TOGETHER IN FAITH

40 Days of Prayer

Devotionals

Wednesday
October 4

Small Things Are Not Despised

For who scorns the day of small things?—Zechariah 4:10a

The world loves the spectacular. God has proven that He is certainly capable of the extraordinary, but He often chooses to work through the ordinary and seemingly insignificant. In this way He demonstrates His love and His power.

Throughout history, God's answer to a critical time was to send a baby. Isaac, Moses, Samuel, John the Baptist, and Jesus were all born as answers to a time of need. When God delivered the Israelites from the Midianites' oppression, He intentionally used an army of merely three hundred men to defeat a vastly larger army. He had more soldiers available, but He preferred to demonstrate His power in the way He accomplished His purposes. When Jesus selected His first disciples He could have enlisted a multitude to follow Him, but He chose twelve. It was not the number of disciples but the quality of their walk with Him that would determine how they affected their world. When Jesus fed a multitude, five loaves of bread and two fish from a boy's lunch were sufficient in the hands of the Lord.

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31–32). The mustard seed was the smallest seed known to the Jews, yet it grew into an enormous tree. He also likened God's kingdom to leaven that is hardly noticeable but raises the entire batch of dough (Matt. 13:33). When children came to Jesus, His disciples assumed they were an annoyance and chased them away (Matt. 19:13–15). But Jesus said that in order to enter His kingdom, people must approach God as a child.

Christians often accept the adage "the bigger the better." We measure success by the number of people involved in our ministry. We seek spectacular displays of God's power. We must learn to view success as God does. God is interested in the heart; He is pleased with obedience

Seeking God daily in prayer asking;

1. God provide for us all that we need to accomplish your vision.
2. God, give wisdom to our Pastors and our Building Team as they lead.
3. God, what would you have me to do?

Experiencing God Day by Day
By
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Devotionals

Thursday
October 5

L**osing Your Life**

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will find it.—Matthew 16:25

Christians are commanded to lose their lives. This means they ought to deliberately release their lives to God and His kingdom. One of the greatest hindrances to you being on mission with God will be your view of what constitutes your "legitimate rights"; that is, those things that you feel you have a right to experience and enjoy. It's not difficult to turn over to Christ those things that are not a sacrifice or that you would prefer to do without anyway. Rather, it is the things that are good and that are dear to you that may stand between you and God's will.

It's good to be near your grown children and grandchildren, for example, but God may want you to go to another city or continent on mission with Him. It's good to get adequate rest, but you may receive a call of distress in the middle of the night. You may assume that you have a right to certain material things, yet God may ask you to release all of your possessions to Him and His purposes (Matt. 19:21).

Jesus modeled perfectly this attitude toward life. He had a legitimate right to enjoy the comforts of heaven. Yet, He did not look at it as a right He should hold on to, nor did He see leaving all that was His as a sacrifice too costly to make (Phil. 2:5–11). As a result, God highly exalted Him and brought salvation to a broken world. 5Has the world convinced you that there are certain rights that you must protect? Are you trying to save your life? Have you noticed that in so doing, you are actually losing the life God wants you to have?

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Friday
October 6

Faithfulness in Prayer

> *There was also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and was a widow for 84 years. She did not leave the temple complex, serving God night and day with fastings and prayers.—Luke 2:36–37*

Your faithfulness allows God to reveal greater insight to you than to the less faithful. Faithfulness brings opportunities to you that are not given to the unfaithful. God takes pleasure in answering prayers that come from a faithful heart.

Anna had been a widow for many years. In her day, a widow had little status in society and was virtually helpless on her own. Anna spent her time, day and night, in prayer and fasting in the temple. As she prayed, she yearned to see the Messiah. God chose few people to encounter the Savior when He was born, revealing His Son only to those whose hearts were faithful and pure. Anna was one of those few. Jesus would later say to His followers, "Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear . . . it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matt. 13:16, 11).

Anna continued faithfully in prayer until her prayer was answered. The answer to her prayers did not come immediately. In fact, it came near the end of her life. But God honored her faithfulness. God's redemptive plan to send the Messiah included answering the prayers of a humble widow.

Faithful praying may mean a lifetime of waiting to receive an answer. God is looking for intercessors who are willing to continue to pray and to believe until they see God's answer.

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Saturday
October 7

Prayer Discovers God's Agenda

> *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He got up, went out, and made His way to a deserted place. And He was praying there.—Mark* 1:35

It was common knowledge among the disciples that they would find Jesus praying during the early morning hours. When they needed Him, they knew to go to the place of prayer. When Judas betrayed Jesus, he led his cohorts to Jesus' place of prayer.

