

**THE**

**FAITH-FILLED**

**LIFE**

**30 DAYS OF WALKING BY FAITH**

**JOE WYROSTEK**



*The Faith-Filled Life: 30 Days of Walking by Faith*

Copyright © 2017 by Joe Wyrostek & Metro Praise International.

All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

Published by Metro Praise International Publishing,  
Chicago, IL.

Unless otherwise noted all Scripture quotations are taken from the  
New International Version copyright © 2011 by International Bible  
Society.

[www.mpichurch.org](http://www.mpichurch.org)

# PREFACE

Mark 9:24, *“Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’”*

I am an “Axiomatic Presuppositionalist”- which means, philosophically speaking, I believe everyone is committed to living by faith in their axiom and presuppositions- which form their worldview. There is not one person on God’s green earth that has a worldview that doesn’t require faith.

**Everyone has faith but not everyone has faith that pleases God!**

Just consider how much faith scientists must have just to perform their basic experiments. They must have faith that they exist (and are not in a dream), that they are in the real world (and not in a computer simulated program with their brain in a vat attached to wires), that other minds exist (that everyone’s body wasn’t snatched by aliens the night before) and that their reality will be the same in the next five minutes like it was in the past five minutes (because everything could change around them in a moment and they could find themselves with a different set of people, in a different environment- maybe on Mars with dwarves).

I know it seems obvious that all the things we take by faith are actually “real” and that they don’t need the same kind of faith Peter needed to walk on water with Jesus. Nothing could be further from the truth. You need the exact same kind of faith that Peter needed to walk on water, that you need to walk on the sidewalk. After all, what is a sidewalk and what is water? What holds these things together on a molecular level and who sets the laws for them and how much mass can they hold? And what is mass? For that matter, what is matter? What is space-time and where am I in space and time?

Maybe now you feel a bit like the boy’s father in our passage to this preface... “I do believe God, but help me with my unbelief!” In other words, I do trust you God in certain ways- ways that are easy for

me to understand, but with the big things (the things I don't understand)- I need help with my faith!

The good news is God promised to give us all the faith we needed in His Word (Romans 10:17). The Word of God builds our faith and the lack of trusting in the Word of God leads to doubt. So in everything you do... from the job you work, to the family you live with, to your spiritual growth, to the way you see the world and the way you talk to yourself; you are either growing in doubt or growing in faith.

As I stated from the beginning, I believe everyone has an axiom- a foundational starting point to his or her worldview. And from that starting point everyone presupposes the way they think the world should be. Jesus had something to say about foundations, read His timely words below in Matthew 7:24-27:

24 Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

The conclusion of the matter regarding faith is simple- build your life on God's Word and you will be blessed in this life and in the life to come. I want to encourage you as you read this book on faith, that you don't just limit faith to "spiritual things," but to every aspect of your life. Faith in God will change your world- mountains can be cast into the sea and feet can walk on water. What are mountains and waves to our God? They are just His creation which He uses for His glory and when you have faith- He will use you too!

## **HOW TO USE THE BOOK**

1. Read a lesson each day consistently for 30 days.
2. Prayerfully consider the reflection at the end of each lesson.
3. Put into practice the three actions listed each day.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DAY 1:	Heroes of the Faith	7
DAY 2:	By Faith Abel Gave God His Best	9
DAY 3:	By Faith Enoch Please God	11
DAY 4:	By Faith Noah Was Obedient	13
DAY 5:	By Faith Abraham Left His Family	15
DAY 6:	By Faith Joseph Dreamed	17
DAY 7:	By Faith Moses Chose God Over Sin	19
DAY 8:	By Faith Joshua Led by Example	21
DAY 9:	By Faith Deborah Led an Army	23
DAY 10:	By Faith Hannah Ask God for More	25
DAY 11:	By Faith Samuel Answered God's Call	27
DAY 12:	By Faith David Killed Goliath	29
DAY 13:	By Faith Solomon Received Wisdom	31
DAY 14:	By Faith Elijah Called Down Fire	33
DAY 15:	By Faith Elisha was Mentored	35
DAY 16:	By Faith Jeremiah Preached	37
DAY 17:	By Faith Three Men Defied a King	39
DAY 18:	By Faith Daniel Prayed	41
DAY 19:	By Faith John Prepared the Way for Jesus	43
DAY 20:	By Faith Simeon Waited for the Messiah	45
DAY 21:	By Faith Jesus Submitted to the Father	47
DAY 22:	By Faith Peter Walked on Water	49
DAY 23:	By Faith Barnabas was a Giver	51
DAY 24:	By Faith Stephen was Martyred	53
DAY 25:	By Faith Philip had Revival	55
DAY 26:	By Faith Priscilla and Aquila Discipled Apollos	57
DAY 27:	By Faith Timothy was a Spiritual Son	59
DAY 28:	By Faith Phoebe was a Great Leader	61
DAY 29:	By Faith Paul Fought the Good Fight	63
DAY 30:	By Faith We Overcome the Devil	65



# DAY 1: HEROES OF THE FAITH

Hebrews 12:1, *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”*

The Bible is full of inspiring stories about ordinary people that did extraordinary things because God was with them. In Hebrews chapter 11, the author listed many of these great men and women of faith to encourage the reader to have the same kind of faith in God that they had. Hebrews chapter 11 is overflowing with faith-filled people doing great things with God and if we have faith in God like them, we can do what they did and see what they saw!

For inspiration the author of Hebrews mentioned the offering of Abel (11:4), the intimacy of Enoch (11:5), the righteousness of Noah (11:7), the obedience of Abraham (11:8), the promised child of Sarah (11:11), the blessing of Isaac (11:20), the dreams of Joseph (11:22), the leadership of Moses (11:23) and the help of Rahab (11:31). What did all these awesome men and women have in common? Faith in God.

Hebrews 11:1 defines faith as, *“Confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”* Faith is basically trusting God and doing what He commands, while being assured that everything He promised will come to pass. Paul taught in Romans 10:17 (NKJV) how faith comes, he wrote, *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* That is why we should always be students of God’s Word because if we’re not hearing the Word of God, faith isn’t coming. But like with a magnet, faith always comes when the Word of God is heard.

Furthermore, James wrote, *“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead”* (James 2:17). Therefore, biblical faith starts by first hearing the Word of God, then second believing what God has spoken and lastly, acting on what God said. As a result, according to Hebrews 11:2, *“This is what the ancients were*

*commended for.”*

**Faith is not passive nor is it only mental (like “make believe”); rather it’s transformative and impacts every part of a person’s life.**

Lester Sumrall wrote, “Faith comes, not by prayer [alone], but by continually feeding upon the spiritual food of God’s Word (Romans 10:17). Every human on earth has a capacity for world-changing faith built into his spirit, soul, and body. No one is excluded. Anyone who will accept it can have a relationship with God the Father, with Jesus Christ the Son, and with the Holy Spirit that will change his world.” Do you believe you can do great things with God by faith like the heroes found Hebrews 11? All you have to do is read God’s Word, believe what it says and act in obedience!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you want to live an extraordinary life of faith?

## **ACTION**

1. Make time everyday to pray and read God’s Word.
2. Believe and trust whatever God says.
3. By faith, be obedient to God’s Word and watch what He will do in your life!

# DAY 2: BY FAITH ABEL GAVE GOD HIS BEST

Hebrews 11:4, *“By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.”*

Most people know the story of Cain and Abel; sadly, the only part they remember is that Cain murdered Abel. What has been forgotten is the reason why Cain wanted to kill his brother in the first place. In today’s passage the author of Hebrews reminds his readers that by faith Abel, *“brought God a better offering than Cain.”* As a result, Cain killed Abel out of jealousy because of his brother’s offering!

Genesis 4:3-7 records, *“3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. 4 And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. 6 Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.’”*

I believe the reason why Abel’s offering was accepted is because he gave God the best from his flock- the first born. The reason why Cain’s offering was rejected was because, *“in the course of time,”* he gave God whatever he had leftover from his crops. Consequently, God told Cain that if he did what was right like Abel, give his first and best, He would bless him too. However, if he allowed the sin of jealousy to stay in his heart it would master him. Eventually, we know that Cain refused to do what Abel did and was conquered by his sin and murdered his own brother in Genesis 4:8.

**The lesson of faith we can learn from Abel is to always put God first in our finances and give Him our best.**

The modern way of giving God your best like Abel would be in your tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:6-12). Don't be like Cain and give God your leftovers nor complain like the Israelites did because they wanted to keep the best for themselves. The prophet Malachi recorded the Lord's rebuke to them when they gave Him their unwanted animals, "8 *'When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?'* says the Lord Almighty." And, "14 *'Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king,'* says the Lord Almighty, *'and my name is to be feared among the nations'*" (Malachi 1:8,14).

