

**THE**

**GOD KIND OF**

**LIFE**

**30 DAYS OF LIVING A NEW LIFE WITH JESUS**

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*The God Kind of Life: 30 Days of Living a New Life with Jesus*

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# PREFACE

John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

Man’s creation, in Genesis 1, is as inspiring, as the fall of man, in Genesis 3, is terrifying. In the beginning, man was created to know God, to walk and talk with God; then, in one failed, sinful moment, mankind was sentenced to death and banished from the very fellowship for which it was created.

Fast forward four thousand years. God, the Son (Jesus), volunteers to come, in the flesh, to rescue mankind from eternal damnation. Interestingly, the method of his appearance, though prophesied, did not meet our expectations. Our Savior was not born into earthy royalty. Our King did not hold a political office. Our Lord did not conquer our enemy with sword or spear. Jesus, our Redeemer, conquered our foe by being born in a lowly place, living a sinless life and dying in our stead. He conquered sin by being made sin for us.

**Jesus became what I was, so that I might become what He is. He took what I deserved, so that I might be given what He earned.**

Three days after His crucifixion, Jesus rose and showed Himself to His chosen. He not only conquered our enemies, He conquered our hearts. God made the Garden of Eden to be our home, but He made our hearts to be His. As John 3:16 proves, His coming was for love. The love of God compelled the Father to send the Son; and, it was love that compelled the Son to leave His heavenly throne and come to earth to die on a man-made cross.

Have you believed in the Son, Jesus Christ? Have you put your life in His hands? Have you believed in your heart and confessed Him with your mouth as Lord? If not, what are you waiting for? This 30 day series has been written to encourage you to live the God-kind of life, the kind of life God always wanted for you. I pray you will receive this life, hold it fast and never let it go!

## **HOW TO USE THIS BOOK**

1. If you have not been born again, confess your sins, in prayer. Thank God for making you a new creature, in Him.
2. Ask God to give you the conviction to finish this book. Take it to heart. It's a road map to guide you.
3. Read a lesson each day, consistently, for 30 days.
4. Prayerfully consider the reflection at the end of each lesson.
5. Put into practice the three actions listed each day.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DAY 1:	Are You New?	7
DAY 2:	A Second Chance at Life	11
DAY 3:	The Life of Faith	13
DAY 4:	Set Free to Live Free	15
DAY 5:	Never Going Back	17
DAY 6:	Heaven Knows Your Name	19
DAY 7:	The Joy of Repenting	21
DAY 8:	Filled to Overflowing	23
DAY 9:	Get a Life, a Prayer Life	25
DAY 10:	You've Got Help	27
DAY 11:	Empowered to Prosper	29
DAY 12:	Cross-Eyed	31
DAY 13:	Jesus is My Sensei	33
DAY 14:	Wholly Holy	35
DAY 15:	Loving God and Loving People	37
DAY 16:	Living by Faith	41
DAY 17:	One Way	43
DAY 18:	By Grace Alone	45
DAY 19:	God's Masterpiece	47
DAY 20:	More than Conquerors	49
DAY 21:	Dead to the Flesh, Alive in the Spirit	51
DAY 22:	Trials = Joy	53
DAY 23:	Great and Precious Promises	55
DAY 24:	A Way Out of Temptation	57
DAY 25:	A Life Built on the Rock	59
DAY 26:	Me and My House	61
DAY 27:	A Friend of God	63
DAY 28:	Know Jesus and Make Him Known	65
DAY 29:	The Righteousness of God	67
DAY 30:	Renew Your Mind	71



# DAY 1: ARE YOU NEW?

2 Corinthians 5:17, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here.”*

Timing is everything. I’ll never forget the day Jesus made me a new creation. It was November 5, 1995. I had made drugs the lord of my life to the point that I thought I needed to go to a mental ward. I was tired — empty — and tired of being both. I called my mother and asked her to take me to the hospital. She refused. “You don’t need a psychiatrist,” she said, “You need Jesus.”

Now, I had been raised in church. I knew who God was. At least I knew who she thought God was. “I don’t believe in God any more than I believe in the Easter bunny,” I told her and slammed down the phone. I needed someone who would help me. I felt like I was spiraling out of control. I remembered that my friend’s Mom was a nurse, so I called her. All she could do was tell me to, “Go check yourself in.” I was 18 years old. Eighteen year-olds don’t have the fortitude to check themselves into anything. Yet, I could not go on — not one more day.

I made the drive to my mother’s house. Something had to give. When I got there, she started preaching (she’s a very passionate Christian). Instead of being defensive or attacking her for what she was saying, I finally — began — to listen. Something pierced my spirit — something beautiful. I actually began to “hear” a way out of my misery. You see God had a plan for my life. He had an assignment for my future. It had been right in front of me all along. That day, I grabbed it. Sitting at my Mother’s kitchen table, I confessed my sins and put my trust in Jesus.

At the time, I had a female roommate. We were nothing but friends, but the atmosphere was certainly conducive for us to be more. When I showed up at home that night, with my Bible from elementary school tucked under my arm, the possibility of me living in sin went straight out the window. Humans are creatures of habit. Though I tried to resume my previous life, I found it impossible. Everything was new on the inside, so everything had to change on the outside.

I put on the rap music I'd been listening to the night before. It didn't sound the same. I called my friends and talked about the things we always talked about. The conversations were empty. Frustrated, I went to the bathroom, randomly opened my Bible and began reading. I had turned to the book of Psalms, authored by God's beloved, David, and started reading the verses to myself. As was unnatural for me, within minutes, I found myself reading aloud. As I did, tears streamed down my face. David's words, his outright worship of God, became the cry of my heart.

I fell in love with God, that night, and found myself never wanting to leave His presence, ever again. My soul panted after Him as a deer pants for water (Psalm 42:1). Augustine of Hippo said, "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee." I knew, from that day forward, I wasn't going to be satisfied without God at the center of every part of my life.

**I needed all of God, in all of me, all of the time.**

Since that day I have been convinced, to my core, that God loves to answer our prayers to make us new. Please understand, I am not referring "only" to going to church or "trying" to be a better person. I am describing a total transformation — rebirth — a renovation, by the power of God, from the person you used to be. At salvation, you become a person that never existed before. All of the past is wiped clean. Sin, hurt and disappointments disappear when Jesus steps in. I want to challenge everyone reading this to have the same experience — the experience the Bible promises.

If you have never been born again and made a new creation, you can start a new life with Jesus, today (John 3:3-16). Simply have faith that Jesus is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do. Repent of your sins! If you have been born again, I exhort you to never go back to your old life. Live your new life, for God, with all of your heart, mind and soul everyday.

**REFLECTION**

Has Jesus made you a new creation?



## **ACTION**

1. If you are not born again, put your trust in Jesus and repent of your sins, in prayer. Use this prayer as an example, *“Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus and ask you to forgive me of all my sins. I confess Jesus is the Lord of my life. I believe He died and rose again to be my Savior. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and make me new from the inside out. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”*
2. If you are born again, examine your life to see if any of the old junk has returned. If it has, repent and ask God to renew each and every part of your life.
3. Tell somebody your story, today, about how God has changed your life. It will increase your faith, honor Him and encourage them.



# DAY 2: A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE

John 3:3, “*Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.’*”

I was born January 19, 1977, and within a few years, according to my parents, I showed a strong desire for rebellion. In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, I received my first paddling from the principle. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, I was given a permanent desk in “time out.” My 6<sup>th</sup> grade year marked my first school expulsion (I had mooned a female classmate). By the time I was 16 years old, I was a drug dealing high school drop out.

At 18 years of age, after being arrested 8 times and abusing drugs regularly, I knew I had to change my life. After accepting Jesus when I hit rock bottom, I was ready to do life God’s way. I realized that day (like never before), that I needed Jesus to forgive me and make me a new person. In light of God’s amazing grace, and my willingness to change, I confessed my sins and boldly proclaimed Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Corrie ten Boom said, “If you look at the world, you’ll be distressed. If you look within, you’ll be depressed. If you look at God you’ll be at rest.” My soul was made new and found that rest on November 5, 1995 (Psalm 62:5).

What kind of sinner were you? Don’t compare yourself to me. Don’t think your sins are not worthy of hell. Paul said, in Romans 3:23, “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” How many times have you lied, took something that didn’t belong to you, disobeyed your parents, lusted, put things in your life before God and church, coveted what your neighbor had, gossiped, got drunk, looked at porn, had sex outside of marriage, worshipped a false god or took the Lord’s name in vain?

