seemed impossible, requests where it seems like there was no way it could ever happen except through God?

God tells us in **Isaiah 43:19**, that he can do impossible things, like making a path through the wilderness or creating streams in the desert. Rather than pacing back and forth, waiting and hoping God will do something spectacular in our lives, are we ready step out and ask God for the impossible? To move in situations and lives where we can't see how He could possibly move? To ask Him to answer in ways we can't even imagine or possibly believe could even ever come about?

What's Holding Us Back from Seeing the Impossible?

As **James 4:2** explains, we have not because we do not ask God. Some might wonder if it's testing God to ask in such big ways? But after all, God tells us He is the God of the impossible. And He is the One who says, "nothing is too difficult" for Him. As recorded in **Jeremiah 32:17**, "Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you."

Are We Underestimating What God Can Do?

How many times do we forget what God is able to accomplish? Are we so accustomed to how the world works that we have come to underestimate what God can do? Have we been limiting how He is able to move on our behalf? Yet, isn't He the One who gives life to the dead and calls those things, which are not, into existence? (**Romans 4:17**)

Are We Forgetting to Approach and Ask with Boldness?

Have we forgotten what **Hebrews 4:16** urges us to do? "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Like **1 John 5:14,15** explains, “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him.”

Our Asking Reveals Our Faith and Pleases God

It pleases God when we step out in faith. “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”

It also glorifies God to answer us. “And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (**John 14:13**).

Challenge for today: *No Cell Phone usage for 2 Hours (Emergency or Business use only; No Texting (that includes responding), talking, utilizing of social media, checking the weather, etc for 2 hours between the hours of 9am-6pm) You can choose the time frame.*

Bible Reading: 1 Kings 19: 1-19 (v11-12); Psalm 23

Prayer Focus: In this time of fasting, what is your mind tuned to? What distractions do you need to remove so that you can focus on God? Prepare your heart to hear the voice of God and ask Him to help you remove distractions that keep you from focusing on Him and hearing His voice clearly.

Day #3 – Wednesday, January 10th, 2024: Big Decisions

Scripture: Luke 4:42-44

“At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for Him and when they came to where He was, they tried to keep Him from leaving them. But He said, ‘I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.’ And He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.”

The hardest decisions to make are usually not between what is good and bad. Usually, the most difficult decisions are between what is good, better and best. It is so important to be able to clearly hear the voice of God when facing important decisions. Jesus regularly disconnected from the world to hear the voice of God. This awakening season is all about disconnecting from the world so that we can hear the voice of God.

All sorts of things will try to crowd God out of your life. Jesus faced pressure from the crowds, and He had to choose between doing good and doing God’s will. The crowds constantly tugged on Jesus to heal them or to do another miracle. What might have happened if Jesus had listened to the voice of the crowds? He would have settled for a very good cause, healing, but missed His primary purpose to preach the kingdom of God to lost humanity. Jesus knew that, with so much need everywhere, He had to hear the voice of His Father, or He would have mistakenly chosen what’s good instead of what’s God. That is exactly what will happen in our lives if we’re not tuned in to God and hearing His voice over the voice of the crowd.

The voice of the crowd cannot answer the question, “Why are you here?” When you hear the voice of God, you begin to understand His purpose for you and what you are all about. It is then that you can prioritize your life around that purpose; this is a freeing place to be, and it uncomplicates your life. Once you begin to realize God’s purpose for your life, you start to understand something foundational about yourself; you’re not here on earth simply to exist but—guess what? —you were sent. Your whole life will change when you understand that you were sent here by God.

TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT

I don’t know your specific assignment regarding your career, relationships, or other matters. I Do know that we are all called to be witnesses for Jesus. I want to challenge you to look at the normal activities of your everyday life and see them as opportunities to be a witness for Jesus. During your fast, look for ways to serve and encourage others at work, at home, in your neighborhood, or at church.

Today’s Prayer Focus

Day #4 -Thursday, January 11th, 2024: Time to Reset

Scripture: Ephesians 2:10

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

One of the reasons I think prayer and fasting are so powerful when combined, is that, together, they activate a chain reaction where we see God’s kingdom manifest on earth. This sequence is what I call agreement...alignment...assignment. When we come into agreement with God, we are aligned with God’s perfect will on earth, as it already is in heaven. When we are aligned with heaven, we find that God can use us in ways we never thought possible; then, we begin to walk in our assignment –the purpose that God created us to fulfill.

God has given you a specific and unique assignment. You are a masterpiece designed by God to make a difference in this world. There is a very specific purpose for which you were created. God is the only One who can truly inform you of that purpose, and, in order to fulfill it, you will need His power.

Here’s the deal: when it comes to pursuing our God-given assignment, if you and I are not in tune with God’s voice, we will only hear the voice of the crowd and get weighed down by the pressures of life. Like a radio station we can’t quite hear clearly, all the voices will cause static and make it difficult for us to tune into the Voice we need to hear.

TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT

As you fast, let your hunger help you focus on God. Every time you experience a pang of hunger, ask God to increase your hunger for Him, in the same way that you hunger for food.

PRAYER FOCUS

Day 5: Time to Reset - Friday, January 12th, 2024

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.”

