



REACHING PEOPLE.
CHANGING LIVES.
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DAYS OF PRAISE

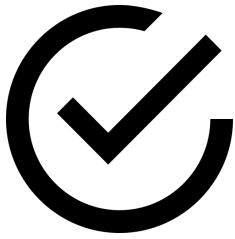
JANUARY 10 - APRIL 10

DEVOTIONALS

WEEK 8

WITH ADDED FASTING INSIGHTS





30 MINUTES OF PRAYER
30 MINUTES OF READING THE WORD
30 MINUTES OF WORSHIP / PRESENCE / REST

DAY 50

MONDAY

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Romans 8:18 (NAS)

What takes a lifetime to accomplish will take eternity to enjoy. In this life we endure a process of perfection so that in the life to come we rest in that perfection. Don't give up! The glory to come cannot be compared to the suffering of today.

What is the Challenge of this verse?

How can you apply this to your life?

What will you work to change?

Prayer





30 MINUTES OF PRAYER
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DAY 51

TUESDAY

Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit. Hebrews 13:17 (NLT)

We reduce the benefit of authority over our life when we assume equality to that authority. The role of proper authority is to watch over, the responsibility is to provide and to protect. The motivation is love, and the authorization is God.

What is the Challenge of this verse?

How can you apply this to your life?

What will you work to change?

Prayer





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DAY 52

WEDNESDAY

God "will repay each person according to what they have done." Romans 2:6 (NIV)

God's love is not the response to our deeds, but His reward is.

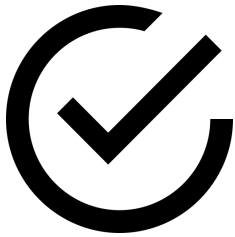
What is the Challenge of this verse?

How can you apply this to your life?

What will you work to change?

Prayer





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DAY 53

THURSDAY

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Peter 1:5-8 (NIV)

When we are content with what we have or where we are, we shift our discipline to simply maintain it. The problem is we simply do enough to keep what we've gained, but growth always requires another level of discipline; pushing beyond where we are to the desired mark of something more. If we have moved to maintaining, then we have prematurely activated the process of dying. Why would we settle if there is more to be gained? This is a spiritual truth realized through natural means.

What is the Challenge of this verse?

How can you apply this to your life?

What will you work to change?





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DAY 54

FRIDAY

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit... Titus 3:5 (NIV)

Self-righteousness is when we hear truth as correction for others but are deaf to the authority it carries for our own. And when our knowledge becomes the standard by which we judge another rather than knowledge providing a standard for personal change. Self-righteousness creates memory loss of mercy received, and a perception that mercy is no longer a need. –

What is the Challenge of this verse?

How can you apply this to your life?

What will you work to change?

Prayer





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DAY 55

SATURDAY

But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. Matthew 12:36 (NIV)

Commitment is a fixed resolve to reach the destination your confession (word) has assigned you. A confession with no commitment is a lie.

What is the Challenge of this verse?

How can you apply this to your life?

What will you work to change?

Prayer





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DAY 56

SUNDAY

But you, Timothy, belong to God; so, run from all these evil things, and follow what is right and good. Pursue a godly life, along with faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight for what we believe. Hold tightly to the eternal life that God has given you, which you have confessed so well before many witnesses. 1Timothy 6:11-12 (NLT)

Your victory or defeat is not predicated on the present situation, but rather what you see as the hope of the reward on the other side. Defeat only happens when we've lost sight of the reward and we give up the fight.

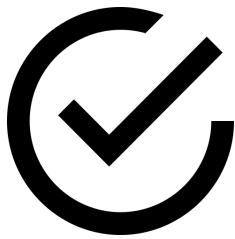
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FASTING INSIGHTS:

People often run into unexpected challenges when they fast for the first time. Even with the amount of preparation you may have put into it, fasting is like everything else in life. You just don't know until you actually experience it. If you think about it, fasting naturally goes against the very nature of life and how we stay alive. Our bodies are designed to take in food in order to gain energy, stay healthy, and stay alive. Fasting slaps that right in the face. When we fast, we shock our bodies and they turn on survival/panic mode. In the next few paragraphs, I will cover this challenge and others you can expect to face and how to overcome them.

1. Fasting puts your Body in Survival Mode

Like I mentioned in the introduction, your body is not ready to go off of food. It is designed to take in and process food multiple times per day. On top of that, past a certain point, many of us eat out of enjoyment and not so much necessity. This not only makes our bodies want food out of survival, but it also forms a habit of eating. Think about dessert, or that midnight snack. Your body does not naturally need them. We just eat those things because the joy it brings us. If you don't believe me, cut out any type of sweets for a week and let me know what you feel.

It's like trying to break a Habit.

This habit we form, of eating more than needed, can make fasting that much more difficult. Just like breaking any habit, you are going to get some push back from your body. Your body is expecting something, and by you telling it "No". Because of that, you end up having to fight those cravings your body is used to getting. When planning your fast, I would advise trying to break any "habit" you may have as far as food before starting your fast. I'll use desserts for example. If you plan on doing a water only fast or a Vegan style fast such as the Daniel Fast, cut out desserts and sugar 4 to 7 days before hand. That way when you start your fast, you are only battling the "survival" part of your body and not both the survival and habit fulfilling part of your body.

God designed your body, so trust him to take care of it.





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The good news is, the reason we are fasting is to get closer to God in some way. And remember, God is the designer and builder of our body. So placing your trust in him during this

fast is the best decision. [...] Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Matthew 4:4

2. We are Not Supposed to Talk About It

In Matthew 16:6 Jesus tells us not to make a big deal out of fasting. He said, "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."