**The bottom line — we are all born sinners and have freely chosen to sin countless times against our holy God.**

We all need Jesus to forgive these sins and give us a second chance at life. Just like you were born, the first time, a sinner in your

flesh by your parents, now you can be born again, in your spirit, to be a saint (holy person) by the Holy Spirit. If you've already been born again, remember to live your new life everyday with Jesus, not the old life with the devil. All things are new this time around; so live like it!

## **REFLECTION**

When were you born again?

## **ACTION**

1. If you are not born again, what are you waiting for? Put your trust in Jesus and repent of your sins in prayer right now!
2. Write down your testimony so you don't forget and can share it with others. Example: Who were you before Jesus? How did you meet Jesus? What has your life been like since accepting Jesus?
3. Memorize John 3:3 and 3:16. These two verses will help you preach to others so that they can be born again!

# DAY 3: THE LIFE OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:1, *“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”*

Have you ever bought something online, maybe a gift for a friend? What did the company give you to confirm your purchase? A receipt? A tracking number? Why? They wanted to give you proof that what you bought was, in fact, on its way to you.

The same is true when having faith and believing in God for His promises. When God makes a promise and you believe Him — it becomes yours at that very moment. However, the promise still needs to be delivered at God’s appointed time. The receipt or “proof” God gives you that it’s coming to you is, “faith.” Faith is not “just” a human emotion, like wishing or playing make believe.

## **Faith is the certainty and substance of God’s promises.**

Paul wrote, in Romans 10:17 (NKJV) that, *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Whenever you hear the Word of God and believe it, faith comes as a guarantee for what is to come. For example, you may not see your healing yet, but it’s already yours, by faith, because God promised it (either in this life or the one to come). You don’t see the new heavens and earth yet, but by faith you have a “receipt of purchase” for your eternal home with Jesus.

As you read the Bible and learn about God’s promises, decide to live by faith because the promises are already yours. Augustine said, “Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.” To doubt God and His Word is to believe your current reality and circumstances are more real than the realities of God. However, just as you are confident that the new TV you purchased online is on the way, remember that Jesus, on the cross, purchased all of God’s promises for you and they, too, are coming. Jesus is the “Amen” of God and all promises are made possible through Him (2 Corinthians 1:20). Live by faith, in Jesus, and expect

one day to receive all His good and precious promises!

## **REFLECTION**

Are you living by faith?

## **ACTION**

1. Write out five biblical promises that God has spoken to you.
2. Pray to the Father, in Jesus' name and declare, by faith, each one of them over your life. For example, "*I am healed in Jesus' name!*" (Isaiah 53:5).
3. Remind yourself of God's promises, in times of testing, to remove doubt and keep fighting the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12).

# DAY 4: SET FREE TO LIVE FREE

John 8:36, *“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”*

There’s an old story about a traveling salesman from the city driving to the country to make new costumers. As he was driving down a dusty, gravel road, he saw a dog running next to his car doing flips and rolling around on the ground with joy.

He thought, for a moment, that it might be some kind of show dog; however, as he slowed down, he could see it wasn’t even a normal looking dog. It had a badly disfigured leg and gruesome scars all over its body. Fascinated by the strange site, he pulled over and had his lunch watching the “unique” country dog. A few moments passed, and the salesman noticed a farmer come by and give the dog some food and water.

The salesman spoke up, “Excuse me sir, I’ve been here watching your dog do all kinds of tricks. How did he learn to be so acrobatic; is he a circus dog?” The farmer replied, “No, I was out checking my rabbit traps one day in the woods and I heard this terrible sound coming from the distance. I followed the sound and found this dog bleeding and tied to a tree left to die. I freed him and brought him home with me. I cleaned him up real good, tended to his wounds and gave him all the food he could eat. Ever since then he has been the happiest dog in town. Whenever he sees people, he starts leaping and rolling over, because he knows he’s free!”

You and I were just like that wounded and abandoned dog when Jesus found you. We were tied to the tree of our sin and left by the devil to die.

**A man once said, “Sin will take you further than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay.”**

Jesus came to set you free from sin so you could live a new life filled with righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). Don't let your current troubles or issues make you feel down, depressed or ashamed. Remember who you were before you met Jesus and start praising Him for your freedom. Jesus died on the cross to set you free from all your sins so you could live free!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe Jesus set you free from the devil and all your sins; along with your guilt and shame?

## **ACTION**

1. Search your heart to see if you are committing sins.
2. Confess and repent of all the sins the Lord shows you.
3. Guard your freedom and joyfully live the new life Jesus has given you! (Psalm 51:12)



# DAY 5: NEVER GOING BACK

1 Peter 4:3, *“For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.”*

“You don’t have to get drunk or smoke weed with us, just come by and hang out,” my friend said to me after I told him I didn’t do those things anymore. He insisted that we could still be friends even though I told him God had changed my life. Sadly, I gave in to his peer pressure and went to the party as a new Christian.

When I arrived, everyone was nice, but once they realized I wasn’t going to cave and party with them, they started to ignore me. After a short time, my so-called friends were wasted and acting like fools.

**While I was watching them I thought, “What am I doing here? Is that how I used to act? I don’t want this junk in my life anymore!” I left and told myself, “I’m never going back.”**

All of my previous time, partying and doing sinful things, had actually been enough for me to realize that I didn’t want those things anymore. I didn’t even want to be around it. I didn’t need to experience any more perversion, drunkenness, drug use, foul language or the like. I was done.

My friends continued to call and tried to get me to go out with them, again, but I remained firm in my convictions and said that if they wanted to hangout with me, they could meet me at church or for lunch for Bible study. Though it was hard, at first, for me to leave my old life behind (I didn’t have many church friends), my new best friend, Jesus, was all that I needed. My heart had a new song, Sundar Singh’s, “I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back.”

Eventually, it got easier for me to not go back to my old life because my sinner friends stopped calling me to party; and, I made

new righteous friends who loved serving Jesus. Now when I look back, I can clearly see that God has never let me down. I can testify “There ain’t no high like the Most High!” My old, partying friends still call me from time to time, but now it’s for a very different reason. They call me to ask for prayer and advice on how to leave their old life behind.

## **REFLECTION**

Are you sick and tired of your sin and old life?

## **ACTION**

1. Examine your heart to see if there are any sins you like to keep doing.
2. Ask God to give you a holy hatred for your “favorite sins” and to see them the way He does.
3. Every time you are tempted to think positively about your past sinful days, remember that it was those days that put Jesus on the cross and damned your soul to eternal hell. Be grateful for salvation and a new life!

# DAY 6: HEAVEN KNOWS YOUR NAME

Revelation 21:27, *“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*

Have you ever stayed in a hotel where you made the reservation in advance? If so, you probably remember when you came to the front desk and confidently said your name expecting to receive a room key. You knew you belonged there, and that they should have a room just for you, because you had made a reservation in your name.

In the same way, John describes in Revelation, that reservations are made for eternity. He is shown, by Jesus, a reservation book for heaven called, “The Lamb’s Book of Life.” This book is not for a hotel, but rather for those who get to spend eternity in the kingdom of God. The only way to get your name written in it is to be born again (John 3:3). No matter who you are, what you’ve done in your past or where you came from, if you have been born again, your name is written in, “The Lamb’s Book of Life,” and heaven knows your name!

You are welcomed and loved in heaven because of the work of Jesus Christ. The day you accepted the free gift of salvation, from Jesus, your name was written in that book for all to see. Your current citizenship on earth is temporary, but your citizenship in the Kingdom of God will last forever. People on this earth may forget you, reject you and treat you harshly, but remember that you are a child of the King and have a reservation in His kingdom waiting for you! Francesca Battistelli sings, “I don't need my name in lights. I'm famous in my Father's eyes. Make no mistake; He knows my name.” Take some time, today, to meditate on the fact that heaven knows your name.

**When you pray to the Father, in Jesus’ name, He knows exactly who you are and how to meet your needs.**

When you face trials and various hardships, you do not face them alone because God is with you!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe heaven has a reservation for you?

## **ACTION**

1. Be thankful to Jesus for making it possible for you to have a reservation in heaven.
2. Pray for three people in your life, today, who don't have their name written in, "The Lamb's Book of Life."
3. Preach the gospel, as often as you can, with the reality of heaven and hell in your heart and words. A great question to ask people is, "Do you have your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?"

# DAY 7: THE JOY OF REPENTING

2 Corinthians 7:10, *“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”*

Have you ever felt so guilty about something you did wrong that you couldn't hide it anymore and had to confess it? Maybe you told a lie, disobeyed your parents, cheated on a test, stole something or gossiped about a friend and knew it was wrong. I know for me, the feeling of guilt and shame was almost too much to handle. When I finally admitted my wrongdoing and sought forgiveness, I never wanted to feel that way again.