Do you think of yourself as a temple? The Bible says that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We've got to get “the gunk” out of God's temple so we can hear His voice clearly and prepare ourselves for new things He wants to do, in and through us. Even if you are going to church, reading your Bible, and worshiping, there are times when you need to give your soul a good spring cleaning to make it fresh again.

As we live our lives, over time we can get all “gunked up.” While our spirit is eternally made new through Christ, our soul, which is the intersection of our mind, will and emotions, can become weighed down, heavy, negative, and sluggish.

The constant demand on our mind, the distractions and the noise, can weigh us down and put us in a spiritual fog. Life has a way of stacking on the pressure and pain, which causes our emotions to get out of whack. As we get tired and weighed down, our conscience can become desensitized, not really bothered by things that once convicted us. God's voice is slowly muffled, and we begin to lose our passion for Him. The fire within dims, and we shift into autopilot, operating from a position of obligation or routine in our relationship with God, instead of one of affection and fervor.

Fasting hits the reset button of our soul. To receive the new things God wants to bring into our lives, we have to periodically hit the reset button. This is what I call experiencing a newness of soul. What a powerful gift we have been given through fasting.

TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT

Along with your fasting, make sure you slow your pace and remove distractions. Try to add some times of silence and solitude along with your fasting.

PRAYER FOCUS

Day #6: – Saturday, January 13th, 2024: Surrender

Scripture: Matthew 16:24: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me.’”

You can know God and never completely surrender your life to Him. Your sins can be forgiven, and you can be on your way to heaven, but you can still be in control. You can add God to your life, but it still can be your life. You still can be in the driver’s seat.

Prayer and fasting is about getting out of the driver’s seat and getting in the passenger seat. To truly surrender means giving God your whole life and discovering the reality, joy, peace, freedom, feelings and experiences that come with truly knowing God. We often believe this is a one-time decision, but it is a practice we must regularly engage in to keep our spiritual fervor.

God is asking you a question, “Will you let Me drive? Will you give Me complete control? If you want all of Me, then I need all of you.” Today, will you tell Jesus have His way in your life?

When we experience staleness in our relationship with God, for whatever reason, surrendering again is the first step to rekindle the fire within! We need to start each day with complete surrender. Surrender is more of an ongoing process rather than just a one-time decision. Full surrender to God means no more going back and forth, with one foot in the world, and the other foot in God’s kingdom. Following Jesus is all or nothing.

The surrendered life is the best life. It’s really the only way to live as a believer. But, to get there, you’ve got to go all out. This means total surrender. No more halfway stuff; you can’t be a part-time Christian. God wants you to be a full-time follower of Jesus. When you fully surrender to God, you are filled with His Spirit and are awakened to His presence in your life. God will energize you and give you a hunger for His Word.

TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT

Is there something that you need to surrender to God today? What have you been holding onto, that you need to give back to God? During your prayer time today, give God the things that you have been holding onto and watch how He moves mountains in your life.

Day #7 - Sunday, January 14th, 2024: Generosity

Scripture: Malachi 3:10

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this, “says the Lord Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.’”

THE PROMISE OF ABOUNDING GENEROSITY

We underestimate the generosity of our Lord.

If you’re like me, perhaps it’s not simply a lack of understanding of the significance of what we’ve already been given in Emmanuel. Rather, well-intentioned, and rightful warnings against “treating God like Santa Claus” or falling into the “prosperity gospel” can cause dwelling on the idea of a God who gives generously to feel consumerist, greedy, or, at the very least, uncomfortable.

Yet, while we must certainly never reduce the indescribably precious gift of prayer to a transaction of demands, nor fail to measure well the cost of the Way of the Cross, there is also a truth of which we must not lose sight: Generosity finds its source in God.

The same God who calls us to become living sacrifices is more eager to delight His children than the giddiest parent on Christmas morning. The same God who dwells in unapproachable light, God is more jovial and full of mirth than our culturally imagined St. Nick. The Holy One of Israel, the Unblemished Lamb, the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty King, the long-awaited Messiah — the very same Lord brims over with affection for you, relishes your excitement, and cherishes your moments of childlike wonder.

While we know it is better to give than to receive, it is the assurance of our access to His abundance that frees us to walk in radical generosity without fearing lack.

Not simply because we have been given every spiritual blessing, not simply because Christ has taught us what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, not simply because He intercedes for us still at the right hand of the Father; we need not fear because *we cannot out-give God*. We cannot surpass His generosity.

“Test Me in this,” He insists. *“See if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”*

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.”

It’s easy to disguise fear of scarcity as prudence. It’s difficult to expect a harvest so rich we struggle to bind the sheaves. It’s easy to conflate reaping the fruit of living as God intended with earning God’s favor. It’s difficult to give without letting our left hand know what our right is doing. It’s easy to become self-deceived about the limits of our control. It’s difficult to daily come needy and open-handed to receive the gifts of the One who calls us Beloved.

But, take heart. He will supply the grace you need to dare to believe, to dare to respond. He who fed thousands with just a few fish and loaves can multiply your offering. And He who knows intimately the longings of your heart, knows also how to give good gifts.

May we live in light of the generosity of our Lord — and so come to know it all the more.

TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT

Lord, teach us to trust Your generosity. Move us to kindness and compassion. Give us courage, wisdom, and grace to love our world the way You do, and to meet the needs You set before us.