By faith, always give God 10% of your total income and prayerfully give an offering above that from your remaining 90% to sow good seed into God's kingdom. If you haven't been faithful in giving God your best, start today!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have faith in God to give Him your best when it comes to finances?

## **ACTION**

1. Read what God teaches about tithes and offerings in Malachi 3:6-12.
2. Trust God with all your finances, especially in regards to tithes and offerings. John Hagee said, "Since my money is God's money, every spending decision I make is a spiritual decision."
3. By faith, love God more than money (Matthew 6:24)!

# DAY 3: BY FAITH ENOCH PLEASED GOD

*Hebrews 11:5, “By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: ‘He could not be found, because God had taken him away.’ For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.”*

Enoch, who’s name means “dedicated,” is a mysterious person in the Bible. His entire life is contained in just three verses in Genesis 5:22-24, “22 Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. 24 Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.” Though we don’t know much about Enoch, we know he walked faithfully with God!

The author of Hebrews makes mention of Enoch in the New Testament as an example of great faith because he pleased God so much that He “took him” up to heaven to be with Him. Many scholars believe Enoch was an example of being raptured. Meaning, his physical body was transformed into a heavenly body and brought directly to heaven just like all Christians are waiting for it to happen to them at Jesus’ second coming (1 Corinthians 15:51-57).

Enoch was someone who most likely lived in a time when serving God was not popular because approximately 100 years after his departure only Noah and his immediate family were found to be righteous. I imagine that while people were worshipping idols based on myth, nature or their ancestry- Enoch was living holy and worshipping God. Likewise, we can safely assume that either Enoch lived in a time of great spiritual decline or at its beginning stages. Either way, I believe Enoch stood out because he had walked faithfully with God when others didn’t.

**It’s God’s desire that all of Jesus’ disciples stand out from this wicked generation by pleasing God like Enoch.**

Enoch serves as a great example for us today of someone who

had a faithful relationship to God no matter what the people were doing around him. God doesn't want us to compromise and become like the world, He wants us to shine like lights and change the world. The ole' timers used to say, "I don't want to see how close to hell I can get and still go to heaven, I want to see how close to heaven I can get and still be on this earth."

Enoch lived in close fellowship with God that Jesus thought it would be better for him to be in heaven than to remain on earth. Jesus made a way for all disciples to have the same kind of intimate relationship with Him by the Holy Spirit (John 14:21). Therefore, by faith, walk with God daily and please Him in all you do.

## **REFLECTION**

Do you want to be in an intimate relationship with God?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you have made loving God about religion rather than a relationship.
2. Believe that God is on the inside of you— closer than the air you breath.
3. By faith, live your life as God's friend, just like Enoch.

# DAY 4: BY FAITH NOAH WAS OBEDIENT

*Hebrews 11:7, “By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.”*

Noah is one of the most famous people in the entire Bible. Most people know the story of the flood and how God commanded him to build an ark to save the animals along with his family. Noah’s family, which populated the earth after the flood; included his wife, three sons and their three wives- eight people in total.

The story of Noah’s ark is probably the most retold Old Testament story in Sunday school. Teachers love to have children color the pictures of the animals going in the ark. However, what most people forget is that millions of people died because of their sin. The Bible recorded in Genesis 6:5-8, “5 *The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7 So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.’ 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.*”

**By God’s grace Noah’s choice to be righteous saved the entire human race and animal population. One righteous person can make a difference!**

Noah reminds us of the ole’ saying, “If loving Jesus is wrong, I don’t wanna be right.” Noah didn’t let sinners tell him what was “right and wrong,” He followed God, even if they thought he was out of his mind. The author of Hebrews stated that his faith was so outstanding in comparison to the faithlessness around him that his

faith literally condemned the world. In other words, because he was faithful and others were not, God was just in destroying everyone else because it was their choice to reject God's commands.

We can learn from Noah three very important things; (1) To always follow God's commands- even if no one around us does. (2) Guard and preserve our families from the corruption of the world. (3) Serve God faithfully.

In view of Noah's faith, I challenge you in this wicked and perverse end time generation to live a life of faith being fully obedient to God!

## **REFLECTION**

Are you obedient to everything God has commanded you to do?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you have not been obedient to all of God's commands because Jesus said in John 14:15, "*If you love me, keep my commands.*"
2. Pray for those who live wicked lives and are deserving of God's wrath.
3. By faith, live a life of obedience to God's commands and preach the gospel to those who don't.

# DAY 5: BY FAITH ABRAHAM LEFT HIS FAMILY

Hebrews 11:8, *“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”*

Imagine being a tribal herdsman following in the ways of your ancestors and all of a sudden you hear the voice of God directing you to leave your family to become a mighty nation. That is exactly what happened to Abraham! Moses recorded the story in Genesis 12:1-2, *“1 The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.’”*

Abram (which means, “exalted father,” was his name before God changed it to Abraham, “father of multitudes”) left his father’s household by faith and followed God to the promise land. He was childless for many years, but eventually had Isaac, the child of promise from his wife Sarah, at a hundred years old! Isaac then became the father of Jacob and Jacob then fathered the twelve tribes of Israel. However, in Abraham’s lifetime he never saw a great nation, he only lived to see Isaac born. Plus, he never saw his descendants occupy the promise land- he only lived in a small portion of it.

At the same time, because Abraham was faithful to leave his father’s house, the Israelite nation was born and God was given a people to establish His covenant with. Abraham not only produced millions of physical decedents (the Jewish people), but literally billions of spiritual descendants (followers of Jesus) because of his faith to leave his family and follow God. Paul said in Galatians 3:29, *“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

We can learn from Abraham’s faith that we have to leave our

old ways behind to experience the new life God has for us. At different times in life we have to be ready to even leave certain people behind that don't serve God. Jim Elliot said, "God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him."

**We have to leave certain people behind in life not because we don't love them but because we don't want to be negatively influenced by them.**

Jesus said in Luke 14:26-27, "*26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.*" Therefore, Abraham's faith challenges every disciple of Christ to always seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness because when we do, all the other things that we need will be added unto us (Matthew 6:33).

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have enough faith in God to leave some people behind to follow God's plan for your life?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God if there are people or things you need to leave behind to fulfill your calling.
2. Pray for the people you need to move away from in life that they too will follow Jesus.
3. By faith, like Abraham, live in a such a way that you leave behind a legacy that impacts generations to come

# DAY 6: BY FAITH

## JOSEPH DREAMED

Genesis 41:41, *“So Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.’”*

The life of Joseph is one of my favorite stories in the Bible because in the end everything that he went through worked together for his good. Joseph said to the brothers who sold him into slavery in Genesis 50:20-21, *“20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.”* No matter what happened in Joseph’s life, he never stopped being faithful to God. As a result, God was faithful to make all his dreams come true!

Most disciples of Christ can relate to Joseph because we’ve had God-inspired-dreams, but instead of seeing them come to pass we’ve faced hardships. Since being called into ministry, like Joseph, I’ve encountered conflict and even betrayal from those close to me. However, as I’ve remained faithful to God, He has made me fruitful! Balaam said in Numbers 23:19, *“God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”*

**What God has promised, He will do. It may not happen when we want it to; but God’s promises, dreams and visions will come to pass!**

As a young man, Joseph was given two dreams about him ruling over his people. But because of jealousy his brothers threw him into a pit and then sold into slavery. In Egypt, Joseph was bought by Potiphar and made his personal slave. Over time, Potiphar’s wife falsely accused him of rape because he wouldn’t sleep with her. Potiphar then cast him into prison, where he was favored and then brought to help Pharaoh understand his dreams. After Joseph helped Pharaoh, he was brought to the palace to reign over all of Egypt- only

second to Pharaoh himself. Today's passage recorded when Pharaoh promoted Joseph to rule over Egypt. From the pit, to Potiphar's house, to prison and lastly, in Pharaoh's palace- Joseph was faithful to God!

I pray that you and I can be inspired by the faithfulness of Joseph to never lose faith in our God-given dreams. May we all see them come true!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have any God-given dreams you're waiting to see come to pass?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to give you His dreams, visions and plans for your life.
2. Confess any doubts you may have regarding the dreams God has given you. Kay Arthur wrote, "In any trial, in any bitter situation, you are not alone, you are not helpless, you are not a victim. You have a tree, a cross, shown to you by the Sovereign God of Calvary. Whatever the trial or temptation, it is not more than you can bear. It is bearable. It can be handled."
3. By faith, never stop believing and being committed to your God-given dreams!

# DAY 7: BY FAITH MOSES CHOSE GOD OVER SIN

Hebrews 11:24-25, “*24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.*”

Many things can be written about the life of Moses- the burning bush encounter with God, the ten plagues God had him bring to Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the receiving of the Ten Commandments, meeting with God face-to-face on Mt. Sinai and leading the Israelites in the desert for 40 years; however, none of those things would have ever happened if he didn’t first make the choice to forsake the pleasures of sin in Egypt for the persecution of being a Jew, one of God’s chosen people.