The same is true with God and our repentance. Repentance is not a form of punishment or shame from God; it is actually His way of allowing us to relieve ourselves of a guilty conscience and receive inner peace. David, in Psalm 24:4, calls this, *“clean hands and a pure heart.”*

**Repentance is more than just having remorse, because it involves changing our mind and attitude towards sin and God's commands. When we are truly sorry for our sins, against God, and desire not to do it again, the Holy Spirit renews our minds so we can live according to God's good, perfect and pleasing will for our lives (Romans 12:2).**

John Wesley wrote, “Repentance says, ‘Without Him I can do nothing.’ Faith says, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’ Through Him I cannot only overcome, but expel, all the enemies of my soul.”

Take for example, David. He was one of the greatest men in the Old Testament; however, he also had one of the greatest falls into sin. He committed adultery with Bathsheba, lied about it, and then had Uriah, her husband, murdered. After the prophet, Nathan, exposed his sin, David repented and wrote about it in Psalm 51. In this psalm, he

teaches all of us how to view the positive side of repentance and the negative nature of sin.

David understood that unless he repented, he could never be close to God, again, and that he would have the Holy Spirit taken from him. David also knew that God was more than willing to forgive and restore him once he repented. A.W. Pink wrote, “After grief for sin there should be joy for forgiveness.”

God returned, to David, the joy of his salvation and let him remain as king after he repented. Yes, there were consequences and hardships God allowed David to face. Yet, God was faithful to not abandon Him in his time of sorrow. We can learn from David how to repent from sin, because true repentance brings joy and new life.

If you’ve had a bad attitude towards repenting, repent!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you have a good attitude towards repenting for your sins?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if you’ve had a bad attitude towards repenting.
2. Read Psalm 51 and learn, if you do sin, how to repent.
3. Ask God to keep you from sin by changing your heart and mind, so you don’t have to live in a cycle of repentance for the same sins.

# DAY 8: FILLED TO OVERFLOWING

John 7:38, *“Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”*

On the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jewish priests would go to the Pool of Siloam and draw out water, to pour over the altar in the temple, to symbolize the outpouring of God’s favor upon their lives (Isaiah 12:3). While everyone was watching the water run down the steps of the temple, Jesus said whoever would believe in Him would have rivers of living water flow from within them.

The people were probably shocked to hear Jesus’ words because He was making the fulfillment of God’s promise about Himself. If Jesus were not God in the flesh, His statements could rightfully be considered blasphemy. However, Jesus (God, the Son) used the water as an illustration of the rivers of living water that He would give His disciples when they received the Holy Spirit (John 7:39).

**The person of the Holy Spirit is the abiding presence of God, the Father, and God, the Son, in the believer’s re-born soul and spirit (John 15:23). He is the source of the rivers of God’s love, power and joy that flow, in us and through us, to a dry and desolate world (Isaiah 43:19).**

Today, you’re not only to be filled for your needs, but also to be overflowing with God’s presence and power to meet other people’s needs. The rivers of the Holy Spirit will bring spiritual refreshment, power and prosperity to all who call on the name of Jesus. Our heart cry should be that of Tasha Cobbs when she sings, “Fill me up till I overflow. I want to run over. I want to run over!”

Make time, today, to pray and ask God to fill you with the rivers of the Holy Spirit to not only meet your needs, but to overflow through you to meet the needs of others. The Holy Spirit has enough

refreshing water for everyone's emotional needs and spiritually dry places. Let the rivers of God flow in Jesus' name!

## **REFLECTION**

Is the Holy Spirit flowing through you today?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask the Father, in Jesus' name, to flow His rivers of living water through you, today, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Pray for God to use you to bring His presence with you wherever you go.
3. Look for opportunities, everyday, to be a "water hose" for Jesus and let the rivers of God's presence flow!



# DAY 9: GET A LIFE — A PRAYER LIFE

1 Thessalonians 5:17, “*Pray continually.*”

Have you ever been around other Christians, been asked to pray and felt embarrassed because you didn't feel your prayers were as good as everyone else's? If so, I've got great news for you. All the prayers of the upright are meaningful and special to God no matter how they sound in the ears of man (Proverbs 15:8). Never let public prayer become an opportunity for the devil to make you feel embarrassed. Your prayers are a great source of blessing to yourself and those around you.

At the same time, we as Christians should always be in a place of spiritual growth and development — especially in the area of prayer (1 Peter 2:2). I should know more about God, today, than when I first received salvation, because I have spent more time with Him praying and hearing His voice. Just as when I got married, I didn't know my wife, as well as, I do now after many years of marriage. The same is true with God and prayer. The more time you spend in prayer with God, the more you learn about His heart and attributes. Also, the more time you spend praying, in private, the more confident and fearless you will be to pray in public, because prayer is always for an audience of one — God.

Avoid thinking of prayer as something you “have” to do for a certain time each day (like a chore); rather see prayer as part of all your life that you get the “privilege” to do. Make prayer your lifestyle, by thinking and meditating on God whenever you can and as often as you can. For example, when you're on the job and asked to do an important assignment, pray to God in your heart, “God, I ask you to give me the wisdom and the strength I need to succeed at this task.” God is waiting for you to invite Him into your daily life and to seek His will. Then, when someone else brings a need to your attention, you can instantly pray aloud with boldness and faith.

Don't be deceived by Roman Catholic priests who have falsely taught, since the dark ages, that people should recite certain prayers at

specific times of the day to please God. Instead, believe and practice what Jesus said in Matthew 6:7. He said we weren't to pray powerless prayers, over and over again, but to address God, as our Father, and make our needs known to Him in Jesus' name. Praying is not to please man or make us look more spiritual to impress others.

**Prayer is God's way of having a deep and meaningful, intimate relationship with us.**

A.W. Tozer wrote, "Faith in a prayer-hearing God will make a prayer-loving Christian." Decide each day to stay in continual fellowship with God through the simple act of prayer!

## **REFLECTION**

How is your prayer life?

## **ACTION**

1. If you have been afraid to pray in public, repent of the fear of man.
2. Ask God to give you boldness, and the words to speak, when called upon to pray.
3. Stay in continual fellowship with God through private prayer and be confident to pray publicly when needed.

# DAY 10: YOU'VE GOT HELP

John 14:16 (ESV), *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever.”*

Have you ever been in a tough situation and said to yourself, “I wish I had an expert to talk to about this and get their help?” Maybe you felt you needed a “marriage expert” during a rough patch in your relationship with your spouse, or a “family expert” to get through to your kids, or a “financial expert” the last time you needed to make an important money decision or a “life expert” when you felt overwhelmed with your daily routine? If you’ve ever wanted help in any of these areas; Jesus’ promise of sending a Helper is for you!

Jesus promised that after He left for heaven, He would send a Helper to be with His disciples. The person of the “Trinity,” He is referring to as the “Helper,” is the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for “helper,” means, “counselor, advocate, strengthener and comforter.”

**The Holy Spirit is all the help from God we will ever need. Even when God uses other people to help us, it still will be as a result of the Holy Spirit.**

Charles Spurgeon wrote, “When you have no helpers, see your helpers in God. When you have many helpers, see God in all your helpers. When you have nothing but God, see all in God. When you have everything, see God in everything. Under all conditions, stay thy heart only on the Lord.”

Think how privileged the disciples were to have Jesus around them all the time to ask their questions and receive help in times of need. Now imagine how disappointed they must have been when He said He was going to leave them and go back to heaven. Jesus made it clear that they wouldn’t be sad for long because He was going to send them the ever-present Holy Spirit to abide with them and in them forever. The Helper would not only be for them, but also for all the disciples after them, even unto the end of the age (Acts 2:38-39).

Isn't that awesome? Jesus wanted all His disciples, for all times, to have the exact same relationship with Him as the original twelve. Every disciple, no matter how old they are or where they live or what they are going through, will have an all-powerful Helper living on the inside of them.

Take some time, today, to consult with your Helper about all the plans and purposes God has for your life. You're not alone; your Helper is with you!

## **REFLECTION**

What do you need help with in your life today?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask the Father, in Jesus' name, for the Holy Spirit to help you in any tough situations you are facing. Learn to wait on Him.
2. Seek God's Word to have the advice confirmed.
3. Act on the advice and when it works out for good, be sure to give God the praise!