Amen

PRAYER FOCUS

Day #8 – Monday, January 15th, 2024

Trust God to Do Great Things (Rick Warren)

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” Matthew 19:26 (NIV)

Everything is possible with God.

Jesus said, *“According to your faith let it be done to you”* (Matthew 9:29)

God wants to use you. He wants to bless you. He wants to do amazing things in your life. He wants you to be a world changer. But he’s waiting for you to trust him.

Stop saying, “I can’t.” “I can’t make this marriage work.” “I can’t do what God wants me to do.” “I can’t love those who are different than me.” Those are lies! All things are possible with God.

Ephesians 3:20 says, *“Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinity beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes”* (TLB).

God wants to use you, and according to your faith it will be done to you. Do you know what the greatest opposition to your faith is? It’s not other people. It’s not critics. It’s not even the devil. It’s your own unbelief.

You have a choice. You can choose to believe God—or not. You can choose to trust God—or not. There are many things you don’t have control over. But you can choose to have faith in God. Do you want God to do big things in your life? Then start believing.

Let’s Talk

When have you seen God do great things as a result of someone’s faith?

In what areas do you easily trust God? In what areas is trusting him more difficult?

Do you believe God can use you to do great things for him? Why or why not?

Day #9 – Tuesday, January 16th, 2024: Creating Space

Stoval Weems - Writer and Pastor

Scripture: Malachi 3:10

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Prayer and fasting is about creating space for God, clearing a runway in our lives for God to land. When you want something new and exciting to happen in your life, then you have to create some space. An expectant mom goes to great lengths to create the perfect nursery space for her new little one.

Think about that new thing that you want God to do in your life. Think about that problem that is blocking your path that you need God to remove. As much as God wants to do something amazing in your life, He is a filler, not a forcer.

Too often we spend so much time and energy trying to figure out and anticipate every scenario. We want God to do this; we want God to do that. But all the while God is saying, “Just create a little space for Me, and I’ll come in and fill it.” By seeking God, and by following Him fully, you are creating space for God to move. As you fast, and as you pray, you are making room for God to do what only He can do. He is a filler, not a forcer.

TAKE A MOMENT AND REFLECT

Maybe you have tried to participate in this fast, but have found yourself stumbling along the way. I want to encourage you to keep going. Don’t be discouraged by looking at the times you gave in to hunger or messed up. Be encouraged by this: when we draw near to God, He draws near to us.

PRAYER FOCUS

Day #10 – Wednesday, January 17th, 2024: *The Breaking Process*

Pastor Jentzen Franklin

“He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples.” Mt 14:19 NKJV

The Bible says that Jesus “took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes” (v. 19 NKJV).

Notice the progression in this story: The loaves were taken, blessed, broken, then given to others. That’s how God works! In order to bless others through you, He will take you, bless you, break you, and give you to others. Paul had to be broken of pride. “I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh...Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, ‘My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me...For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2Co 12:7-10 NLT). So, if you have a “thorny” person or situation in your life, God wants you to experience His grace and power through dealing with them. Paul finally reached the place where he could thank God for his “thorn.”

The Bible speaks about “the sacrifice of praise to God” (Heb 13:15). When you’re willing to sacrifice in order to have something, it means you value it enough to pay the price for it. Do you want to walk in God’s power? To experience His blessing? Then thank God for your “thorny situation,” and embrace the breaking process through which He is taking you today.

Day# 11 – Thursday, January 18th, 2024: Come and Rest

by Priscilla Shirer

“He said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.’” Mark 6:31a (EHV)

Rest is becoming a lost art in our modern culture.

We’ve exchanged its old-fashioned value for a hectic, fast-paced, breakneck speed of life. Our fervor and passion disintegrate while our blood pressure elevates. Packed within each 24-hour time span is an unsustainable number of tasks we’ve placed upon ourselves, as well as demands others deem urgent enough to place upon us as well.

And based on our fatigue and frustration, we’d give anything to offload the burden.

But rest doesn’t seem like a viable option anymore. Have we forever passed up any kind of reality that dares to include rest as part of a typical day? Or week? Or ... month? (Or ... a year?)

When Jesus sent His disciples off on a specific ministry assignment in Mark 6:7-11, He didn’t shield them from the fact that their journey would not be particularly easy. People would refuse to listen to them, much less give them hospitality. Any cause for excitement would be counterbalanced by any number of legitimate reasons for quitting and discouragement. They’d be empowered to preach, heal and spread the news of the kingdom, yes, but they’d also be exhausted on every front — physically, emotionally and spiritually. And even after finally coming back home from their tiring journey, people would still be *“coming and going,”* enough that the disciples *“did not even have time to eat”* (v. 31b).

So as their first order of business upon returning, Jesus greeted them with clear instructions to rest: *“He said to them, ‘Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while’”* (Mark 6:31a).

It wasn’t a request. It wasn’t a friendly suggestion. It was Jesus’ command. Here’s what you’re going to do, guys. You’ve been through a lot. And much more remains to be done. But for now ... *rest ... come and rest.* At least for a little while.