By faith Moses’ mother defied the edict of Pharaoh to allow her firstborn son to be put to death. Instead she kept Moses hidden until he was three months old and then placed him in a basket to hopefully be found by someone to raise and care for him. God directed the basket to Pharaoh’s daughter and thus, Moses was raised as an Egyptian. However, at forty years old when he saw how the Egyptians treated the Israelites as their slaves, he chose to no longer live as an Egyptian, but rather chose to be mistreated along with his people.

Moses could have looked away from the suffering of his people and kept enjoying his life of sin. Imagine how different it would have been for God’s people if Moses chose sin over God. God’s people would have remained enslaved until the Lord rose up another leader to deliver them. Plus, Moses would have been forgotten in history because he would have been no different than all the other Egyptians around him who lived in perversion, idolatry and violence.

**One decision changed the course of Moses’ life and impacted countless generations. Likewise, think about how many people will be impacted by your decision to forsake sin and be Jesus’ disciple.**

Consider the destiny God has for you and the people he wants you to influence. If you choose to live in sin you will never see those people's lives changed and you will be forgotten in history like the wicked in Isaiah 26:14. However, if you choose God over sin, your life can literally impact generations to come.

Imagine if you choosing to live for God and rejecting sin resulted in dozens of people getting saved, who in turn lead hundreds of others to Christ and thus, thousands of people serve Jesus 30 years from now- would all that be worth you facing hardships now? Literally, thousands of people's lives and destinies can be changed just by your life. Make a decision today to have the same faith Moses had and choose God over the fleeting pleasures of sin!

## **REFLECTION**

What would you rather have- temporary suffering and impact people's lives for eternity or have the temporary pleasures of sin and suffer for eternity?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent of any sin you may be enjoying at this time. The ole' timers used to say, "There ain't no sin worth going to hell over!"
2. Live your life 100% sold out for Jesus.
3. By faith, choose God over sin and impact people's lives.

# DAY 8: BY FAITH

## JOSHUA LED BY

### EXAMPLE

Joshua 24:31, *“Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel.”*

God appointed Joshua as Moses’ successor before he died. Joshua’s assignment was to bring about God’s promise to Israel by conquering the enemies of God and taking possession of the promise land. His life can be summed up with two bookend verses. Just like how a bookshelf has two ends that keep all the books in standing order- so it is true with these two verses concerning Joshua. These two verses help us understand all that Joshua accomplished as Israel’s leader.

The first bookend verse comes at the beginning of his life and the other at the end. Everything that Joshua did as a leader comes in-between these two powerful verses. The first bookend verse of Joshua’s life is found in Joshua 1:8 when God told him, *“Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”* This verse at the beginning of Joshua’s leadership, God gave him the secret to success, which was to keep God’s law.

The second bookend verse is found in Joshua 24:25 at the end of his life, which reads, *“On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws.”* Joshua’s last accomplishment as Israel’s leader was to reaffirm God’s covenant with Israel and remind them to keep all of His laws and decrees.

**From beginning to end, the secret of Joshua’s success as a leader was to be obedient to God’s commands.**

Joshua led by example first in his own house and then with those around him; even with the whole nation of Israel (Joshua 24:15). As Christ's disciples, you and I are called to be leaders. People should follow what we say and do because our lives line up with God's Word. A wise man once said, "You can't give what you don't have." If we want to impart a standard of godly living to others we must first have a godly life. I pray that your life is an example to others, just like how Joshua's life is an example to everyone who reads the Bible.

## **REFLECTION**

Do you lead others by your Christ-like example?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you haven't been a good leader because of sin and hypocrisy.
2. Make a decision like Joshua, that by faith you and your house will serve the Lord.
3. By faith, choose to lead others by your Christ-like example.

# DAY 9: BY FAITH DEBORAH LED AN ARMY

Judges 4:4, *“Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.”*

After the death of Joshua, God raised up judges to lead the people of Israel. God used these judges to be prophetic voices to lead the Israelites. They often times would lead Israel’s army into battle and make final decisions about how to apply the Law of Moses (which was the governing law for both Israel’s civil and religious affairs).

The book of Judges described their work in Israel starting with Othniel and ending with Samuel. After Samuel the Israelites demanded that God give them kings instead of prophets. This decision led to many troubles between the kings (who were mostly sinful) and the prophets (who were used by God to try and save the nation from idolatry). Some of the more famous judges like Gideon and Samson get most of the attention because of their great victories in battle. However, my favorite judge is Deborah because she was the only female judge.

Deborah might have been in the natural, one of the weaker judges, but spiritually she was one of the strongest and most powerful. She was such a great leader that when she commanded Barak (Israel’s military leader) to go to war, he refused unless Deborah went with him. Barak said in Judges 4:8, *“If you go with me, I will go; but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go.”*

The inspiration from Deborah’s life is so obvious and outstanding that religious male chauvinists can’t ever deny it. Deborah is a present day example and role model for all Spirit-filled women leaders. Though in different times, women’s roles have been limited in church history- it is clear in Deborah’s life that God can and does use women to win great victories for His people!

I would like to encourage every godly woman to have faith in God to be all that you can be for the Lord and for every godly man to

support the women in their lives to be great leaders. Peter preached at the start of the church that God desired to use both men and women to prophesy and lead God's people. He said, quoting from the Old Testament prophet Joel, "*In the last days, ' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy'"*" (Acts 2:17).

**God desires to use all who are willing, whether male or female, to be a prophetic voice to this generation!**

I pray that we all can be inspired by the faith of Deborah and be courageous leaders in our generation. Jack Hyles wrote, "Leadership is made for service." Let us be God's servant-leaders that break barriers of culture, race, age and gender- all for the glory of God! Paul said in Galatians 3:28, "*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Therefore, let nothing stand in the way of you fulfilling God's calling in your life!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe women can be powerful leaders in the church?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you have wrongly limited the role of women.
2. Support godly women in leadership.
3. If you are a woman, by faith, accept your calling and do great things for God!

# DAY 10: BY FAITH HANNAH ASKED GOD FOR MORE

1 Samuel 1:20, *“So in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, ‘Because I asked the Lord for him.’”*

Hannah lived in a time when women’s lives were based primarily on their ability to produce children for their tribe. Male children were regarded as more valuable because they could carry on the family name, provide for the family and look after their parents when they got old. Females, though considered less valuable, were still a blessing because they could help care for their family, bare more children for the tribe and the parents could receive a dowry for them from their future husband.

Hannah lived in a polygamous home where her husband Elkanah had two wives (though this practice was not blessed by God, it was allowed in Old Testament times). Elkanah’s other wife Peninnah, had bore many children to him but Hannah remained barren. When Hannah shared her disappointment with Elkanah he didn’t understand and tried to comfort her by saying, *“Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don’t you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don’t I mean more to you than ten sons?”* (1 Samuel 1:8) Hannah felt alone and misunderstood; yet she was willing to believe God for what she didn’t have.

**Hannah had faith in God for more than just a good life with her husband- she wanted a child that would become an awesome man of God.**

In her desperation she went to the tabernacle and wept bitterly before the Lord to receive a child (1 Samuel 1:10). She then prayed with great faith and said, *“Lord Almighty, if you will only look on*

*your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head"* (1 Samuel 1:11). Hannah's prayers were so loud and filled with desperation that Eli the priest thought she was drunk. However, after she made her intentions clear, Eli gave her a promise that God would answer her prayer (1 Samuel 1:12-18).

In the course of time she became pregnant and gave birth to Samuel- the last and greatest judge of Israel (1 Samuel 1:20-28). And because she was willing to give Samuel to the priest to be raised in the Lord's service, God gave her five more children- three sons and two daughters (1 Samuel 2:21)! As a result of her faith Hannah received more from the Lord than she ever imagined.

Hannah serves as an example for us today of mountain moving faith. She knew that with God all things are possible to those who believe according to His will. May we all have faith in God like Hannah to not settle for things the way they are, but believe God to do exceedingly more than we could ever ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21)!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have faith in God like Hannah for the problems you are facing?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you have lost your faith in God to do great things. Alexander MacLaren said, "There can be no faith so feeble that Christ does not respond to it."
2. Prayerfully read the Word of God and receive His great and precious promises for your life (2 Peter 1:4).
3. By faith, ask God to change your impossible situation!