# DAY 11: EMPOWERED TO PROSPER

3 John 1:2 (AMP), *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in every way and [that your body] may keep well, even as [I know] your soul keeps well and prospers.”*

What is the common response to someone sneezing in our culture? Saying, “God bless you!” Have you ever thought about why we give “blessings” to strangers when they have a physical response to pollen, germs or the like? One of the best answers I have found originated during the bubonic plague of the sixth century. People, hoping to ward off the spread of the disease, would offer this blessing to anyone who sneezed.

In other times, people superstitiously believed that someone might “sneeze” out his soul and therefore need God’s blessing to “keep it in.” As strange as these two explanations may be, the simple fact is, today, Christian and non-Christian people alike, offer God’s blessing to anyone who sneezes.

The word “blessing” in the context of Deuteronomy 28:1-14 means, “To be empowered to prosper and succeed.” Likewise, in the above passage, John is offering a huge “God bless you,” to the people, without them needing to sneeze first. He is simply saying, “I pray you prosper in everything you do, and are in good health, just as your soul prospers.” In other words, “I pray that God blesses you!”

**Do you know God wants to bless you? He strongly desires to give you success in “every way” and in everything you do. God wants you to be in good health, be successful in your family and prosperous in your work.**

He also desires for your soul to prosper in so many wonderful ways with all the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23, “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”)

How do we give and receive these blessings? We are to pray with faith and be obedient to God's Word (Hebrews 11:6). John Wesley wrote, "When a man becomes a Christian, he becomes industrious, trustworthy and prosperous."

John prayed for his friends to prosper. As a result, we can pray for each other, too. Make some time, today, to pray for God's blessings in your life and in the lives of those around you. Maybe even do it after someone sneezes!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe God wants to prosper you and those in your life?

## **ACTION**

1. Pray for God to prosper three people in your life (be specific).
2. Ask God to prosper you in three specific ways today.
3. Bless people according to God's Word when you are in public (i.e., preach the gospel, offer to pray for and with them, etc.).

# DAY 12: CROSS-EYED

1 Corinthians 2:2, *“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”*

If someone were to ask you, “What is your main focus in life?” Or “What do you look to for inspiration?” Some might say, “My family,” “our country,” or “helping people.” When Paul reflected on what was the most important thing in his life he said, “Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

Jesus and His crucifixion meant to Paul some of the following things: (1) the Old Testament law had been fulfilled; (2) Jews and Gentiles could receive forgiveness for their sins by the blood of Jesus; (3) the way was now open to have a relationship with God as a Father; (4) the Holy Spirit could dwell within the hearts of all disciples; (5) the Jewish Messiah had come and established the Kingdom of God in His Church; (6) the Father had amazing blessings to give, through Jesus, to His people; and, (7) one day soon, the Messiah would come back to judge the world and live with His people!

If Jesus and His crucifixion was so important to Paul, that He wrote, “I resolved to know nothing” except those two things; shouldn’t we make Jesus and the cross the center of our lives, too? I believe, like Paul, that every disciple should be cross-eyed in life. We should never get tired or bored at looking at Jesus and what He did for us.

**When we are cross-eyed in life we don’t see our troubles, fears, worries, hurts, sins and the past anymore, because all we see is what Jesus did to set us free from bondage (John 8:36).**

Billy Graham said, “God proved His love on the cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, ‘I love you.’” When times of temptation come, look to Jesus and the cross for victory. When your past tries to sneak back into your present, stay focused on the cross and the new life Jesus purchased for you with His blood. When people hurt you or break your heart look to Jesus and His cross to find healing and inner peace.

In everything you do and in every situation, stay cross-eyed!

## **REFLECTION**

What is your main focus in life?

## **ACTION**

1. Repent if anything other than Jesus and the cross has been your focus in life.
2. Place all your attention on Jesus and His cross.
3. When temptations and trials come — stay cross-eyed!



# DAY 13: JESUS IS MY SENSEI

Luke 6:46, *“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”*

*“Wax on, wax off!”* Do you remember Mr. Miyagi from the movie Karate Kid? Mr. Miyagi was the karate sensei (expert teacher) to young Daniel LaRusso in the movie. “Daniel-Son,” as Mr. Miyagi liked to call him, came to him to learn karate so he could defend himself from the bullies at school. The bullies’ sensei was John Kreese, and they belonged to the karate gang Cobra Kai.

In the movie, Mr. Miyagi wanted to first teach Daniel-Son discipline and technique, but Daniel only wanted to learn “power moves.” As a result, Daniel got frustrated and wanted to quit, but Mr. Miyagi wouldn’t change his method of teaching. Eventually, the karate kid humbled himself and willingly received Mr. Miyagi’s instruction. In the end, even such seemingly minor tasks as waxing cars became the foundation for moves that made Daniel a karate champion.

The same is true for us, as disciples of Jesus, in our relationship with Him as our Lord and Savior. The Greek word for Lord means, “master.” In the above passage, Jesus is rebuking people on Judgment Day because they called Him “Lord” (Master), but didn’t do what He commanded. However, we as Jesus’ true disciples are to look to Him as our Sensei (Teacher) and obey all that He commanded (even if like Daniel, we don’t understand it).

**Jesus said, in John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my commands.” He didn’t mean we are to only obey the commands we like, He meant for us to keep all of His commands.**

When Jesus commands us to not look at people lustfully, we are to say, “Yes Master, I will guard my heart and my eyes.” When Jesus calls us to spend private time with Him, in prayer and devotion, we are to say, “Yes Master, I will come and spend time with you alone.”

Even if Jesus commands us to give away all of our possessions to the poor, as He did with the rich man in Mark 10:17-22, we are to humbly say, “Yes Master, I’ll give everything I own to the poor.”

If we say Jesus is our Master and don’t do what He says we are hypocrites and deserve to be cast out of His presence for eternity. We must follow Jesus and obey what He teaches if we truly want to hear Him say to us on Judgment Day, “*Well done, good and faithful servant!*” (Matthew 25:21). At this point someone might ask, “What if I sin and don’t obey Jesus?” Jesus gave us a command to follow when we break His commands; the command to repent (Revelation 2:5). So repent, turn around, and start obeying! Make a decision, today, to do what Sensei Jesus tells you to do.

## **REFLECTION**

Are there any areas in your life that aren’t under the Lordship of Jesus?

## **ACTION**

1. Search your heart, today, to see if there are areas in your life you need to change. Submit to Jesus.
2. Repent of all disobedience and start following all of Jesus’ commands.
3. Keep following Jesus’ commands, everyday, and if you sin again, repent and ask God to change your heart so that you will stop sinning in that area of your life (1 John 3:9).

# DAY 14: WHOLLY HOLY

1 Peter 1:15-16, “*15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’*”

Imagine you’ve been playing volleyball in your friend’s backyard all afternoon, on a hot sunny summer day, with temperatures in the 90’s. After the last game, you ask your friend for a cold glass of water because you’re extremely dehydrated. He quickly returns with a glass of water and just as you take your first gulp he says, “I got it from the toilet, hope you don’t mind!”

What would you do? Chances are you would spit out the water, chase down your friend and never let anyone get you a glass of water, again. After we are saved, the same is true with God. He asks us to be a pure drink offering unto Him, so we cannot present ourselves to Him full of impurities.

God saves us to cleanse and purify us from all sin (1 John 1:9). He wants us to be 100% holy and set apart from our sins. He doesn’t want us just to be 95% or even 99.99% pure. God wants us to be wholly holy, 100%. When a person is saved and cleansed from all their sins, they should remain that way by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**If the believer should sin, the blood of Jesus will cleanse them and make them 100% pure when they repent and let God change their habits.**

Don’t live for Jesus, partially, and have Him spit you out of His mouth on Judgment Day (Revelation 3:16). Be holy and free from sin because God is holy. Charles Spurgeon wrote, “Christ will be master of the heart, and sin must be mortified. If your life is unholy, then your heart is unchanged, and you are an unsaved person. The Savior will sanctify His people, renew them, give them a hatred of sin, and a love of holiness.”

Remember, you can’t save or cleanse yourself. Salvation (being forgiven of sin) and sanctification (being made separate from sin)

come from the grace of God, the Father, are received from Jesus, by faith and are sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22). Live wholly holy by the power of our Holy God living inside of you!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe God made you wholly holy when you were saved?

## **ACTION**

1. Search your heart in prayer, today, to see if you are living wholly holy.
2. If God shows you any sin(s), ask Him to cleanse you and break the habit of sin in your life.
3. Keep your heart from sin by living holy, because God made you holy.