Do you ever feel guilty for taking time away to regroup and recharge? Are you saddled with a sense of wasted opportunity if every space on your calendar is not

filled? Are you afraid your world will stop turning if you disengage for even a few moments? Are you concerned about losing your competitive advantage if you're not converting every moment into maximum achievement and efficiency?

Then hear the voice of your Savior welcoming you into a place where grace flows, where the Spirit refuels, and where mercy fixes what's been strained and stressed by accumulating life's pressures. This is the space where priorities and relationships that have been pushed out of alignment (and are in need of repair) get patched up and recalibrated.

Quiet time is not an excuse for the lazy but a wise investment for the diligent. It's for those who are committed to being active servants and followers of Jesus Christ instead of slaves to the tyranny of urgent busyness and activity. By prioritizing rest for ourselves and those we love, we might just rediscover the joy we thought had been lost forever.

Lord, help me to embrace Your grace. Guide my steps as I seek to come to You ... and allow me to rediscover the rest You commanded to be part of my life. In Jesus' Name, Amen

Day #12 – Friday, January 19th, 2024: Unique Techniques

Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:17–39

But David persisted. “I have been taking care of my father’s sheep and goats,” he said. “When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I’ll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!”

Saul finally consented. “All right, go ahead,” he said. “And may the LORD be with you!” (1 Samuel 17:34–37)

Man is impressed with the externals; he doesn't see the heart. God is different. He doesn't judge by appearance or intelligence. King Saul hadn't learned that, however, so he looked at David and said, "You don't have the size for it. You're just a kid. Look over there at that giant!"

*As I picture it, David was blinking and thinking, **What giant? The only giant in my life is God. That's a dwarf over there, Saul. God is not impressed with the externals; He looks on the heart. God is omnipotent! And if He's on my side, omnipotence can't lose.***

So often, when facing our own giants, we forget what we ought to remember, and we remember what we ought to forget. We remember our defeats, and we forget the victories. Most of us can recite the failures of our lives in vivid detail, but we're hard-pressed to name the specific, remarkable victories God has pulled off in our past.

Not so with David! He says, "You know why I can fight Goliath, Saul? Because the same God who gave me power over a lion and a bear will give me power over Goliath. It is God who will empower me . . . so just let me at him."

Well, that let Saul off the hook, so he says, "Go, and may the LORD be with you." Isn't it remarkable how people can use spiritual clichés to cover up their empty

lives? They know all the right words to use . . . all the pious-sounding sayings. Saul sure did.

Then Saul said, "Now wait a minute, David. We have to fix you up for battle." Imagine it! You can't tell me the Bible doesn't have humor, because it says, "Saul clothed David with his garments." Here's Saul, a 52 long, and David is a 36 regular.

What works for one person will not necessarily work for someone else. We're always trying to put our armor on someone else or wear someone else's armor. But that's not the way to do battle. It was a great breakthrough in my own life when I finally discovered that I could be me and God would use me. I couldn't operate well, wearing another's armor. God provides unique techniques for unique people.

Day #13 – Saturday, January 20th, 2024: When God Says "No"

Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Scripture: 2 Samuel 7:4–17

“Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever. (2 Samuel 7:11–13) *"David, you will know the delight of having a son by whom this temple will be built. Not through your efforts, but through your son the dream will be fulfilled."*

It is not a question of sin here. It is not God's judgment that is coming upon David as a consequence of wrong. It is simply God's redirecting David's plan and saying, "This is a great resolve, but I say 'no' to you and I say 'yes' to your son. Now accept that."

Well, was David wrong to begin with—wrong in thinking of building the temple?

It is not a question of being wrong. It's a question of accepting God's "no" and living with the mystery of His will. We people on this earth package everything. And we expect God to package His plan for us just like we would. We want the logic that we use to be His logic. And when it isn't, we wonder what's wrong because it's not working out like we would have worked it out.

When God says no it is not necessarily discipline or rejection. It may simply be re-direction. You have pursued His will; you have wanted to do His will. With all good intentions you said, "By God's grace I am going to pursue this." And here you are, thirty or forty years later, or maybe only five years later, and it hasn't materialized.

Now if you listen to some people, you'll be put on a guilt trip. "You see there," they say, "you set your heart on God, but you have run from Him. You're out of His will." I don't know how many couples I have talked with who, early in their lives, had their life's plan all mapped out, but it didn't transpire. Perhaps the very road they are traveling is God's will for them, and it took His saying "no" to get them on that right road. Others were of little help.

The thing we have to do in our walk with God is to listen carefully from day to day. Not just go back to some decision and say, "That's it forever, regardless." We need to look at it each day, keep it fresh, keep the fire hot, keep it on the back burner, saying, "Lord, is this Your arrangement? Is this Your plan? If it is not, make me sensitive to it. Maybe You're redirecting my life."

Day #14 – Sunday, January 21st, 2024: Helpful Hope for Broken Dreams
Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 7:18–29; 1 Chronicles 22:1–6

David said, “My son Solomon is still young and inexperienced. And since the Temple to be built for the LORD must be a magnificent structure, famous and glorious throughout the world, I will begin making preparations for it now.” So David collected vast amounts of building materials before his death. Then David sent for his son Solomon and instructed him to build a Temple for the LORD, the God of Israel. (1 Chronicles 22:5–6)

What a father! He may have been weak at other times, but at this moment, David stands tall. "Lord, I know You don't want me to fulfill the dream, but, Lord, I'm going to set apart as much as I can to support my son as he fulfills the dream that was on my heart." What an unselfish response.