# DAY 11: BY FAITH SAMUEL ANSWERED GOD'S CALL

1 Samuel 3:10, *“The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”*

Very few people can say that they have heard the audible voice of God. Samuel was not only given the great honor of hearing God's audible voice but he was also chosen to do so at a young age. Likewise, he heard God's voice in a time of spiritual drought. The Bible records in 1 Samuel 3:1, *“The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.”*

When the Lord first called Samuel's name, he didn't know it was God's voice but rather he thought it was Eli the priest calling for him. After two times of God calling Samuel's name and Samuel coming to Eli, Eli discerned that it was in fact God calling him. Eli told Samuel that the next time he heard the voice of God he should say, *“Speak, for your servant is listening.”*

Upon responding properly to the Lord, Samuel received a prophetic word concerning God's judgment that was going to come to Eli's house. God told Samuel he was going to replace Eli and his children as the prophetic voice to Israel (1 Samuel 3:11-21). From that point on, Samuel became a great leader in Israel. He was able to hear God's inner voice and speak God's messages boldly to the Jews. Samuel was so sensitive to hear God's inner voice that he could clearly discern that it was David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, who God wanted to be Israel's second king (1 Samuel 16:1-13).

**Those who are close to God, like Samuel not only know God's voice, but they know His heart.**

As a result, we can learn from the faith and obedience of Samuel that when we hear God's inner voice we should say, "Speak for your servant is listening!" Charles Stanley said, "God's voice is still and quiet and easily buried under an avalanche of clamor." Therefore, like with Samuel we must first be willing to hear God's voice, whether audible or in our hearts, and then do whatever He commands.

## **REFLECTION**

Do you know how to hear God's inner voice through the Holy Spirit?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask the Lord to daily speak to your heart through the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 10:27, "*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*"
2. Always confirm what you believe to be God's voice with the Word of God. And if you're not sure, do what Samuel did and ask trusted leaders. Remember, God will never contradict what He has already spoken nor cause division in good churches.
3. By faith, live your life led by the voice of God.

# DAY 12: BY FAITH DAVID KILLED GOLIATH

1 Samuel 17:32, *“David said to Saul, ‘Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.’”*

The story of David and Goliath is probably the most well known inspirational story of the Old Testament. It is found in 1 Samuel 17 and has been used to represent overcoming challenges in life. From spiritual attacks to financial hardships to overcoming sin to underdogs facing impossible odds- just the mention of this story brings people hope to believe in God no matter what they’re facing in life.

Often times what gets lost in all the comparisons and present-day applications is the simple fact that a young boy trusted God in a way that thousands of people around him did not. A shepherd boy did what trained warriors couldn’t, because he believed that God was bigger than even the biggest enemy. David believed that God would give him victory over a giant just like He had empowered him to slay bears and lions as a shepherd.

**It’s not the size of our enemy that matters, but rather the size of our God.**

Some may ask, “What made David’s faith different than everyone else’s fear- weren’t there other people in Israel’s army that believed God was able to help?” Or, “What about King Saul, he had seen God do amazing things in the past and knew the miraculous victories of Gideon, Deborah, Samson and the other mighty warriors of the Bible- why couldn’t he face Goliath with courage?”

I believe the answer is simple and is the real lesson of encouragement from David’s life- David chose to believe God was greater than Goliath. All the other soldiers, including King Saul, could recite the stories of the past and say they believed in God; yet they stood on the sideline and did nothing because when it mattered most they lacked faith. David, on the other hand, was compelled by faith to

stand for God and face the enemy no matter what the consequences would be. He was either going to die a fool for God or win the greatest battle known to Israel at that time. Either way, He couldn't just stand there and do nothing. His faith in God motivated him to confront and defeat the enemy.

Does your faith in God empower you to face the giants in your life or are you going to just stand there and do nothing? I challenge you to re-read the story of David's faith and go conquer the problems in your life; no excuses. As Nike said, "Just do it!"

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have faith in God to overcome all the challenges you are facing in life?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to forgive you if you have been standing on the sidelines of life because you're afraid to face your problems. Face your problems afraid if you have to, but whatever you do, don't let fear stop you!
2. Prayerfully ask God to give you boldness and courage to face your giants.
3. By faith, conquer all the giants in your life with God on your side!

# DAY 13: BY FAITH SOLOMON RECEIVED WISDOM

1 Kings 3:9, *“So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”*

Solomon, the third king of Israel, is known in the Bible as the wisest and wealthiest Israelite King to have walked the earth (2 Chronicles 1:12). The Scriptures record that his vast knowledge included plant life, animals and memorizing over 3,000 proverbs (1 Kings 4:32-33). Solomon was well known and admired for his great wisdom as noted in 1 Kings 4:34, *“From all nations people came to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.”*

It is estimated that Solomon’s wealth in today’s terms would be valued around 100 billion dollars with an annual income of over 700 million in just gold. Israel had so much gold during Solomon’s reign that silver became of little value (1 Kings 10:21). He also built an extravagant place of worship for God known as, “Solomon’s Temple,” made with solid gold and the finest of materials (1 Kings 6). Today, Solomon’s inspired writings found in the book of Proverbs are the single greatest source of practical wisdom in the world.

We can learn from Solomon that God’s wisdom is to be valued and treasured in life. When God asked Solomon what he wanted, he responded in faith that he desired discernment (wisdom) to guide God’s people. And because he didn’t ask for wealth and power, God gave him wisdom, plus more wealth and power than he could ever imagine.

Therefore, we should apply the same faith in our requests to God. Instead of asking God for more money and blessings, we should ask Him for more wisdom to make better financial decisions and live

a prosperous life. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 4:7-9, “7 *The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. 8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. 9 She will give you a garland to grace your head and present you with a glorious crown.*” A wise man once said, “We don’t have money, family and government problems- we have a lack of wisdom problem!”

**We don’t need more things to solve our problems; we need more of God’s wisdom.**

Do you need God’s wisdom? You can do exactly what Solomon did and ask God for it! James said, “*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you*” (James 1:5). Have faith in God and ask for wisdom!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe that God’s wisdom can solve all your problems?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to give you wisdom.
2. Read the Bible, especially the book of Proverbs, and receive the wisdom you need from God.
3. By faith, live a wisdom-filled life!

# DAY 14: BY FAITH

## ELIJAH CALLED DOWN FIRE

1 Kings 18:24, *“Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord. The god who answers by fire—he is God.”*

Elijah is known in the Bible as one of the boldest and most radical Old Testament prophets that ever lived. During the time of Elijah the people of Israel were divided in their worship of God. The majority of the people turned their hearts towards Baal (a false god of the Canaanites) and God was displeased with them. Elijah was called by God to turn back the hearts of the people from worthless idolatry to serving the one and only God.

In 1 Kings 18:16-46 the Bible records one of Elijah’s most intense confrontations with the prophets of Baal. God led Elijah to challenge them to a show of power. Elijah’s challenge was simple—whichever’s God could bring down fire from the sky wins. The prophets of Baal spent all day trying to get their god to answer them, but nothing happened. In their desperation they began cutting themselves and pouring out their own blood to prove their dedication, however, fire never came down.

Elijah, on the other hand, mocked and ridiculed them in their foolish idolatry by saying things like, “Maybe your god is too busy to come now or he might be sleeping!” Elijah’s mockery made them slash themselves more and shout even louder. But despite all their efforts the prophets of Baal failed the challenge.

Then Elijah prayed to God and the fire of the Lord fell! The Bible records in 1 Kings 18:37-39 the following account of this great miracle, *“37 ‘Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.’ 38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the*

*trench. 39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, 'The Lord —he is God! The Lord —he is God!''* Afterwards, Elijah had the priests of Baal executed because of their crimes against God's law (1 Kings 18:40).

**Elijah's faith in God removed all his fear and gave him the boldness to confront the lies of his day.**

I pray that you and I will have the same kind of faith Elijah had and boldly face the spiritual opposition of our generation. Today, our battle is not against flesh and blood, but with Satanic forces in spiritual places like Paul said in Ephesians 6:12. It is our job to be an answer to Jesus' prayer to bring heaven to earth. D.L. Moody said, "How far away is Heaven? It is not so far as some imagine. It wasn't very far from Daniel. It was not so far off that Elijah's prayer and those of others could not be heard there. Men full of the Spirit can look right into heaven."

When we encounter false religions, abortion, immorality, injustice and spiritual idolatry may we boldly confront it with the truth of Jesus Christ in love!

## **REFLECTION**

Are you willing to boldly confront and make a stand against the evil of your culture?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God for boldness to speak the truth in love.
2. Prayerfully look for opportunities to confront the evil of your culture with the truth of God's Word- urban violence, false religion, abortion, sex trafficking, injustice and the like (Acts 4:29).
3. By faith, live a life of Holy Ghost boldness!

# DAY 15: BY FAITH

## ELISHA WAS MENTORED

*1 Kings 19:21, “So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.”*

Elisha was just an ordinary farmer until the prophet Elijah came up to him and placed his cloak on him (1 Kings 19:19). When Elijah put his cloak on Elisha this meant he wanted him to be his disciple. By faith Elisha received the calling to be trained under Elijah and left his home, family and comfort to follow and serve the man of God. God wanted Elijah to rise up another prophet to take his place when his time on earth was finished and Elisha was the perfect choice.