# DAY 15: LOVING GOD AND LOVING PEOPLE

*Mark 12:30-31, “30 ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ 31 The second (commandment) is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”*

Did you know that Jesus was a genius at making complicated things simple? In the above verses, Jesus simplified 613 Old Testament laws into two commands, “Love God and love people!” Certainly, Jesus taught many other things on how to fulfill those two great commands, but the concept was given in such a way that even a child could understand and remember it.

Loving God is about being passionate for Him in worship and adoration (John 4:23-24). This means learning to love being with Him (in conversation and time), enjoying His presence, abiding daily, as a branch in the vine of Jesus (John 15). Also, it means to love God by obeying His commands (John 14:21). As a result, if you love God by worshipping Him and obeying what He commanded, with all your heart (emotions), soul (will), mind (thoughts) and strength (energy), you will always please Him.

Loving people, as you love yourself, means helping them in their time of need by being like the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). It also means preaching the gospel of Jesus to the lost, and teaching all people the ways of God (Romans 1:16-17). When you have compassion for people and teach them how to be saved and please God, you love them as you would love yourself.

Some people believe that Jesus’ two commands are impossible to fully obey in this life. They wrongly assume that the power of sin is too great and the grace of God too weak to actually make mankind able to obey them. They try to appear humble (or make excuses) when they say things like, “Nobody is perfect. We can’t always treat others

as Jesus did.” Or, “We aren’t capable of giving God all of us until we are in heaven, because the flesh is always going to lead us astray.”

Jesus taught the exact opposite of those poor excuses and bad theology. He not only gave us His commands, with the expectation for us to obey them, but gave us the very power to do so (Matthew 19:26). Jesus said, in Matthew 5:48, “*Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*” Our perfection is not from ourselves but is the gift of God, given by grace, in our salvation and spiritual rebirth (Hebrews 12:23). We were born sinners but are born again as saints —holy ones of God. William Durham said that God never saved a man outwardly without also saving him inwardly.

**We shouldn’t make excuses and say, “I can’t give Jesus 100% of my heart because of my flesh, so I’ll just give what I can.”**

Instead, we should say, “God, today I give you everything, because you made me new so I could live 100% for you. If I’m holding anything back let me know, because my whole heart belongs to you!” Also, we should pray, “God, if I mistreat someone today let me know, because I always want to treat others like I want to be treated.”

Loving God and loving people should be the norm for the disciple on earth, not the hope of heaven. Choose, today, to love God and people the way Jesus commanded!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you love God and people the way Jesus commanded?

## **ACTION**

1. Change your (bad) theology if you don’t believe you can follow Jesus’ commands as He taught them.
2. Search your heart for the times you haven’t loved God or people the way Jesus taught. Repent and ask God to change your behavior.

3. Love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-39)!





# DAY 16: LIVING BY FAITH

Genesis 12:2, *“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.”*

When God gave the above promise to Abraham, he didn't have a child, his wife was barren and in her sixties; and, he was seventy-five years old. As a matter of fact, his name was still “Abram” (“high father”), because God hadn't changed it to Abraham yet (“father of multitudes”). However, God didn't speak to Abraham from an earthly and natural perspective, He spoke to him from a heavenly and spiritual perspective.

God was declaring the future to Abraham in the present. God was giving Abraham a promise that was grounded in the very power and nature of Himself. The moment Abraham believed what God said to him, he was acting in faith. From that time on, when he would talk to people about what God said, he was speaking in faith because he trusted and believed in God's good character. A.W. Tozer wrote, “True faith rests upon the character of God and asks no further proof than the moral perfections of the One who cannot lie. It is enough that God has said it.”

Can you imagine how funny it must have been for some people to hear an old man with no kids, in his seventies, say that God promised to make his descendants a great nation? Even Sarah, his wife, who was barren, in her sixties, laughed when she heard about God's plans for her. However, the Bible teaches in Galatians 3:6 that, *“Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”*

Paul also wrote, in Galatians 3:9 that, *“Those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”* When we believe and speak the promises God has for us, we are blessed like faithful Abraham. God kept His word to Abraham and made his descendants the great nation of Israel; and, it was from the Jewish people that Jesus

was born and made an even greater nation of Christians from all the different nations in the world.

**Remember, God is not a man that He should lie (Numbers 23:19). What He has promised you according to His Word, He will do!**

Take some time, today, to learn from our faithful father, Abraham, and decide to put your faith in God and believe what He has said He will do.

## **REFLECTION**

What are some promises God has given you?

## **ACTION**

1. Find and write down three promises from God found in the Bible.
2. Pray and speak the promises, out loud, and believe them to be true.
3. Walk and talk, in faith, because God will keep His Word!

# DAY 17: ONE WAY

John 14:6, *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”*

Have you ever driven the wrong way on a “one way” street? If so, you might have heard someone yell, “Stop! You’re going the wrong way!” If you listened and turned back around, you were probably thankful for their help. The same is true about heaven. There is only one way to go — a narrow road — through Jesus. It is the job of every Christian to help people who are going the wrong way, to stop, turn around and go the right way. The Bible calls this act of turning around, “repentance” (Acts 3:19).

Jesus always acted, and taught, that He was the only way to the Father, because He knew who He was, where He came from and where He was going. He made no mention of Buddha, Krishna, or even Hercules (all supposed ways that came before His incarnation). According to Jesus, He was the only way people could be in a relationship with God, and those who taught other ways (those before Him and those who would come after) were thieves and robbers (John 10:8).

Was Jesus a liar, a lunatic or Lord? Did Jesus really believe there were “many roads” to heaven, and lie about Himself being the only way because of His ego? Was Jesus a lunatic? Was He out of His mind because He didn’t know how crazy His statements really were? Or was Jesus, who He said He was, “Lord?”

Some people, today, like to say Jesus was just a “good man,” but would a good man lie or act like a lunatic? Jesus’ own actions leave no room for Him to just be a good man. A good man doesn’t claim to be the only way to God, the Shepherd of men’s souls and the Judge of all the earth.

**If Jesus was telling the truth, He is the Lord of all; and; He then must be taken seriously and His teachings fully obeyed.**

C.S. Lewis famously wrote, “A man who was merely a man, and said the sort of things Jesus said, would not be a great moral

teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

If you believe Jesus is Lord, it’s your responsibility to let others know about the “one way” to God. We live in a culture where “buffet religion” is very popular. Many people like to pick and choose from each religion what they like the best; a little Jesus with a side order of Buddha. However, a little poison with your food will kill you. Decide to always follow Jesus and let others know they should too!

## **REFLECTION**

What direction, other than Jesus, do you see people taking in life?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to give you the revelation of Jesus being the only way to the Father.
2. Determine to always follow Jesus and spend time with the Father.
3. When God brings people into your life who are going the wrong way, have a prayerfully prepared, short message to share with them to help turn them around.

# DAY 18: BY GRACE ALONE

Ephesians 2:8-9, “*8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.*”

Now that you are saved, you may be tempted to think that because of all the good things you do for God, you are in some way, “saving yourself,” or “earning your place in heaven.” The truth is, you cannot save yourself — never could — never can. The entire Christian walk, from beginning to end, is all about God’s grace.

Imagine going skydiving without a parachute and trying to use the air to stop your fall. Grasping at something that isn’t there would do nothing to stop your rapid descent. Remember Paul wrote, in Romans 3:23, “*for all have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory.*” Lying, lust, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, pride, greed, bitterness, idolatry, gossiping and jealousies have all caused you to suffer a great fall from God’s glory.

However, your fall is even more terrifying than that from an airplane. Your fall, from God’s glory, will be for eternity in the lake of fire. You will never stop falling; and, all the good works you have done to try to save yourself, will be like dirty grave-clothes wrapped around your body. All of the religious teachings and rituals you did will be like ropes made of sand. You will have nothing to hold on to nor strength to save you. You will have no hope of help from those who have fallen before you, either, because they, too, have nothing to stop their own horrifying descent.

You will cry and scream for the fall to stop and the ground to comfort your feet again, but your tears won’t be heard because no one will be with you. You will be alone, accompanied only by the memories of your sin and rebellion, and they will torment you like undying worms crawling through your flesh.

The last moment you will remember of your feet standing, will be in a place where you don’t belong, for the Maker of Heaven, your only hope, will have cast you to your eternal fall with these parting

words, *“I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws”* (Matthew 7:23 NLT).

**What then is grace? It is Jesus’ undeserved gift of salvation.**

Grace is your only hope of not falling into the pit you deserve to be cast into. It is by grace alone that sinners are saved. This undeserved gift, and unmerited kindness, comes only from Jesus. Receive His grace, live in His grace, and be forever grateful that He saved a “wretch like you.” Recall the words of this famous song by John Newton, “Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now I see.”