I see two simple truths in all this. First, *when God says no, it means He has a better way, and He expects me to support it.*

Second, *my very best reaction is cooperation and humility.* He doesn't call everybody to build the temple, but He does call everyone to be faithful and obedient. Some of you who are reading this are living with broken dreams. Sometime in the past you had high hopes that your life would go in a certain direction. But the Lord, for some mysterious reason, has now said, "No." And you've moved along in life and now you're up in years, and you find yourself slowly becoming shelved, and the younger ones are taking charge and moving on. How quickly age takes over!

Just about the time we get our act together, we're too old to pull it off. And so we release it to the Solomon in our lives. It takes genuine humility to say to that person, "May God be with you. I'll do everything I can to support you in seeing that it gets accomplished."

Do you identify with David? Did you have your hands full of your dreams and your visions, ready to present them to God on the altar of sacrifice? Did you have your plans all prepared and thought through, only to see them crumble at your feet? And now you're standing there, empty-handed?

Know this: God is ready to fill your empty hands like you would never believe, if you will only lift them up to Him in obedience and praise, as David did. God is still alive and well, and He knows what He's doing. To some He says yes. To others, no. In either case, the answer is best. Why? Because God's answers, while surprising, are never wrong.

Day #15 – Monday, January 22nd, 2024: *Love...Who?*

“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say, ‘Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.’”
Matthew 5:43-44

Loving your neighbor can be a tall order sometimes. After all, our neighbor isn't always lovable. But then again, neither are we. Jesus tells us that we are to love not only our neighbor, but even our enemies. Love your enemies? Pray for those who persecute you? Who loves like that? God does. And if we are going to act as true children of our Father in heaven, we need to love like that as well.

How is that even possible? How do I love someone who has broken my trust? There is a difference between loving and trusting. If someone has hurt or betrayed you and asks for your forgiveness, should you forgive them? Love says yes. Should you trust them? No. Forgiveness is a mandate of Christ. Jesus said: How often shall we forgive them? Seven times? No, seventy *times* seven. Forgiveness is free, but trust is something to be earned.

Still, loving enemies does not come easily or naturally to human beings. What motivates you to love those who have wronged you? Romans 5:10 says, “For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.” God saved you while you were still his enemy.

When you love others while they are your enemies, when you pray for those who persecute you, you are saying to the world, “I can forgive because I have been forgiven.” You are acting as a true child of your Father who is in heaven

Father, give me a love for my enemies that I do not naturally possess. Help me to see them as you see them—people who need forgiveness and grace. Amen.

Day #16 – Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024

What Forgiveness Really Is

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Luke 23:34 (NIV)

Forgiveness may be the most misused, misapplied, and misunderstood quality in our culture. You may think you know what forgiveness is all about, but, if you're like most people, you really don't.

Here's a quiz to help you gauge your understanding of forgiveness; decide if each statement is true or false.

1. A person should not be forgiven until they ask for it.
2. Forgiving includes minimizing the offense and the pain caused.
3. Forgiveness includes restoring trust and reuniting a relationship.
4. You haven't really forgiven until you've forgotten the offense.
5. When you see somebody hurt, it is your duty to forgive the offender.

When you read the Bible and learn what God has to say about forgiveness, you discover that all five of those statements are false.

Since most people don't understand forgiveness, we're going to spend the next few days looking at what forgiveness really is.

First, real forgiveness is unconditional. There are no requirements attached to it. You don't earn it. You don't deserve it. You don't bargain for it. Forgiveness is not based on a promise to never do it again. You offer forgiveness to somebody whether they ask for it or not.

When Jesus stretched out his hands on the cross and said, *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing,”* nobody had asked for it (Luke 23:34 NIV). Nobody had said, “Jesus, please forgive me for what we're doing to you.” He just offered it. He took the initiative.

Second, forgiveness isn't minimizing the seriousness of the offense. When somebody asks for your forgiveness and you say, “It's no big deal. It really didn't hurt,” that actually cheapens forgiveness. If the offense wasn't a big deal, then you don't need to ask for or offer forgiveness.

Forgiveness is for the big stuff. You don't use it for slights that are just minor issues; life's small slights just require patience and acceptance. It's life's big wrongs that require forgiveness—and those wrongs shouldn't be minimized. If an offense was a big deal, admit that it was. And then forgive, or ask for forgiveness.

Understanding forgiveness is the first step to living it out. So the next time you've offended someone, or have been offended yourself, remember these two things: First, forgiveness is unconditional. And, second, forgiveness never minimizes the wrong.

Let's Talk

Is there someone you've forgiven conditionally—with requirements attached? How can you move toward unconditional forgiveness today?

Why is it so hard to offer forgiveness to someone who has not asked for it? How can you forgive, even when the offender never asks for it?

How does your attitude about forgiveness change when you consider how Christ forgave you?

Day #17 – Wednesday, January 24th, 2024

Four Steps Towards Forgiveness

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV)

If you're like most people, you might have some misconceptions about what it means to forgive. And, because you don't understand forgiveness, you find it really difficult to forgive.