Elisha didn't start off doing great things in man's eyes, but rather he was the servant of Elijah. His tasks would involve washing Elijah's hands, running errands for him and being a source of encouragement for his mentor (2 Kings 3:11). As time went by, Elijah was called by God to take a chariot to heaven. He commanded Elisha to go from him and carry on the ministry. However, Elisha was not willing to leave Elijah because he loved him dearly. He said, “*As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you*” (2 Kings 2:6). Because of Elisha's persistence, Elijah blessed him and said that if he saw him go to heaven then he would be able to do double what he had done in ministry (2 Kings 2:9-10).

Sure enough Elisha followed Elijah all the way until he watched him be taken up into heaven on a chariot of fire. He then saw the cloak that Elijah wore fall from the sky and he put it on. This was the same cloak that was placed on him years ago. Now with Elijah's mantle in hand, Elisha served the Lord just as his leader had taught him.

During Elisha's life he was able to do more miracles in number and see greater things than Elijah had seen. I believe Elisha's greatest accomplishment was starting a school of the prophets, which multiplied the teachings he had received from Elijah, so that Israel would have prophetic voices all throughout the land (2 Kings 6:1-7).

**Mentorship insures that a person's life experiences don't die when they do, but rather their wisdom can live on in the lives of those they've shared them with.**

By faith, Elisha was able to humble himself to be taught by Elijah. The discipleship of Elijah with Elisha is an Old Testament shadow of Jesus making disciples. Today, may we all have the same faith of Elisha to be a disciple of Jesus Christ that makes new disciples (Matthew 28:19-20)!

## **REFLECTION**

Are you being discipled to make new disciples?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to place you under a godly mentor to disciple you. A.W. Tozer said, "Only a disciple can make a disciple."
2. Prayerfully look for opportunities to disciple others.
3. By faith, be a disciple that makes disciples!

# DAY 16: BY FAITH

## JEREMIAH PREACHED

*Jeremiah 20:9, “But if I say, ‘I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name,’ his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.”*

Jeremiah was the last major prophet to warn the people of Judah before the Babylonians took them into captivity. Jeremiah lived in a time when the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms called the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The Northern Kingdom was known as “Israel” with Samaria being its capitol and the Southern Kingdom was known as “Judah” with Jerusalem being its capitol. Israel had ten tribes and Judah had two tribes from the total of twelve tribes that settled in the land during the time of Joshua.

Both the kings in Israel and Judah were constantly disobeying God and leading the people astray with idolatry. God warned them through various prophets that if they didn’t repent and worship the true and living God they would be conquered and taken into slavery (Jeremiah 1:16). Sadly, neither kingdom listened to the prophets God sent and eventually, after many warnings, the nation of Israel was conquered by Assyria in 722 B.C.

Just one hundred years after the fall of the Northern Kingdom, God used Jeremiah to give the final warnings to Judah. If they too didn’t repent, the Babylonians would conquer them. God set apart Jeremiah to be Judah’s last hope, however, the people refused to change. Jeremiah’s main message was about the judgment God was going to send (Jeremiah 7:25-29). Because the Jewish leaders and priests hated hearing about their impending doom, they severely persecuted Jeremiah by beating him and throwing him into a pit (Jeremiah 38:1-28).

During this time of Jeremiah’s life he felt discouraged and he didn’t want to preach anymore. Despite his feelings of despair, he placed his faith in God and declared what we read in today’s passage. He said that even if he tried he could not hold back God’s Word

because it was like fire shut up in his bones!

**Jeremiah's faithfulness to preach, even when he didn't feel like it, led to God giving future generations hope. The writings of Jeremiah encouraged great leaders like Daniel and his friends in Babylon (Daniel 9:2).**

Therefore, we should be encouraged to imitate Jeremiah's faith and continue preaching God's Word even when we don't see results or "feel" like it. We must be faithful to preach the gospel in season and out season, so that future generations can be saved. It is our job to pass the gospel torch to the next generation. Don't try to hold it in; let your life burn bright for the world to see!

## **REFLECTION**

Are you willing to preach the gospel even if you suffer persecution and no one listens?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to set your life on fire (Acts 1:8).
2. Study yourself full, to preach yourself empty. Billy Sunday said, "I am not the author of the plan of salvation, but I am responsible for the way I preach it."
3. By faith, never stop preaching like Jeremiah!

# DAY 17: BY FAITH THREE MEN DEFIED A KING

*Daniel 3:17-18, “17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”*

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were Israelite men who were forced to live in Babylon after the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem. Their original Jewish names were- Hananiah, Misha’el and Azariah; however, their captors gave them their well-known names from the Chaldean language.

These three young men were peers to Daniel and together were trained in the courts of King Nebuchadnezzar to be leaders in his kingdom (Daniel 1:3-7). Their famous story takes place when King Nebuchadnezzar built a 90-foot tall idol and brought all the leaders in Babylon together to honor him by worshipping it. Whoever refused to worship the idol was to be thrown into a fiery furnace (Daniel 3:6).

Once the call to worship was given, people noticed that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were not bowing down before the idol like everyone else. The three young men then were brought before the king and told if they didn’t bow down they’d be thrown into the fire. They boldly refused and responded with the words found in today’s passage. Their faith in God made King Nebuchadnezzar so furious that he had the furnace heated up seven times hotter and then threw them into the fire.

While the young men were in the furnace the king saw it was not burning them but instead there appeared in the fire a fourth man, whom the king said looked like the “son of the gods” (Daniel 3:25). We now know that this was Jesus! As a result, Shadrach, Meshach

and Abednego were taken out of the furnace and were honored by the king because of their great faith and dependence upon God.

**One of the greatest lessons we can learn from Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's faith is to stand up for God, without compromise, no matter the cost.**

I love how they said in today's passage that even if God wouldn't deliver them, they still wanted King Nebuchadnezzar to know they were not going to bow down to his idol. They acted courageously regardless of the consequences. Can you say the same thing to your culture, family and friends?

By faith in God, can you say; "I will not bow down to political correctness, atheistic philosophy, the homosexual agenda, abortion, evolution, corporate corruption, racism, false religion and Hollywood's perversion?" I pray that we all can be encouraged by these humble young men to serve God alone, regardless of the consequences.

## **REFLECTION**

What cultural idols do people want you to bow down to?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you've had the fear of man or the fear of persecution. A wise man once said, "God may allow you to face the furnace of affliction, but He'll never let you face it alone, He'll be with you!"
2. Ask God to fill you with His boldness to stand for righteousness-no matter the cost.
3. By faith, don't bow down to the idols of this generation!

# DAY 18: BY FAITH

## DANIEL PRAYED

*Daniel 6:10, “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”*

Many Christians around the world are familiar with the story of Daniel in the lion’s den. The story has been told in Sunday school classes and church services to encourage people’s faith. God sending His angel to shut the lion’s mouth has inspired people to face their hardships knowing that if God is for them nothing can stand against them (Daniel 6:22). However, most people don’t know the circumstances that caused Daniel to get sent there.

In summary, Daniel was a young Jewish man that was captured and forced to work in Babylon. During his time in Babylon the empire went from being ruled by the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians. As a result, much of the favor he and his three friends (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) had received under King Nebuchadnezzar, was forgotten under King Darius, the new Persian King.

At the same time, because Daniel quickly gained favor with the Persians and was made one of the new king’s 120 governors, the other leaders became jealous of him (Daniel 6:1-4). The spiteful leaders tried to trap him and get him removed. Since they couldn’t find any fault in his life, they choose to find issue with his relationship with God. They tricked King Darius into signing a law that basically said no one could pray to any other god except him for thirty days (Daniel 6:7).

Once the law was made these men waited secretly by Daniel’s window to see if he would keep his three daily prayer times facing Jerusalem. Once they saw him pray they captured him and threw him into the lion’s den as punishment. When God delivered Daniel, King Darius then threw the men who devised the plan into the den and

honored Daniel and the one true God.

Think about this, Daniel could have been spared the initial arrest and punishment if he simply would have stopped praying.

**Some people in the church wouldn't have to worry about getting arrested like Daniel for praying because there wouldn't be enough evidence to convict them!**

Others might find a command to stop praying to be a relief because they treat praying like a laborious chore. We can all learn a lesson of faith from Daniel's prayer life. He not only understood the personal benefits of prayer, but he also believed in the national benefits of prayer. Because of Daniel's national prayers of repentance for Israel, God was merciful and restored the Jews back to their land after seventy years of captivity (Daniel 9:1-19). Therefore, may we always follow the words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and "*pray continually!*"

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have a consistent prayer life?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent to God if you have not been praying regularly. Leonard Ravenhill said, "No man is greater than his prayer life. The pastor who is not praying is playing; the people who are not praying are straying. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few prayers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere."
2. Joyfully establish and maintain a life of prayer.
3. By faith, never stop praying!