**REFLECTION**

Reflect on what it means to be “saved by grace.”

**ACTION**

1. Ask God to reveal the depths and power of His saving grace to you.
2. Spend time, today, thanking Jesus for His sacrifice that gives us forgiveness by grace.
3. Never turn away from the grace of God (Galatians 5:4).

# DAY 19: GOD'S MASTERPIECE

Ephesians 2:10 (NLT), *“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”*

Do you own anything that is valuable? If so, how do you treat it? Maybe you own an expensive piece of jewelry and keep it in a special place? Or have a nice car that you park in the garage every night to keep out of the weather? Some people own nice houses, cars, clothes, furniture and even expensive artwork, but do you know what God values most in all creation? You!

The God who made the heavens and the earth, said you were His masterpiece in Christ Jesus! Some people value gold over people, but God put gold on the streets of heaven for His people. Some people will kill for rare jewels, but Jesus died so that people could live in a city with walls made of jewels.

When you gave your life to Jesus, it might have been a surprise to you, but it was the perfect, foreordained plan of God. This means, it might not have been planned a month in advance in your mind, but God had been anticipating, from eternity past, to make you His masterpiece. The day you were born again you became the masterpiece of God — His Picasso.

Though you will grow and develop good works, the day you were saved, as God’s masterpiece, you were completed! You’re not being tinkered with and worked on as you grow, you were perfected and completed the day you were saved. God now wants your maturity (spiritual growth) to match your identity (spiritual perfection). The author of Hebrews wrote, *“You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect”* (Hebrews 12:23). Your spiritual soul was perfected when you were saved. Now it’s time to live like it!

The life long journey of spiritual growth is all about learning who God made you to be the day you were saved, and then doing the good works He planned for you in advance. Take for example, if

someone could buy you the most expensive manmade thing and give it to you as a gift — say — the international space station (worth over 150 billion dollars). How long do you think it would take you to learn all about it and do all the “good works” it could do? A long time? A lifetime? The same is true with how God made you.

**It will take you the rest of your life to learn how to live and act like the masterpiece God made you to be, in Christ, but you will never be more valuable, special and beautiful than you were the day you first got saved.**

A man once said, “In all other religions, you start your journey with the hope to gain salvation because of your good works. In Christianity, everyone who believes in Jesus, starts their journey at the finish line because they are saved by His finished work.”

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe you are God’s masterpiece?

## **ACTION**

1. Ask God to remove all self-pity and condemnation from your identity. Believe you are who God said you are.
2. Believe and act like the masterpiece God made you to be.
3. If you fail to do any of the good works God prepared for you, repent. Ask Jesus to change your behavior and move forward in grace.



# DAY 20: MORE THAN CONQUERORS

Romans 8:37, *“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.”*

When we believe in Jesus’ work on the cross, we become “more than conquerors,” because Jesus defeated death, hell, and the grave, on our behalf, for the Father’s glory. Jesus became our substitutionary sacrifice and made atonement for all our sins past, present and future, securing our salvation. For everyone, in Christ Jesus, there is no outside force that can defeat or separate us from Christ’s love.

What are you facing today? Sickness, financial hardships, loneliness, persecution, stress, satanic attacks, rejection or death, itself? Paul listed many troubles the conqueror will face, but He did so with the promise of victory. *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:38-39). In all the troubles you face, you are more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ who loves you.

**Our greatest testimonies will come from our most difficult tests; and, our most prized victories will come from our most intense battles.**

Decide to not give up when you face hardships and tough times, because God is with you and nothing can stand against you. Joyce Meyer wrote, “Courage is not the absence of fear; it is pressing forward while the feeling of fear is present.”

Sometimes people die and it doesn’t seem like all of their “battles” were won. God doesn’t promise that every victory will come in this life. Some battles are won, after death, when the Kingdom of God permanently resides with man on the new earth. Refuse to lose heart in your momentary struggles. Quit your “quits.” God is with you, and you will see the victory in this life or the one to come.

Think about your life from God's perspective, because He can see the big picture from start to finish. Only He knows what heaven and the new earth will be like. When He says you are, "more than a conqueror," He knows it is the truth. It is up to you and me to believe it!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe Jesus made you more than a conqueror?

## **ACTION**

1. Think of the biggest hardship (outside of sin and temptation) that you are facing today (i.e., sickness, financial trouble, etc).
2. Then pray aloud, "*Father, \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with your hardship, i.e., "sickness") will not separate me from the love of Christ, because I am more than a conqueror through Him who loves me. In Jesus' name, amen.*"
3. Live today in the confidence of your confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

# DAY 21: DEAD TO THE FLESH, ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT

Colossians 3:3, *“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”*

The moment you accepted Jesus into your life two things instantly occurred. First, there was a funeral. Then, there was a rebirth. The funeral was for the death of your old life, because of the sinful nature that resided in your earthly body (“your flesh”). The rebirth was for your soul (mind, will, and emotions) and your spirit (“your spiritual life”). From that moment on, your old life has been dead and you have been given a new life with Christ. As Jesus’ disciple, you are now empowered to no longer live according to your old sinful ways, but according to the new ways of the Spirit (Galatians 5:24-25).

Sadly, some misinformed Christians have been wrongly taught to believe they are two different persons on the inside; imagine, “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.” One person is evil and the other one is good. As a result, they feel they have to fight the evil side of their personality, everyday, and let the good side win.

Not only is this weird, basically saying Christians are schizophrenic, it is totally unbiblical! When the Holy Spirit said through Paul, the apostle, that you “died,” and “your life is now hidden with Christ,” He meant it. It is now your choice to stop living the old life and choose to live the new life, with Christ, in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Think of it this way, even though I graduated first grade, I still have the choice to go back and repeat all the work I already did that year. No one is stopping me from doing first grade work everyday; however, to do so would be foolish. I am already a first grade graduate; I should act like it. You are already a new person, in Jesus, so act like it and stop doing the things you did when you were a sinner. Remember, you are either a sinner or a saint; you can never be

both at the same time. That would be equivalent to being a circle-square or a married-bachelor at the same time. It's logically impossible to be two things because the two are contradictory.

Some may think it doesn't matter how we view ourselves, but King Solomon taught that as a man thinks, so is he (Proverbs 23:7 KJV).

**It is very important to believe we are who God says we are so that we can do all that He said we can do. If you believe you're still a dirty rotten stinky sinner, you're going to keep living like a dirty rotten stinky sinner.**

However, if you believe what God said about you is true, that you're old life is dead and your new life is with Christ, then you're going to live a new and abundant holy life. A man once said, "If you believe Jesus made you sinless, you will sin less!"

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe your old sinful nature died when you got saved?

## **ACTION**

1. Take captive any thought or wrong teaching that has given you permission to live less than how God commanded you to live.
2. Believe you are who Jesus said you are.
3. Live like your old sinful life is dead and your brand new life is with Christ because it is!

# DAY 22: TRIALS = JOY

James 1:2-3, “2 *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.*”

James wrote that our trials equal God’s pure joy. How can this be true? How are we supposed to consider facing various trials and hardships in life as “pure joy?” Such trials as sickness, death, betrayal and even murder (which the church was facing at this time from persecution)... either James is playing a cruel joke on us or he is living in fairy-tale-land playing “make believe,” right?

We need to properly understand the verses above if we are to consider it pure joy when we face various trials like the early church faced (Christians fed to lions, burned alive and impaled) and rejoice. As a result, the key to understanding the joy in trials is found in verse three where James writes, “*the testing of your faith produces perseverance.*”

We are not rejoicing in the trial itself, we are rejoicing in the outcome of the trial. For example, if your child turns his back on God after you raised him in the fear and admonition of the Lord, you don’t rejoice and say, “I’m so happy right now because my child has turned away from God. This trial is pure joy!” God forbid. Instead, you are to rejoice and say, “I praise God for this trial and count it as pure joy, because I know my faith will get stronger through this and God will increase my perseverance to see this trial through to the end!” Augustine wrote, “Trials come to prove and improve us.”

**In other words, every trial you face is producing a deeper faith and perseverance in your life. This faith and perseverance will result in great blessings in this life and in the eternal life to come.**

Don’t allow discouragement and depression to come when you face various trials (as if God is not in control). Instead, rejoice and trust that God is allowing you to go through this time of testing to

increase your faith and perseverance. You will make it through the trial stronger than when you started!

## **REFLECTION**

What are some trials you're facing today?