As a follower of Jesus, you need to understand forgiveness. The Bible clearly calls Christians to forgive. Galatians 6:1 says, *“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently”* (NIV).

So, if God expects you to forgive others, what does healthy, biblical forgiveness look like? Here are four things you should do when you need to forgive someone.

1. Recognize no one is perfect. When you hate somebody, you tend to lose your perspective about that person. Resentment, bitterness, and hurt make you stop seeing that person as a fellow human being. You treat them like an animal. But the truth is everyone is in the same boat. The Bible says, *“Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins”* (Ecclesiastes 7:20 NLT). We're all imperfect.

2. Relinquish your right to get even. This is the heart of forgiveness. The Bible says, *“Never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it”* (Romans 12:19 TLB). Even if you think you deserve to retaliate, don't. If the hurt runs deep, you may have to commit over and over again to not getting even. But, no matter what, leave the repayment to God.

3. Respond to evil with good. Humanly speaking, it's nearly impossible to respond to evil with good. You'll need God's help. You'll need the love of Jesus to fill you up. Why? *“[Love] keeps no record of wrongs”* (1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV). When you

can respond to evil with good, you'll know you've fully released someone from the wrong they've done to you.

4. Refocus on God's plan for your life. As long as you continue to focus on the person who has hurt you, that person controls you. In fact, it often goes a step further: If you don't release your offender, you will begin to resemble your offender. So stop focusing on the hurt and the person who hurt you. Instead, refocus on God's purpose for your life—his purpose is greater than any problem or pain you might be facing.

Don't sit another day in your resentment. If you've been holding on to pain caused by someone else, go through these four steps and move on to the life you were created to live!

Let's Talk

Which one of these four steps is most difficult for you? Which is easiest?

When did you try to get revenge instead of leaving repayment to God? What did you learn from that situation?

When have you responded to evil with good? How did that situation turn out?

What did you learn?

Day #18 – Thursday, January 25th, 2024

You Don't Have It All Together, and That's Okay

“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you” (Romans 12:3 NIV).

The first and greatest barrier to change in any area of your life is pride.

The fact is, nobody has it all together. I don't have it all together. You don't have it all together. The Pope doesn't have it all together. The Bible says nobody is perfect. Everyone on this planet is broken because of sin.

But we walk around trying to impress people and pretend like we've got it all together. The problem is that if you want lasting change in your life, you first have to humbly assess your current state and admit that you don't have it all together. You have to admit you have a problem with your finances, your health, or wherever you're struggling in your life.

Are you willing to ask the people closest to you, “Where do I need to change?” Do you have the courage to ask others to be honest about you and with you?

Why is this so important? Because you can only manage what you measure. If you don't know the measure of your faith, you can't grow in your faith. If you don't know the measure of your health, you can't develop and grow in health. If you don't know the measure of where you are financially, you can't set goals financially. If you don't know the measure of where you are spiritually or vocationally or relationally, then you can't grow in those areas. You can only manage what you measure.

If you're going to set some health goals, financial goals, or any other kind of goal, record your progress throughout the year so you can measure your growth and your development. Evaluate where you are so that you can know where you should go.

Let's Talk

What people in your life can you talk with openly and honestly? What areas of your life do you need to evaluate so that you can set realistic goals for change? What are some ways you can keep track of your growth and progress?

Day #19 – Friday, January 26th, 2024

Believe God for Your Healing

Pastor Jentzen Franklin

“I am the Lord, who heals you.” Ex 15:26 NIV

In the Bible one of the names God chooses to be called by is “Jehovah Rapha,” which means “I am the Lord who heals.” Now, if God calls Himself the healer, then you have the right to believe what He says and expect that, given an opportunity, He will perform His role competently. After all, His credibility depends on living up to His name. The Psalmist said, “Your promises are backed by all the honor of your name” (Ps 138:2 NLT). Has God changed? No; He says, “I am the Lord All-Powerful, and I never change” (Mal 3:6 CEV).

And Jesus, who is God, is “the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8 NIV). What He was, He still is. What He did, He still does. So, when you or a loved one is sick, do these two things: (1) Pray, in faith believing. A “good faith” deal requires that both parties trust each other’s word. Their trust is a rational decision of their will, not their emotions. Faith is your will deciding that God will keep the promise He has made to you. It’s refusing to be ambivalent by saying, “If only I felt more positive.” No business could survive such ambiguity. Jesus spelled it out clearly: “All things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you” (Mk 11:24 NAS). (2) Look for faith-partners who will pray with you. “Pray for each other so that you may be healed” (Jas 5:16 NLT). “If two of you agree...concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you” (Mt 18:19 NLT)

Believe God for your healing

“I am the Lord, who heals you.” Ex 15:26 NIV

Why isn’t every sick person who is prayed over healed? We don’t know, and God doesn’t tell us. We know that doubt and unbelief can hinder His miracle-working power in our lives. When Jesus returned to His hometown to those who knew Him best, we read: “He did not do many

miracles there because of their lack of faith” (Mt 13:58 NIV). But there are aspects of healing we will never fully understand. Paul writes, “I left Trophimus sick in Miletus” (2Ti 4:20 NIV). Why would Paul, who had raised the dead, leave a friend sick instead of praying and seeing him healed? There are many things about God we don’t know, but here’s one thing we *do* know: “I am the Lord, who heals you.” And since He said, “I am the Lord, and I do not change” (Mal 3:6 NLT), and “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb 13:8 NIV), we can go to Him for healing based on His Word.