# DAY 19: BY FAITH JOHN PREPARED THE WAY FOR JESUS

*Luke 1:17, “And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”*

John the Baptist was blessed with the honor of being the forerunner to Jesus’ incarnation and earthly ministry. He was given to his mother Elizabeth and father Zechariah as a miracle child based on the prophetic words of an angelic visitation found in Luke 1:5-25. He is known as the “Baptist” because he baptized people in water for repentance.

The angel that visited his parents proclaimed God’s plan for his life and that he was to be set apart and used mightily for the Lord according to the prophecy found in Malachi 4:5-6, “5 See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.” God wanted to establish a generational blessing with the people of Israel that would be the foundation for the church of Jesus Christ.

The Bible describes him living in the wilderness eating locusts and wild honey, while wearing clothes made from camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist (Mark 1:6). This lifestyle was considered strange even in his day. Yet, when he began his ministry, he was like a wild brush fire that set the Judean countryside ablaze with the message of repentance and water baptism (Luke 3:7-14).

Not only was John bold and courageous, but he was also humble too. He was keenly aware of his secondary role to Jesus in the plan of God and was willing to let all his followers know. Mark 1:7 states, “*And this was his message: ‘After me comes the one more*

*powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.’”*

**John was a great man of God because he knew who he was and who he wasn't. He knew he wasn't the Messiah, but he was the Messiah's forerunner.**

In today's terms, John was able to “stay in his lane.” And because of his humility, he was given the honor of baptizing Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17). Too many leaders fail because they try to be someone they're not. Jealousy and envy rot the good fruit in our lives when we stop being thankful for what God has called us to do and want what He has called others to do. Think about what Leonard Ravenhill said, “John the Baptist never performed any miracles. Yet, he was greater than any of the Old Testament prophets.” Why? Because he prepared the way Jesus.

As we see Jesus' second coming approaching quickly in these last days, may we all have the same faith of John the Baptist to go out into the world and preach the message of repentance and baptize all those who believe (Matthew 28:19). In doing so, I pray that we can all have the same humility of John and say, “*He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.*” (John 3:30 NLT)

## **REFLECTION**

Are you preparing the way for the second coming of Jesus by preaching the gospel?

## **ACTION**

1. Be filled with the Holy Spirit and be a witness for Jesus to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).
2. Preach the gospel as often as you can.
3. By faith, never stop making Jesus' name great and preparing for His return!

# DAY 20: BY FAITH SIMEON WAITED FOR THE MESSIAH

Luke 2:26, *“It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.”*

Simeon was a Jew that lived in Jerusalem and was devoted to God. Today’s passage records that he was given a promise from the Holy Spirit that he wouldn’t die until he saw the promised Messiah. Luke then records that when Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the temple to be presented before God, the Lord spoke to Simeon to go to the temple courts and meet Jesus (Luke 2:27).

As Simeon saw Jesus he took Him into his arms and praised God saying, *“29 Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel”* (Luke 2:29-32). Luke then records that Mary and Joseph marveled in the presence of God due to this man’s faith.

Lastly, Luke 2:34-35 records, *“34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: ‘This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.’”*

Simeon’s great faith encourages us today to never forget the promises that the Holy Spirit has spoken to our lives. I can only imagine how it must of felt for Simeon to daily go to the temple and come home without seeing the Messiah. Yet, he remained faithful to God’s promise to go back day after day, hoping each day the promise would be fulfilled.

**Simeon didn’t give up or turn his back on God just because**

**the promise tarried in coming- he remained true to God's Word.**

The prophet Habakkuk wrote many years prior during times of hardship, *"For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay"* (Habakkuk 2:3). May we all remember the promises that God has spoken to us and never lose faith. I believe, like with Simeon, God will do all that He said He would do!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe God will do all He promised to do in your life?

## **ACTION**

1. Recall the promises that God has given you.
2. Decide today to remain faithful to God's promises no matter how long they take to come to pass. A.W. Pink said, "The permanence of God's character guarantees the fulfillment of his promises."
3. By faith, never stop believing in God's promises!

# DAY 21: BY FAITH JESUS SUBMITTED TO THE FATHER

Matthew 26:39, *“Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’”*

The Bible teaches us that when Jesus came in the flesh He humbled Himself by becoming a servant. Paul wrote in Philippians 2:7, *“Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”* Jesus did not think of His privileges in heaven (as the second person in the God-nature, equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit) as something that He had to forcibly hold on to. Rather, He willingly emptied Himself of His divine advantages to become a man so that He could be sacrificed for our sins (Philippians 2:6-11).

Luke recorded in his gospel that because of Jesus’ incarnation (coming in the flesh) He humbled Himself to grow both in wisdom and stature with God and man (Luke 2:52). At the same time, Jesus never stopped being fully divine; He just limited His divine attributes while on earth to live as a normal man, dependent upon the Father and the Holy Spirit.

For this reason Jesus said in John 5:19, *“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”* Likewise, because of Jesus’ humility, He limited His knowledge of the future and said in Matthew 24:36, *“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”*

**When Jesus walked the earth, He wasn’t like Superman; He was a man just like us. He demonstrated that what Adam failed to do (obey God), He could do in humility.**

In today's passage, Matthew recorded that before Jesus' crucifixion He expressed His weakness to the Father because He knew the suffering that was coming. He wasn't complaining or trying to get out of obeying God because He knew that there was no other way to redeem mankind and satisfy the wrath of God. He was admitting, as a man, the honest thoughts and feelings of facing the cross. Nevertheless, He set for us the perfect example because He didn't let His fears deter His obedience. Jesus humbly placed His faith in the Father and submitted to His will.

The author of Hebrews declared, *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are —yet he did not sin"* (Hebrews 4:15). We can be encouraged by Jesus' obedience and trust the Father in our weaknesses. If Jesus Christ, God the Son in the flesh, expressed His weakness and still obeyed the Father by going to the cross; may we trust the Father by obeying all His commands!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have enough faith in God to say, "Not my will but your will be done in ever part of my life?"

## **ACTION**

1. Repent for the times you have not submitted yourself to God's will for your life.
2. Don't let fear stop you from submitting to God. Francis Frangipane wrote, "Any time we open ourselves up to fear, we fall prey to his deceptions and intimidations. Yet, if we submit our hearts to God and stand in faith, we can resist those first fearful thoughts. As we yield to God we can master our reactions to fear and the enemy will soon flee."
3. By faith, obey the will of God!

# DAY 22: BY FAITH PETER WALKED ON WATER

*Matthew 14:28-29, “28 ‘Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ 29 ‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.”*

Twelve men were in the boat that day, but only one walked on water. Besides Jesus, Peter is the only other person in history (that we know of) to have walked on water. There are sad stories of those who tried and failed... some even to their death. However, Peter not only stood on water, he walked on it and came to Jesus.

Many ask, what made Peter’s reaction and experience so different than all the other disciples? Didn’t James and John believe in Jesus- why didn’t they get out of the boat too? Wouldn’t it be fair to say that whoever would have asked to come to meet Jesus on the water would have experienced the miracle? I believe it was available to everyone present. But the question remains, why was Peter the only one? I believe the answer is found in just one word, faith.

**Peter was the kind of disciple that had to put his faith into practice. He wasn’t satisfied with just watching Jesus- he wanted to do what Jesus did.**

His passion for God was something that couldn’t be held in or made to conform to those around him. He was a natural leader among leaders and dared to be first. What made the miracle possible was Jesus’ command to, “Come.” Peter’s ability to walk on water wasn’t natural- it was supernatural. He could literally walk on the water because God’s Word was beneath his feet. As Reinhard Bonnke would say, “Peter didn’t walk on H<sub>2</sub>O, but C-O-M-E!” His faith came in agreement with what Jesus had spoken and impossibilities became

possible.

Yes, it is true that when he took his eyes off of Jesus and started to look at the waves, fear gripped his heart and he began to sink. But Peter getting a little wet doesn't change the fact that he walked on water! Sometimes when you attempt great things for God by faith you may waiver and stumble in unbelief; but the same God who brought you out the boat is able to keep you safe and bring you back to the boat. Don't be afraid to step out of your natural and walk into God's supernatural!

You have nothing to lose but fear- so get off your "holy backside" and walk with Jesus! May we all learn from Peter's bold and courageous faith to be quick to obey God's Word- even if the surrounding circumstances seem impossible. Let us walk by faith and not by sight as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:7. When we choose to live the life of faith we will experience God in ways that we could never of imagined and we will see His glory revealed upon this earth! (Ephesians 3:20-21)

## **REFLECTION**

Are you willing to step out of the boat and walk on God's Word?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to give you His promises for all the majors areas of your life; family, career, ministry, etc.
2. Prayerfully remove all excuses and confess all your fears.
3. By faith, walk on the water with Jesus!

# DAY 23: BY FAITH BARNABAS WAS A GIVER

*Acts 4:36-37, “36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), 37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.”*

Do you like being encouraged? How well are you at giving encouragement? One of the easiest and most meaningful gifts you can give someone is the “gift of encouragement.” Encouragement means, “to give support.” Joseph the Levite was so supporting of his local church that the apostolic leadership called him, “Barnabas,” which in Aramaic means, “Son of Encouragement.”