## **ACTION**

1. Think about two trials you're facing today.
2. Now, rejoice for the promised outcome you will have when the trial passes.
3. Trust God that He is with you and will bring you through whatever you're facing.

# DAY 23: GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES

2 Peter 1:4, *“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”*

Did you know that God has a promise for every situation you face in life? God has literally given a promise of prosperity and blessing for every hardship you will ever face.

**Every trial and test the believer goes through can be seen as a chance for God to keep His Word!**

Think about it like this — if you bought a new car and it came with a manufacturer’s “bumper to bumper warranty” for the first 100,000 miles, it would cover any problems within that time. If, during that time frame, your transmission went bad, you could bring the car back to the dealer because of the warranty. The same is true concerning God’s promises. Whenever we face “breakdowns” in life that need repair, we can go to God, confidently, based on His promises to “fix us.” God’s promises are His warranty for our life.

Corrie ten Boom said, “When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don't throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer.” We need to trust Jesus the same way He trusted the Father. When the Father showed Him that He needed to cross the lake, Jesus was able to sleep through the storm because He knew nothing could stop the promise from coming to pass (Luke 8:22-25).

Peter calls these kind of Bible promises “very great and precious,” because they are powerful and given to us from the will of God. When we act upon the promises of God, we “participate in the divine nature” and “escape the corruption in the world,” which

basically means we go through life “dancing with the divine” and avoiding the despair of the godless.

At the same time, God’s promises are not like “wishes” from a genie in a bottle. All the promises require faith and perseverance on our part; and, some promises will not fully come to pass until we reach heaven. Also, some promises will be fulfilled in different ways than we imagined. No matter what happens in life, we can find hope in God’s promises and trust the God who gave them!

## **REFLECTION**

What are some promises from God you’re holding on to?

## **ACTION**

1. Search the Bible for three promises, today, that relate to a need in your life.
2. Pray for God to fulfill His promises, His way and in His time (i.e., “surrender to His will”).
3. Live, today, with hope in God, because He will always keep His Word!



# DAY 24: A WAY OUT OF TEMPTATION

*1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”*

All of us face temptations, in life, when we think there is no possible way out of something without sinning. Sometimes, our temptation may be to get angry and act ungodly (as in bad traffic), but we need to stop ourselves at the moment we’re getting ready to yell at the car in front of us and look for God’s way out. His way out of an ungodly temper might just be turning on worship music, focusing on Jesus and being thankful for the “extra” time we then have to be in His presence!

**Repeat this out loud with me, “God will not let me be tempted beyond what I can handle. God is faithful and He will always provide a way out so that I can endure it.”**

Now repeat that phrase until you believe it! You may face the temptation of giving up on God’s promises, staying home from church and running away from godly people in your life because you are ashamed of your mistakes. However, if you take just a moment before you start your “100 yard-dash” away from everything holy and ask God for the way out, He will give you one. He may encourage you and say, “Go to church, confess your weaknesses to a trusted leader and have them pray for you because you’re not facing this situation alone.”

The ESV Study Bible wrote concerning this verse, “Even when Christians face morally confusing situations, they should never think that they have no options other than sinful ones. There will always be

a morally right solution that does not require disobedience to any of God's moral laws.”

So, no matter what temptation you are facing, in life, before you freak out and say God has abandoned you and there is no other option but to sin — stop, drop, and roll! Stop whatever wrong thing you’re about to do. Drop to your knees and pray for God’s way out. Roll out of the temptation into a way of escape provided for you!

## **REFLECTION**

What temptations are you facing today?

## **ACTION**

1. Confess to God the two biggest temptations you’re facing in life.
2. Pray out loud, with faith, “Jesus, you will not let me be tempted beyond what I can handle in these situations. You are faithful and will always provide a way out so that I can endure it.”
3. Ask God for a way of escape in each situation and praise Him because of His faithfulness. He will always guide you along the right paths for His name’s sake (Psalm 23:3).

# DAY 25: A LIFE BUILT ON THE ROCK

*Matthew 7:24, “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.”*

I love to go to the beach, lay out and swim during the day and fish for sharks at night. I’ve had the wonderful blessing of visiting great beaches all over the U.S. and other countries. I’ve been to beautiful beaches in California, Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Mexico and my all time favorite — Paradise Island Beach in the Bahamas. At every beach I’ve visited, I’ve seen extraordinary homes along the shore. The homes in Miami and the Bahamas we’re some of the nicest I’ve ever seen.

No matter how beautiful the beachfront homes are however, they all have one major problem; they’re built on sand! Sometimes when hurricanes and high tides come, those extraordinary beachfront homes are the first ones to get destroyed. However, the small two bedroom homes built on solid ground just a few miles away usually make it through the storms without major damage. Why? Because the cheaper homes away from the beach are built on much better foundations than the million dollar homes on the beach.

The same is true in life. Some unbelievers may have high paying jobs, great educations and even strong family values but, Jesus said, when the storms of life come, their lives fall apart because they built their houses upon the sandy foundation of man’s ways. William Booth said, “Look! Don't be deceived by appearances — men and things are not what they seem. All who are not on the rock are in the sea!”

**When we, as wise Christians, obey what Jesus taught, we will survive the same storms that brought down foolish builders, because we built our lives on God’s Word.**

The security in our lives doesn't come from our jobs, worldly wisdom or even our family; our defense comes from God's Word!

Certainly, God wants us to be hard working and successful on our jobs, but it's not those things that keep us safe from the storms of life. It is Jesus' teachings, and our obedience to them, that make all the difference. The beach is a fun place to visit, but build your house on a firm foundation!

## **REFLECTION**

Have you built your life upon God's Word or the sand of something else?

## **ACTION**

1. Examine the foundation of your family, job and overall life to make sure they are built on the Word of God.
2. Dedicate your life to building upon the foundation of God's Word by obeying all that Jesus taught.
3. Help others build their lives on the Rock, Jesus Christ!

# DAY 26: ME AND MY HOUSE

*Joshua 24:15, “But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”*

Joshua gave his final words to the Jewish people after successfully completing his task, for the Lord, at the end of his life. He had powerfully brought the people of Israel into the Promised Land and defeated the enemies of God. However, he knew the greatest enemy the people of Israel would face was their own families and their own evil hearts.

Joshua knew that the only way Israel could be defeated was if the people turned their backs on God and worshipped the false gods and idols of the surrounding nations. So, he gave them the ultimatum; “you can either serve the Lord or the false gods.” Joshua was clear what he and his household would do because he boldly said, “as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord!”

Your family may not be tempted to serve the gods of the Egyptians or the Amorites; however, they may be tempted to serve the gods of “money,” “sports and entertainment,” “selfishness,” “humanism,” “compromise” and “sexual perversion.” Francis Frangipane wrote, “If we exalt money, status, or sex above the Word of God, we are living in idolatry. Every time we inwardly submit to the strongholds of fear, bitterness, and pride, we are bowing to the rulers of darkness. Each of these idols must be smashed, splintered, and obliterated from the landscape of our hearts.” You need to make up in your mind which “god” you and your house are going to serve.

**If you are a leader in your house you should determine when everyone goes to church, does family devotions, obeys God’s**

**commands and goes to preach the Word of God to others. Don't let actors, politicians, friends, musicians or the world's culture have the loudest voice in your home — keep God at the center of your family.**

At the same time, if you're not the main leader in your home (maybe you are a teenager or the wife of an unsaved husband), you can start with your life and those you have influence over by saying, "As for me and my heart, I will serve the Lord!" No matter who you are, or what situation you are in, make Jesus the only God of your house!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you and your household serve the Lord?

## **ACTION**

1. Establish daily times of prayer and Scripture reading with your family (i.e., "family devotions").
2. Pray for your family to always serve God.
3. Don't let the idols of this world become your god. Keep Jesus as your only Master!

# DAY 27: A FRIEND OF GOD

James 2:23, *“And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend.”*

Wow, could you imagine what it must have felt like for Abraham to be God’s friend? To see God face-to-face and spend time together eating and talking with Yahweh (Genesis 18:1-33)? Friendship is a relationship that is mutually beneficial for two people who like to be together. By God calling Abraham His friend, God was affirming His great love and appreciation for Abraham’s companionship.

The Bible teaches us that God has no needs, so it wasn’t like He needed to find someone to hang out with (because He was lonely).

**God chooses, in His infinite love, to have intimate fellowship with His own creation.**

David understood this great honor, given to humanity, when he wrote, *“What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for him?”* (Psalm 8:4) When Jesus (God, in the flesh) came and walked among us, He said to His disciples, *“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you”* (John 15:15). Jesus opened the door of friendship to anyone who would be His disciple, because everyone who believes in Him, like Abraham and the disciples did, can be His friend.