One of the last statements Jesus made before leaving earth was: “These signs will follow those who believe...They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover” (Mk 16:17-18 NKJV). Do you believe God still heals people today? If you do, then obey this Scripture: “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up” (Jas 5:14-15 NKJV). The word for you today is: Don’t give up—believe God for your healing

Day #20 – Saturday, January 27th: The Words of Our Mouth

Are your words strengthening those around you or giving them burdens to carry?

Proverbs 16:21-24

Our words help us do many good things: We can use them to talk to our heavenly Father. We can speak the truth of Scripture and sing praises to Jesus Christ. We can love, encourage, advise, and teach those around us. The list goes on and on.

However, our voices also have the power to do great harm. When a problem like this occurs, it's often been triggered by something small—perhaps a critique made in anger or a jab caused by envy. Harsh words may feel good, even justified at times. But they never bring about what God desires because, in the end, they aren't life-giving. They're not what we, as Christ-followers, are meant to offer (Matthew 22:36-40).

Jesus teaches us that “the good person out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good ... for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart” (Luke 6:45). So, while negative feelings and speech may arise in us from time to time, it is important to pause and take note of them. Let's analyze what's really causing those harsh words and pray that the Lord will continue to soften our heart and increase our capacity for kindness.

Day #21 – Sunday, January 28th, 2024: A Busy Mind

Adapted from the resource *My Time with God* by Joyce Meyer

Isaiah 26:3

God never told us to have a busy mind, but a mind that is filled with peace. I recently experienced several days in which I was extremely tired. Actually, exhausted was more like it, and I couldn't understand why. I was getting good sleep, and, yes, I had a lot going on, but that is not unusual for me.

After putting up with it for a couple of days and complaining frequently, I finally asked God why I was so tired. I just didn't understand. He showed me that it wasn't physical tiredness that I felt, but mental tiredness. I had been thinking too much! I must say I was surprised, but as I took an honest look at all the things that were on my mind—while I was simultaneously doing a lot of things like recording for television, working on a book, and traveling—I understood what God was showing me.

In addition to all that, I was attempting to do a lot of creative thinking about upcoming teaching seminars, books, making changes in some ministry areas, finances, and other things. But I should have been giving my mind to what I was doing, instead of doing one thing and thinking about lots of other things. With God's help, I made a change and decided to give my mind a short vacation, and it helped a lot. Perhaps this example will help you too!

Prayer of the Day: Father, please help me keep my mind on what I am doing and remember that You want me to have peace of mind, not a busy mind!

Bonus Day: January 29, 2024 Praying for Those Who Hurt Us
Daily Reflection / Produced by The High Calling

"Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you." [Luke 6:28](#)

When Jesus calls us to love our enemies, we might wonder what that really means in practice. Surely, we're not to get all warm and fuzzy when we think about those who seek to hurt us. That's our culture's view of romantic love, not the kind of robust, challenging love envisioned by Jesus, a love that is more about action than about feelings. But what sorts of action embody a love for our enemies?

Jesus gives several specific examples in [Luke 6:27-36](#). In verse 28, for example, he says: "Bless those who curse you." To bless, in this instance, means to speak well of someone or to speak kindly to that person. Perhaps there is someone in your place of work who is spreading false rumors about you in order to advance above you. How will you respond? According to Jesus, not by retaliating. Rather, you are to love this "enemy" by speaking well of him, even when his back is turned. Or, when you see her, you should address her politely and graciously.

Jesus adds, "Pray for those who hurt you." There is nothing wrong with asking the Lord to get them to stay their hand. But praying for them involves asking good for them, seeking the Lord's presence in their lives and transformation of their hearts.

Prayer of this sort may sound easy enough in the abstract, but when you are really praying for real enemies, it can feel counterintuitive and even offensive. In the week following the attacks of 9/11/2001, Irvine Presbyterian Church joined thousands of other churches across our nation in hosting a special prayer service. We poured out our grief to the Lord. We asked him to comfort the families of those who had died. We prayed for firefighters and police officers, many who were risking their lives in the wreckage of the World Trade Center.

And we prayed for our enemies, for those who had planned the attacks and were no doubt plotting further harm to the United States. I was responsible for this particular prayer, and I labored over it for hours. What I wanted to say was, "Lord, wipe them out. Destroy them," but I sensed that this was not what Jesus meant when he taught us to pray for our enemies. So, I did pray that those who had planned the attacks would be brought to justice, knowing that is was consistent with God's will. But I also prayed that God would touch their hearts, bringing them

to repentance. I asked that he would reveal his love and grace to them, so that their lives might be transformed.

As I prayed this way, I could sense the tension in the room. It was almost as if I had uttered profanity in my prayer. Nobody stormed out in anger. And, near as I can recall, nobody even sent me a nasty email. I did have a few people comment on my "bold prayer." For me, praying for our enemies that day was truly one of the hardest things I ever have had to do as a pastor. It was an act of sheer obedience.

I've said it before. Loving our enemies is not easy. Nor is it easy to bless them or to pray for them. But this is the way of Jesus.