One of the ways that Barnabas encouraged the church was by being a generous giver and financial supporter. Luke recorded in the book of Acts that he sold a field and gave all the money as a gift to the apostles. Because of his gift, the church was able to distribute it to meet the needs of the church. Not much is said about how much wealth Barnabas had or how many fields he owned, but nonetheless, what sticks out is that by faith he was willing to sell something valuable and give it all to the church.

Some might think it would be easy for Barnabas to sell a field and give all the money away if he was rich and had many fields. However, I know many rich people that don’t have enough faith to even give God their tithe faithfully, let alone a generous offering!

Others may wrongly assume that poor people are always generous givers because they know what it’s like to be in need. Therefore, whenever they have extra they will joyfully give it away. But that is not always true either, I used to work in the inner city of New Orleans with some of the poorest people in the U.S. and I witnessed firsthand some of the worst cases of greed. Even some adults were not even willing to share the candy we gave them with

their children- they'd say, "Get your own!"

**The amount of money a person has doesn't determine their level of generosity; their heart does.**

Joseph, the Levite from Cyprus, had such an encouraging heart of generosity that most Christians today don't know his real name because his nickname Barnabas ("Son of Encouragement") has defined him. Not only that, but for over two thousand years his faith has inspired millions of Christians to be encouragers and generous givers in their local church!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you want to be a generous giver and encourage God's people?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to give you a generous heart, free from all greed and the love of money (Matthew 6:24). Jeremy Taylor wrote, "He, who gives what he would as readily throw away, gives without generosity; for the essence of generosity is in self-sacrifice."
2. Pray for the Lord to bless you to be a blessing to the church.
3. By faith, give your best to the church!

# DAY 24: BY FAITH STEPHEN WAS MARTYRED

*Acts 7:59-60, “59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ 60 Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep.”*

The death of Stephen, the church’s first martyr, is inspiring because his life of courage challenges every disciple to give his or her all for Jesus. His story can be found in Acts 6:8-7:60 and it’s pivotal to understanding the environment in which Christianity was established. Stephen was one of the first deacons to be chosen to serve the apostles in the work of feeding the needing. The standard of being a deacon (which in the Greek means, “servant or waiter”) was to be “*full of the Spirit and wisdom*” (Acts 6:3).

Before being appointed as a deacon nothing of Stephen’s life is known in the Bible, but it can be safely assumed that for him to have been chosen at such an early stage of the church he probably was also part of the hundred and twenty in the upper room that received the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4. As a result, to have been one of the original hundred and twenty, he also most likely had either personally followed Jesus or was close to those who did. In other words, Luke recorded in his gospel that Jesus had at times, seventy-two disciples following Him that He could send out two-by-two to preach like in Luke 10:1. Therefore, it’s possible that Jesus might have personally trained Stephen as a preacher.

We may not know for sure how Stephan was trained; but we do know without a doubt that he was highly regarded by the disciples and was a gifted preacher. His street preaching was powerful, full of miracles and was irrefutable to Jewish opposition. Luke recorded in Acts 6:8-10, “*8 Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Opposition*

*arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen...  
10 But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him  
as he spoke.”*

### **Stephen chose to live a courageous life instead of a long life.**

There are three lessons we can learn from Stephen’s short, but inspiring life; first, be a servant in the church who is full of wisdom and the Holy Spirit. God will always anoint those disciples who serve His people. Second, be bold in preaching the gospel of Jesus even if it offends. Stephen boldly chose to be loved by God and hated by man (Acts 7:54). Third, be forgiving towards those who persecute you. Stephen prayed like Jesus and asked for the forgiveness of all his enemies right before they stoned him. He said in Acts 7:60, “*Lord, do not hold this sin against them.*” Saul of Tarsus, one of the witnesses, eventually became Paul the great leader of the church.

May we all have the faith and courage of Stephen to never stop speaking God’s Word even if it costs us our friends, jobs or even our very lives. Because of courageous disciples like Stephen, the Christian faith grew mightily in ancient times and is still growing in persecuted countries around the world. Tertullian said, “The blood of the martyrs, is the seed of the gospel!”

## **REFLECTION**

Are you willing to give your life for Jesus and the gospel?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to remove any fear of persecution.
2. Study the Word of God and prepare yourself to be a witness for Jesus wherever you go (2 Timothy 2:15).
3. By faith, preach boldly in the face of persecution!

# DAY 25: BY FAITH PHILIP HAD REVIVAL

*Acts 8:6-8, “6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. 7 For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city.”*

After Stephen was martyred, Philip (also one of the original seven deacons) went to Samaria and preached God’s Word with signs following. Philip could have backed down and stopped publically preaching God’s Word after his friend was stoned, however, he did the opposite; he spread the gospel net even further to Samaria and boldly proclaimed the good news for all to hear.

Unlike in Jerusalem where they stoned Stephen, the Samaritans eagerly accepted the gospel. Luke recorded in Acts 8:8, “*There was great joy in the city!*” Crowds of people came to hear the preaching and they were amazed as they witnessed the power of God drive out demons and heal the lame and paralyzed.

I don’t believe it was any accident that Philip picked Samaria to be the next major place to hear the gospel after Jerusalem because he knew that Jesus said in Acts 1:8, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” Therefore, the disciples started in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and then after Stephen’s death they split between going to Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1).

**Philip didn’t let fear detour him from having faith in Jesus’ plan to make disciples of the nations. Because he was willing to walk by faith and preach to the Samaritans a great revival came and many people were saved, delivered and healed.**

The challenge for us today is to complete the last part of Jesus’

plan and reach “*the ends of the earth!*” We don’t know what will happen when we go because it could be revival or riot. Nevertheless, we should be encouraged by the faith of Philip and boldly declare God’s Word for all to hear and believe that God is able to save and deliver all who call on the name of Jesus!

## **REFLECTION**

Are you willing to preach the gospel in your part of the world?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to fill you with the fire of the Holy Spirit to be a living witness for Jesus.
2. Begin to make times to regularly preach the gospel in your city and surrounding areas.
3. By faith, preach repentance to sinners, healing to the sick and deliverance to the oppressed! John R. Rice said, “Present-day wickedness, apostasy and modern civilization cannot prevent revival.”

# DAY 26: BY FAITH

## PRISCILLA AND AQUILA DISCIPLED APOLLOS

*Acts 18:26, “He [Apollos] began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.”*

Priscilla and Aquila were a power couple in the early church. They were fellow coworkers in the gospel with Paul and like him were tent makers (Acts 18:2-3). They had a church that met in their home and together they won souls and made disciples (1 Corinthians 16:19).

Just like how Andronicus and Junia were a married apostolic team starting new churches with Paul (Romans 16:7); Priscilla and Aquila were overseers in a local church Paul helped start. Paul wrote about their dedication in Romans 16:3-4, “*3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. 4 They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.*”

Two aspects of their faith can encourage us today; first, they had faith in God to use them together as a married couple. In their culture, women were not given the same status as men, especially among the Jews. However, their culture didn't prevent them from being partners in teaching and preaching the gospel.

**All married couples should be inspired by Priscilla and Aquila's faith to work together and make disciples in their home for the glory of God.**

Second, and most importantly, they were faithful to the work of God. They didn't quit when things were hard nor did they turn their backs on Paul when he was arrested. Instead they were willing to risk their lives for their leader. They were not ashamed of Paul's

persecution and stayed committed to working together with him to make the name of Jesus great in the local church.

I pray that all married couples will be challenged and inspired by Priscilla and Aquila's faith to open your home and even risk your lives for the Kingdom of God to make new disciples.

## **REFLECTION**

Are you willing to partner with your spouse to make disciples?

## **ACTION**

1. If you're married, pray for God to use you and your spouse as a power couple for the Lord.
2. Pray together with your spouse to be given opportunities to make disciples in your home. Charles Spurgeon said, "You will never make a missionary of the person who does no good at home. He that will not serve the Lord in the Sunday school at home, will not win children to Christ in China."
3. By faith, whether you are married or single, determine to always be faithful to make disciples.

# DAY 27: BY FAITH TIMOTHY WAS A SPIRITUAL SON

*Philippians 2:22, “But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.”*

The story of Paul and Timothy in the Bible is a remarkable story of discipleship and loyalty. Paul most likely led Timothy to the Lord in his first missionary trip to Lystra and Derbe in Acts 14:6-7. However, it wasn't until John Mark, Barnabas' nephew, left Paul on a mission trip that Timothy was given the chance to be Paul's traveling companion (Acts 15:38-16:3).

