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CHANGING LIVES.
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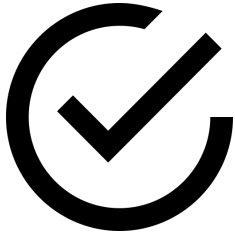
DAYS OF PRAISE

JANUARY 10 - APRIL 10

DEVOTIONALS

WEEK 7

WITH ADDED FASTING INSIGHTS



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

DAY 43

MONDAY

"If you love me, obey my commandments." John 14:15 (NLT)

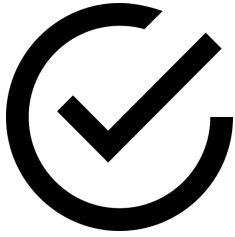
At the end of the day ours is not a failure of a command, but the absence of love.

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 44

TUESDAY

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23 (NAS)

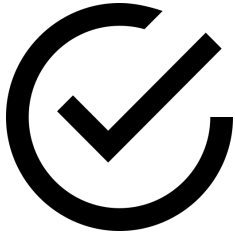
I may not always be in control of the affairs of my life, but I am always in control of how I respond to them.

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 45

WEDNESDAY

So brothers and sisters, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him. Your offering must be only for God and pleasing to him, which is the spiritual way for you to worship. Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect. Romans 12:1-2 (NCV)

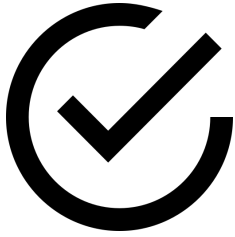
A spiritual sacrifice is choosing to do what is right and good when you don't feel like it.

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 46

THURSDAY

Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals. 1Corinthians 15:33 (NAS)

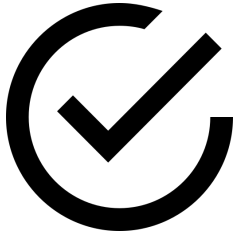
The quality of people you surround yourself with defines the quality of person you wish to become.

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 47

FRIDAY

Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the LORD. Psalm 31:24 (NAS)

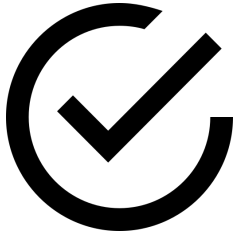
Courage is when faith flexes its muscle in the face of fear and refuses to give up when fear says it's impossible.

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 48

SATURDAY

Death had its hands around my throat; the terrors of the grave overtook me. I saw only trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD: "Please, LORD, save me!" How kind the LORD is! How good he is! So merciful, this God of ours! The LORD protects those of childlike faith; I was facing death, and then he saved me. Now I can rest again, for the LORD has been so good to me. He has saved me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.
Psalm 116:3-8 (NLT)

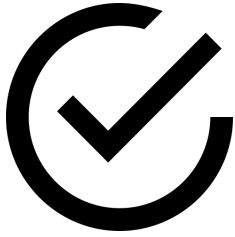
Depression is real and is a struggle for many believers. At its core it has many facets and origins. Could it be in most situations that it is the deception that your situation is void of God's control.

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 49

SUNDAY

But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness. James 3:17-18 (NLT)

Careful the fights you invite. Some conflicts are simply unavoidable, others are spiritual; entities that seek to oppose your authority in Christ relying on our timidity of identity. Still there are conflicts we provoke out of the arrogance of our ignorance, and stubbornness of pride. We've been called to a virtue of peace, and peace with wisdom executes authority in all matters to the resolve of God's will not man's.

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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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.

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



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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.

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.



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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.

"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.



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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.

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." Galatians 5:16