FURTHER REFLECTION:

Have you ever blessed someone who was speaking poorly of you? How did it feel? What happened inside of you when you did this? Have you ever prayed for those who hurt you? Are there people in your life right now who are seeking to harm you, for whom you need to pray? What keeps you from praying for your enemies? What helps you to do it?

PRAYER:

Dear Lord, you know how hard it is to do what you ask in this verse. You know because you did it. You blessed those who cursed you, even as you suffered in agony on the cross. You asked the Father to forgive those who were torturing you to death. And you ask me to imitate you in this behavior. I must confess that part of me just doesn't want to do this. I want to ignore your command, Lord. I want to pretend as if it's not really for me. Yet your word is clear.

Help me to bless those who curse me and pray for my enemies. Yes, I ask for the grace to pray for global enemies, for those who would continue to want to hurt me and my fellow citizens. But I also ask you to help me pray for the "little enemies" in my life, for people at work who get under my fingernails, for the politicians whose views drive me crazy, for the check-out clerk who didn't even say "thank you." May my heart be trained so that my first instinct when someone wrongs me is to lay that person before you in prayer.

Today, Lord, I also want to pray for my brothers and sisters who are confronting enemies who do far more than curse. I pray for those who are facing harassment, torture, and even the possibility of martyrdom because of their faith. Yes, I continue to pray for their deliverance, for justice and protection. But I also pray that you will give them the supernatural ability to love as you call us all to love, even to pray for those who hurt them. I pray in the name of Jesus, who lived what he commanded. *Amen.*

Bonus Day -Tuesday, January 30, 2023: God Wants Me To Make An Impact **L. David Harris**

This is the Faith I Live by: In Christ I can make an impact

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.” Ecclesiastes 9:10 NKJV

Death is not morbid. The Bible teaches us that we are here today, and sometimes gone today because tomorrow is not promised. Instead, I believe death can bring hope. Given the right perspective, we can see death as showing us that we have a certain amount of time to make a lasting impact on the world around us. We can make an impact on our families, through our faith, or even civically within our communities. There are a number of spaces that we can influence. No matter where we are, we can always make an impact.

What Will Your Legacy Be?

The question is: in the limited time we have, what kind of changes will you leave behind? What will your legacy be? When you die will people remember you for your love? Will they remember you for your undying dedication to the causes of the maligned? Maybe people will remember you for your zeal for the kingdom? Or will people remember you for your selfishness? Maybe they'll remember you for your foolish arrogance? And what if they remember you for your disregard for the common good?

In our theme passage, the wiseman gives us a royal charge to live like our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. When He encountered people He completely altered their current situation. For example, when Jesus met blind people He gave them new vision. Many times while traveling and preaching He encountered hungry people and always fed them both physically and spiritually. Or how about when He encountered proud people and humbly gave them a glimpse to His sovereignty as the mighty King of the universe. Or even when He encountered injustice and rebuked the oppressors with a whip He hand made. Jesus made an indelible impact on everything and everyone He touched. And He only had thirty-three years on this Earth. But the three and a half years of His ministry changed the world forever.

It's not about how much time you have, it's about what you do with the time you're given.

Make Every Moment Count

It's important as we think about our everyday decisions to determine that we will do our best to make each moment God gives us count for something. And when we gather together all the fragments of lasting, positive impact, they will comprise a respectable legacy that can be passed on for generations to come. This life is but a fleeting moment, but our impact must continue long after we are gone.

By God's grace, this is the faith I live by, let this be the same for you, in Jesus' name.

Bonus: Day – Wednesday, January 31,2024: Called to Serve

Our call to become like Christ is a call to serve the people around us.

Matthew 20:20-28

As believers, we seldom call ourselves “servants of Christ,” but that is exactly what the Lord tells us to be. After His disciples wrangled about who was the greatest, Jesus surprised them with a call to become a servant of all.

Christ is not just our Savior but also our Lord and Master. Just as He served His Father by caring for people, so we serve God by meeting the temporal and spiritual needs of those around us.

- **Service produces spiritual growth.** God is continually transforming believers into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29), but our self-centeredness often gets in the way. Serving others is one tool the Lord uses to free us of selfishness.
- **Service achieves God’s purpose for our life.** The Lord has work for each of us to accomplish in our lifetime (Ephesians 2:10). If we only take in and never give out, we will miss much of what He has planned for us.

As a child of God, you have a high calling that can be realized only by lowering yourself to the level of a servant. Look for opportunities today to serve someone, and take your place alongside Christ, who was the ultimate servant of all.

How Do you feel? Renewed!!

Ready to serve!

Yes, its time to eat again, but our prayer is that you and God have become closer and that for the remainder of this year, you will walk in complete authority and favor in your life.

Also, please take the time to email us (admin@lc3katy.life) and share your experiences during this fast. Did God answer your prayer(s)? Did HE give you greater insight? Do you feel more invigorated? Please share with us...

Lady T and I are so humbled to serve such a wonderful and loving congregation!

Change is happening now!! Walk in the “new” you!!

BIG Things are on the way!

Blessings....

Pastor K & Lady T

Life Changer Community Church

3115 North Fry Rd. #407

Katy, Tx 77449

www.LC3katy.life