**When one of Paul's young disciples quit and turned back in the middle of a mission trip; God raised up a new disciple to travel with him. We're all valuable, but we're all replaceable.**

Timothy's relationship with Paul most likely started when he was around 15-19yrs old and spanned for approximately 20 years. Paul considered Timothy a “son in the faith” or a “spiritual son” (1 Timothy 1:2). The trust that had Paul in Timothy can be seen in his choosing to place him over the churches in Ephesus, which was where Paul spent the most time and most likely had the greatest fruit (Acts 20:17-38).

At one point in Paul's ministry it seemed like many people were abandoning him but he said that Timothy never left his side. He wrote in Philippians 2:19-23 regarding his love for Timothy, “*19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son*

*with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.”*

At the end of Paul’s life Timothy was the one to receive his last and final letter, 2 Timothy. In this letter Paul started by writing, “*Timothy, my dear son,*” and ended by saying, “*Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me*” (2 Timothy 1:2 & 4:9-10). Uniquely, the life of Timothy is only known by the things Paul wrote about him because he never wrote any letters nor is quoted in the book of Acts. However, what we can learn from Paul is that Timothy had great faith in God and was willing to be like a son to him, even when others left.

Paul used the imagery of a “father and son” relationship with Timothy because they served God together, fought the good fight of faith side-by-side and never let anything break apart their love and commitment to each other. And because of their work together some of the greatest books in the Bible have been written, 1-2 Timothy, which are my personal favorites. Plus, young and old leaders alike have been inspired to work together for the Kingdom of God, spanning generational gaps and successfully passing the gospel torch.

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have faith to serve church leadership like Timothy did with Paul?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you have ever wrongfully forsaken your church leadership.
2. Ask the Lord to bring you into “family style” relationships with leaders in your church. Albert Schweitzer said, “Example is leadership.”
3. By faith, be committed and loyal to the good leadership God has placed in your life.

# DAY 28: BY FAITH PHOEBE WAS A GREAT LEADER

Romans 16:1, *“I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae.”*

The Bible only mentioned Phoebe in two verses, Romans 16:1-2, where Paul wrote, *“1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. 2 I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.”* Despite there only being two verses written about this awesome female deacon, we know a great deal about her character.

First, she was a woman leader in the church. The position that she held was that of a deacon. Some scholars believe that since Paul had not yet formalized the distinction between elder and deacon as he did in 1 Timothy 3, written many years later, that by way of apostolic tradition found in Acts 6, a deacon was the highest position a leader could have in the church, equivalent to that of an elder in later times. Dr. Craig Keener even believes that Phoebe could have brought Paul’s epistle (Romans) to the church of Rome. Keener also states, “Phoebe held a position of considerable responsibility, prominence, and authority in her congregation.”

Despite Paul’s temporary cultural restrictions given to women in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35, we see that in fact he did allow women to be leaders in the church. Paul mentioned many other outstanding women by name in Romans 16:3-16, such as Priscilla, Mary, Junia, Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis and Julia. All of these mighty women of God were commended for their hard work in the gospel.

Second, Phoebe is said to be a *‘benefactor of many people, including [Paul].’* The Greek word for benefactor, *“prostatis,”* means to be “a helping leader.” Phoebe not only served as a leader in

the church but also was a leader to leaders. Some scholars even believe that Phoebe might have been instrumental in Paul's transformation from a Jewish leader to a Christian apostle because he includes himself in the receiving end of her leadership.

Whether she was simply helping Paul's current ministry or was essential to his spiritual growth, Phoebe was a committed leader in the Body of Christ that was instrumental in many people's spiritual life. On top of that, by being called a deacon and a benefactor in the church, she was given the highest accolades a leader in the New Testament church could receive.

**All people, especially women, should be encouraged by the faith of Phoebe because she was a great leader and helper in the church; everyone should aspire to be like her.**

May we all desire to have the same faith Phoebe had to assist in the process of developing new disciples and leaders in the church of Jesus Christ!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have faith to believe that women can be great leaders in the church?

## **ACTION**

1. Remove the error of gender exclusivity from your life and ministry if you don't believe women can have great leadership roles in the church. Just as Paul commended Phoebe as a deacon to the church of Rome, many great elders today are commending powerful women leaders in the church.
2. If you're a woman, ask the Lord to raise you up to be a great leader.
3. By faith, be the best leader and helper you can be in the local church.

# DAY 29: BY FAITH PAUL FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

2 Timothy 4:7, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”*

If there was ever a disciple in the New Testament that understood persecution, rejection and abuse- it was Paul the apostle. Take a moment to read 2 Corinthians 11:23-30 as he described the many hardships and sufferings he endured.

23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? 30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

Paul listed the following twenty-three hardships he faced in the ministry; (1) Prison time, (2) Flogged severely, (3) Exposed to death, (4) Five times whipped thirty-nine times, (5) Three times beaten with

rods, (6) Stoned, (7) Three times shipwrecked, (8) Spent a night in the ocean, (9) Constantly on the move, (10) Danger from rivers in travel, (11) Dangers from bandits, (12) Danger from Jewish people, (13) Danger from Gentiles, (14) Danger in the city, (15) Danger in the country, (16) Danger at sea, (17) Danger from false brothers, (18) Laboring night and day without sleep, (19) Suffering hunger and thirst, (20) Times of being cold and without proper clothing, (21) The pressure of all the churches, (22) Outward physical weakness and (23) Inward spiritual weakness in the form of temptation.

**Despite all of Paul's hardships, he never stopped fighting the good fight of faith.**

The Romans eventually beheaded him during the time of Nero's persecution, but nevertheless, Paul finished his race. What was Paul's "secret of success" to endure suffering? He had faith in God. Paul believed that God's grace was more powerful than all his weaknesses and temptations. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:10, "*That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*"

I pray we will all be empowered by God's grace, motivated by Paul's testimony and never stop fighting the good fight of faith!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe when you are weak, Christ is strong?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you've been having "pity patty parties" instead of having faith in God.
2. Put your faith in God during times of suffering. Augustine wrote, "God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering."
3. By faith, fight the good fight and finish your race.

# DAY 30: BY FAITH WE OVERCOME THE DEVIL

Revelation 12:11, *“They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

When everything in this life is said and done, we will all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Only the ones who have their names written in the “Lamb’s Book of Life” will be given eternal citizenship in the Kingdom of God; not by their good deeds but by the grace of God. Those who have not received the grace of God by putting their faith in Jesus will suffer forever in the lake of fire with the devil and his fallen angels. John wrote in Revelation 20:15, *“Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

Jesus taught in John 3:16-18 that the only difference between those who have everlasting life and those who perish is whether or not they believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. In other words, to not believe in Jesus is a sin just like murder and witchcraft. Some theologians believe unbelief was the root sin of Adam and Satan and thus it’s the only unforgiveable sin because as long as you have unbelief you are certain to suffer God’s wrath. John wrote in Revelation 21:8, *“But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”* Notice how being “cowardly” and “unbelieving” is punishable with fire for eternity!

I write these things humbly and with the fear of God to proclaim to all who read this lesson- if you think letting the devil defeat you and not walking in faith is an option, then please remember the unbelieving and cowardly will have no excuse on Judgment Day.

All of us who are saved should consider the admonition Jesus gave the church of Smyrna in Revelation 2:10, *“Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be*

*faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown."*

**All faithful Christians are promised victory over the devil when they receive the blood of the Lamb, keep the word of their testimony and don't shrink back from death (martyrdom).**

May all who read this lesson be numbered with those in heaven that are given the eternal Kingdom of God. Let us not be cowardly and unbelieving, but rather have courageous faith and live a life of victory over the devil!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe Jesus has made you victorious over the devil?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you are cowardly or unbelieving in any way. A wise person once said, "The first step to victory is to realize that Jesus already defeated the devil!" 1 John 3:8
2. Keep your faith and testimony until you meet Jesus face-to-face.
3. By faith, help others overcome the devil!

# **ALL THE BOOKS IN THE 30 DAYS SERIES**

1. The God Kind of Life: 30 Days of Living a New Life with Jesus
2. The Promised Life: 30 Days of Experiencing God's Promises
3. The Prayer Life: 30 Days of Practicing God's Presence
4. The Wisdom Life (Pt. 1): 30 Days of Growing in Wisdom
5. The Wisdom Life (Pt. 2): 30 More Days of Growing in Wisdom
6. The Spirit-Filled Life: 30 Days of Operating in Pentecostal Power
7. The Discipleship Life: 30 Days to Becoming a Follower of Jesus
8. The Purpose-Filled Life: 30 Days of Learning the Meaning of Life
9. The Soul Winning Life: 30 Days of Doing Biblical Evangelism
10. The Overcoming Life: 30 Days of Conquering Obstacles
11. The Faith-Filled Life: 30 Days of Walking by Faith
12. The Revival Life: 30 Days of Standing for Cultural Change

**To purchase, visit [mpichurch.org/books](http://mpichurch.org/books) or search "Joe Wyrostek" on Amazon.com**