The hypocrites Jesus is speaking of here are fasting to "appear to men to be fasting". in other words they are making a big deal in front of others and are putting on a face that shows they are "suffering for God". We are not to do this. For if you do it this way, Jesus eludes to the fact that these people will not get there rewards from God since they got what they wanted out of man.

Don't be a Complainer.

So you may be asking, "Travis, what is the challenge I am facing? I can easily do that.". I would then answer you saying, "I agree with you. It is easy. It might be easy for you and for me, but this may not be easy for everyone." There are some people who complain and talk about certain things just so others will feel sorry for them. There is something Comforting about the fact that someone else feels sorry for you. It lets you know you are cared about. But some people need that affirmation for than others. I am not here to call anyone out or make you mad. I'm just speaking about this because this is what Jesus eludes to in Matthew 16:6. I am just asking you not to seek your affirmation from man, but from God. Because sooner or later, man will disappoint you.

It's not a sin to tell someone else though.





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I want to address one more thing here in this topic of fasting in secret. This does not mean if you tell even one person about your fast, God will cut you out of his blessings. In fact, in the previous post "How to Prepare for your Spiritual Fast", I encourage you to get a support group around you during your fast. This helps keep you on track and keep you accountable. The point here is not to boast or brag about your fasting to make others think highly of you.

3. We Often Feel like Quitting

Hunger is a real thing. And hunger is what you will experience during your fast. You will get pains and cravings that you feel like you can't beat. You will think of excuses to "accidentally" let that Hershey Kiss fall into your mouth (I'm speaking out of experience here). All these cravings will make you consider cutting your fast short. The headaches and stomach pains will also make you consider cutting your fast short. It is normal.

God knows our intentions.

God knows the intentions of our heart. He knows we are not perfect and he knows we are going to slip. That is called the grace and mercy of God. Get used to it. If you slip up or quit, God is not going to beat you over the head. He is not going to strike you with lightning and he is certainly not going to give up on you. Just pray and ask for his help and do better next time. If you find yourself constantly quitting early or sneaking in snacks, ask yourself "Why?". It could be a number of reasons. Maybe you weren't as committed as you should have been because you fasted out of peer pressure and not of your own desires. Maybe you quit because you felt anxiety because you weren't as prepared as you thought. Or maybe you quit because you took on a fast that was too advanced for you. For example, choosing to do a two week water only fast for your first fast. Whatever the case may be, evaluate why you may have quit and talk to God about it and Don't be ashamed of starting small. Fasting once a week or twice a month is a great way to get started.

4. You will put God to the Sideline

This sounds like a harsh one. How can we put God to the side if the very reason we are fasting is to get closer to God? That is an excellent question. Here is the Answer... listen to this testimony given by someone who recently started fasting.





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"The very first fast I ever fasted was the Daniel Fast in January of 2019. For those that don't know, the Daniel Fast is a three week partial fast. It only allows a vegan diet and zero sugar. If you know me at all, you know I love my meat and sweet tea. So this was not easy. The first few days I felt the pains and hunger, but was very good about taking my usual meal times and reading the bible, praying and meditating on what God had for me.

After about day four, I found myself skipping my usual lunch time to continue working. I would quickly eat the vegan meal I had with me, but since it didn't really fill me for more than an hour, I found it was easier to distract myself with work. That way I wouldn't feel hungry."

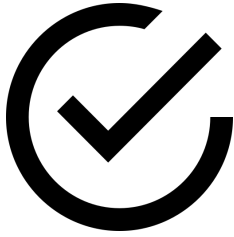
The word distract is the word I want to focus on. Because we feel these cravings and our body is yelling at us, we will find any distraction to get us through that. And usually sitting down and reading isn't good enough. We can easily fall into the trap of our earthly desires to distract us from the things of God. This is true for any Christian fasting or not. The key here is to be aware of these distractions and knowing when you have fallen victim to them. Have your bible study time planned ahead of time, that way you know exactly what you are doing when meal time comes.

5. The Devil Will Attack You

Satan's ultimate goal is to stop us from doing what God wants us to do. Why do you think Christians seem to have it tougher than non-believers sometimes? It is because the devil is focused on us and working to stop us at all costs. There is no reason for him to mess with an unbeliever since they aren't doing anything to further the kingdom of God anyways.

Even Jesus faced temptation while fasting. Now think about this. What is the goal of your fast? No matter what the specific goal of your fast is, the general goal is usually getting closer to God and asking God to reveal to you what he would have you do for him. This scares the devil and he is going to do what he can to get you to quit. If you haven't read it before, read about Jesus's 40 day fast. It is found in Matthew 4, Mark 1 and Luke 4. Satan tried to tempt Jesus himself and if you don't think he will try to tempt you, you are sadly mistaken.





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Use Scripture. To fight off the temptation, we need to do what Jesus did.....fight back with the Word of God. Every time Satan put a temptation in front of Jesus, Jesus quoted a scripture that stopped Satan from perusing that temptation. Satan didn't quit right away. If you notice, he moved on to another temptation. But what did Jesus do? Quoted more scripture. Take lessons from Jesus and fight your temptation with scripture. It is easier now, more than ever, to have the bible on us at all times. We all have it on our phones at this point. Just break that thing out and start reading it. After all, the bible is our sword and we are to use it to fight.

Here are a couple verses to get you in the right mindset and knowing you have power over that temptation: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
James 4:7 ... "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."
Galations 5:16