When we place our trust in Jesus and confess our sins, we are made righteous and are brought into close relationship with God. As a result, if you have been born again, you are God’s friend, too! You have been given a great privilege.

What kind of friend are you to God? As a friend of God, do you spend time with Him everyday? Do you enjoy being in His presence? Do you introduce Him to your other friends? Or, are you ashamed of

Him and only spend time with Him when you need something? Are you God's friend on bad days or only when things go the way you like?

D.L. Moody said, "A rule I have had for years is: to treat the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal friend. His is not a creed, a mere doctrine, but it is He Himself we have." I challenge you, as God's friend, to never be ashamed of your friendship with Him, nor be a "fair-weather friend" (when things go your way); but, in all you do, aim to please and honor Jesus because He has given you the highest honor by being your friend.

## **REFLECTION**

Are you a good friend to God?

## **ACTION**

1. Examine your life to see if you honor your friendship with God on the job, in your home and out with your other friends.
2. If there are things you do that displease God and dishonor your friendship with Him, repent and ask Him to forgive you.
3. Live, everyday, being mindful of your best friend.



# DAY 28: KNOW JESUS AND MAKE HIM KNOWN

Mark 3:14, *“He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.”*

Nothing in life is more important than “knowing Jesus” and “making Him known.” To know Jesus is to have an intimate relationship with Him as your Lord and Savior. To make Jesus known is to preach His life-changing gospel to everyone you can. The above passage sets the example which every disciple, in every generation, must be faithful to do.

Knowing Jesus, has to do with your personal relationship with God. Part of your relationship with Him is to grow spiritually. By knowing Jesus, your identity instantly changes and you become a son or daughter of God.

**As you spend time with Jesus, your maturity level will change because you learn His heart and hear His will for your life.**

Worship, prayer, personal study of God’s Word and being faithful to gather with God’s church is how you grow closer to Jesus. Witnessing, serving others, going on mission trips and preaching the Good News of the gospel is how you help others get closer to Jesus. Knowing Jesus always comes first, making Jesus known always comes second.

Some Christians, today, just want to “know Jesus” and keep Him all to themselves. They are either too lazy or too afraid to share Him with others, so they hide their “light” and no one else is benefited by it. On the other hand, some people are so busy, in ministry for Jesus, that they forget to spend quality time with Jesus, personally. These people believe that “doing” is more important than “being.” This is why people burn out. Jesus taught Martha that being at the Master’s feet is always more important than doing things for the Master (Luke 10:38-42). Remember, ministry is not our Master; Jesus is.

Warren Wiersbe wrote, “The local church is espoused to Christ, but there is always the danger of that love growing cold.” Like Martha, we can be so busy working for Christ that we have no time to love Him. Christ is more concerned about what we do with Him than for Him. Labor is no substitute for love. To the public, the Ephesian church was successful (Revelation 2:1-5); to Christ, it had “fallen.” Therefore, live like the first disciples who knew Jesus, personally, and made Him known, powerfully!

## **REFLECTION**

Are you faithfully knowing Jesus and making Him known?

## **ACTION**

1. How are you growing closer to Jesus, everyday?
2. What are you doing to make Jesus known to others?
3. Live, everyday, knowing Jesus and making Him known!

# DAY 29: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

2 Corinthians 5:21, *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

Confess out loud, “I am the righteousness of God. Jesus became what I was (sinful), so that I might become who He is (righteous).” I believe it, do you? As a pastor, I have holy anger concerning how the devil keeps people in the rat race of sin by convincing them they are never really righteous. The devil has convinced people that because they were born a sinner, they are going to die a sinner and sinning is all they will ever do.

Satan teaches people, from an early age, that the temptation to sin cannot be defeated. He tells us that whenever we are tempted to sin, there is no other option but to give in to it and disobey God. The devil is a liar; and, he has convinced religious leaders in Christianity to buy into his lies as well. Many pastors and leaders teach their people that even after they are saved and born again, that they aren’t really fully saved from the power and presence of sin, but need to be saved over and over again, or that they will always be “half a sinner and half a saint.”

Sadly, these people read Romans 7, and believe Paul was teaching that as believers we would always be powerless against the sin that wages war against our minds. They neglect to understand Romans 8:2, where Paul boldly proclaimed, *“because [of] Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”* Paul firmly believed that once a person was saved they were totally free from sin and death in their soul and spirit. They were no longer a slave to the evil, within, and could freely do the good God commanded.

Think about it like this — before you came to Jesus there was no righteousness in you. You were utterly sinful (Romans 3:23). In the same way, now in Christ, there is no sin in you, you are completely righteous because you have been cleansed and purified from all unrighteousness (1 John 2:9).

**In other words, as much as you were a sinner before Christ, is as much of a saint as you are now in Christ.**

William Durham wrote, “In conversion we come into Christ, our Sanctifier, and are made holy, as well as righteous. When one really comes into Christ he is as much in Christ as he will ever be. He is in a state of holiness and righteousness.”

Some may ask, what about 1 John 1:8, which states, “*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*” This is for the person who believes they have no need for salvation. They may say, “I’m a good person. I don’t have any sin or need any forgiveness from God.” Yet, for all those who do admit and confess their sins, John declared in the next verse, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9). It is the one who humbly confesses their sins who is cleansed from all unrighteousness.

Do you believe when Jesus saved you from your sins, that you were really saved from the power and presence of sin? Do you believe that when you were born again and made a new creation you were really born again and made a new person? Do you believe when Christ died on the cross He really put to death your old sinful nature and purchased for you a new life that is for all who believe in Him? Do you believe that when you confessed your sins, you were literally washed and cleansed from all your unrighteousness?

If you believe it, then live like it, because Jesus made you righteous!

## **REFLECTION**

Do you believe that you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus?

## **ACTION**

1. Discard any bad teaching that has made you believe you are not righteous in Christ.
2. Believe you are who God said you are and that you can do all that He said you can do.
3. If you sin and act as you used to, repent and be cleansed, again, from all your unrighteousness, so that being without sin is your default existence.



# DAY 30: RENEW YOUR MIND

*Romans 12:2, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

It has been said that an average person can think a thought every second. This means we can have as many as 3,600 thoughts an hour (57,600 thoughts in one 16-hour, wakeful day). Consider if just 10% (one out of ten) of those thoughts, in a normal day, were negative. This would mean you had 5,760 negative thoughts per day. Now consider if you had a “bad day,” and 25% (one out of four) of your thoughts were negative. This would be over 14,000 depressing thoughts!

Paul, in the above passage, is giving the secret to success in the Christian life — the renewal of the mind. Whenever your physical brain has negative thoughts and patterns of thinking that do not conform to the pattern and way of God’s thinking, “Take the thought captive.” Be obedient to the mind of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). Joyce Meyer wrote, “Pay attention to the condition of your mind and keep it free, peaceful and full of faith.”

As a Christian, you are not to conform yourself any longer to the thought patterns of this world. For example, when you’re having a bad day, don’t do what the people of this world do and keep thinking depressing and negative thoughts. Be “transformed” (changed), in your lifestyle, by encouraging yourself with the Word of God (1 Samuel 30:6). Say to yourself, “Today is not going well, but because I’m more than a conqueror, through Jesus Christ, I’m going to make it through this to victory!” When times are tough, don’t listen to yourself; talk to yourself. Avoid letting your thoughts run on “auto pilot,” and be proactive to speak God’s Word over your life.

Make a decision, today, to get rid of all your “stinkin’ thinkin’” and be renewed (made new). Transform your old way of doing things into the new ways of God.

**Remember, just because a thought enters your mind, doesn’t mean you have to think about it over and over again like a sad song on repeat. You can stop it and put a new happy song (thought) on.**

How do you renew your mind? By rejecting the old fleshly thoughts and replacing them with the new Holy Spirit-inspired thoughts. Reject + replace + repeat = renew. When you are renewed in your mind, you can follow the rest of Paul’s commands, in Romans 12:2, by testing (putting into action) God’s perfect, good and pleasing will for your life. Find what pleases God and think about those things 57,600 times a day!

## **REFLECTION**

What is your thought life like?

## **ACTION**

1. On average, what percentage of your thoughts do you think are negative?
2. What do you normally do when negative thoughts come into your mind?
3. From this point forward, whenever a negative thought comes into your mind, reject it and replace it with a God-pleasing thought and think on that (Philippians 4:8)!



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