Every time the Lord Jesus faced an important decision, He prayed. When He was being tempted to do things by the world's methods instead of the Father's, He prayed (Matt. 4). When it was time to choose His disciples, He prayed the entire night (Luke 6:12). If the Son of God required a night of prayer in order to determine the Father's mind, how long might it take us in prayer to clearly determine our Father's will?

Because Jesus was so often surrounded by crowds, He knew He must find a quiet place so He could clearly hear His Father's voice. Jesus had many people seeking to influence the direction of His life. His disciples wanted Him to go where the crowds were (Mark 1:37). The crowds wanted to crown Him king (John 6:15). Satan tempted Him to make compromises in order to draw a following (Matt. 4:3, 6, 9). Jesus knew that His mission was not to attract a crowd, but to remain obedient to His Father. It was prayer that set the agenda for Jesus' ministry (Luke 6:12). Prayer preceded the miracles (John 11:42–43); prayer brought Him encouragement at critical moments (Luke 9:28–31); prayer enabled Him to go to the cross (Luke 22:41–42); and prayer kept Him there despite excruciating pain (Luke 23:46). Follow the Savior's example, and let your time alone with God, in prayer, set the agenda for your life.

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Sunday
October 8

Where Your Treasure Is

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.—Luke 12:34

What you value most is your treasure. Where you spend your time and your money is your treasure. Whatever dominates your conversation is what you treasure. What others know you for is a good indication of what your treasure is.

Most Christians are quick to claim that God is their first priority. Yet often their actions reveal that their treasure is not God but things of this world. Some Christians find it difficult to discuss their relationship with God, but they can chatter easily about their family, friends, or hobbies. Some find it impossible to rise early in order to spend time with God, but they willingly get up at dawn to pursue a hobby. Some find it difficult to give an offering to God but readily spend lavishly on recreation. Some boldly approach strangers to sell a product, yet they are painfully timid in telling others about their Savior. Some give hundreds of hours to serve in volunteer organizations but feel they have no time available to serve God.

If you are unsure of where your treasure is, examine where you spend your available time and money. Reflect on what it is you most enjoy thinking about and discussing. Ask your friends to tell you what they think is most important to you. Ask your children to list the things most valuable to you. It may surprise you to know what others consider to be your treasure.

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Monday
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God Remembers

> *"Go and announce directly to Jerusalem that this is what the Lord says:*
> *I remember the loyalty of your youth,*
> *your love as a bride—*
> *how you followed Me in the wilderness,*
> *in a land not sown."—Jeremiah 2:2*

Even when our hearts grow cold toward God and our devotion to Him weakens, His love remains steadfast. We may forget God, but He remembers us.

God was concerned because the people of Judah had allowed their hearts to drift far from Him. In a powerful moment, God shared His heart with His people, recalling what it was like when they first began loving Him. He remembered how they had loved Him, as a new bride loves her husband, with excitement and enthusiasm for the future. He recalled the kindness they had expressed as they willingly followed Him wherever He led them. God reminded them of the love they had once had for Him, so that the memory might rekindle feelings of devotion and their hearts might return to Him.

If you do not guard our heart, you will grow cold in your love for Christ. A time may come when He approaches you and reminds you what your relationship was once like. Do you recollect the joy that permeated your life when you first became a Christian? Do you recall the youthful commitments you made to Him, pledging to do anything He told you to do? Do you remember the thrill you experienced each time you came to understand a new dimension of His nature? Spiritual memory is important. You may not realize how far you have drifted from God until you contrast the love you are expressing to Him now with that of earlier days.

God has not changed. He is the same Person you gave your heart to when you became a Christian (Mal. 3:6–7). If your love for God is not as intense as it once was, return to Him. He will restore the intimate fellowship you once shared with Him.

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October 10

Be Anxious for Nothing

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.—Philippians 4:6

Don't be anxious! Paul said there is nothing that should cause a child of God to worry. He was well aware of things that cause anxiety. His nation was occupied by a foreign army and ruled by corrupt leaders. He was writing from prison, where he was being held as a result of false accusations. He was separated from those he loved; his motives had been questioned, and he had been misrepresented. Some were trying to undermine all that he had accomplished in starting churches. He suffered physically and faced imminent execution (2 Cor. 11:23–29). Yet Paul said there would never be a crisis so troubling that God could not bring peace in the midst of it!

God will not necessarily take your problems away, but He will carry the load for you. He wants you to experience His peace, which is beyond human comprehension. You will never fully understand how God could give you peace in some of the situations you face, but you do not have to understand it in order to experience it. This peace is not just for those who "handle stress well"; it is for everyone! You may know that God wants you to experience peace but wonder how this is possible, given what you are presently facing. Yet, Scripture says to be anxious for nothing. God's word clearly indicates that there is nothing you can face that is too difficult, too troubling, or too fearful for God. No matter what your circumstances are, turn your anxiety over to God and let His perfect peace guard your heart.

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