



THIS BOOK BELONG TO

Name : _____

Church : _____

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Foreword

Rev. Dr. Jimmy Oentoro – Founder of IFGF GISI

Shalom,

When we talk about prayer and fasting, some people are thinking of rabbis, nuns, or other “spiritual” people. But actually, prayer and fasting has got to become a part of the lives of every people of God. In the Bible, there are many stories of people from all walks of life who took up fasting as their spiritual discipline: a king, a queen, a prophet, a government official, and even Jesus had once fasted. They fasted to ask for protection, during worship, to start a ministry, to consecrate themselves, and so on. Remember:

- Prayer and fasting is not a “hunger strike”. Prayer and fasting actually declares our surrender to the will of God, whereas a “hunger strike” means you want our will forced upon the Lord. In prayer and fasting, we humbly seek God (2 Chronicles 7:14) and declare our dependence upon Him.
- Prayer and fasting is not a “diet”. In a diet, you reduce your food intake to decrease your body size, but prayer and fasting is an opportunity to increase our faith by knowing our Creator. Depriving oneself of food without providing for time to pray is not fasting, but a mere diet.
- Prayer and fasting is not “changing our meal times”, but instead it is an act to change ourselves by disciplining our bodies and saying NO to food. At the same time, we are building “self control” by saying NO to other fleshly desires (1 Corinthians 9:27) as well as evil wills, words, and deeds.
- Prayer and fasting is not a “detox” to clean your body, but rather to clean our lives from all kinds of sin. True repentance is oftentimes portrayed through prayer and fasting.

Through the Biblical characters we will learn about for 40 days during this prayer and fasting, I hope that we can come to see a different side to their lives. That is, how they can faithfully follow God, no matter what their circumstances are, because of their diligent prayer and fasting. Let us learn from them and trust that during the next 40 days, we will grow to become stronger individuals and experience spiritual rejuvenation.

God bless you!

Happy Fasting



Foreword

Rev. Dr. Budi Hidajat - President of IFGF GISI

Praying Like Ezra Did

"So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and He answered our prayer" (Ezra 8:23).

In returning to Jerusalem, Ezra was bringing with him many of the exiles from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes. Knowing that it was going to be a long and difficult journey, Ezra realized he needed extra protection. Though they could have asked the king for horses & soldiers, or hired guards to protect them, Ezra decided not to do that for he was ashamed. After all, he and the people of Israel had already told the king how powerful their God was. Surely He could protect them on their way.

So, they fasted and prayed! They did it so they might humble themselves before their God and asked Him for a safe journey for themselves and their children, with all their possessions (Ezra 8:21). And the Lord answered their prayer (Ezra 8:23b).

Prayer is always a strong weapon against the enemy. And fasting makes it even more so. Fasting takes prayer to a whole new level. It is a way of saying, "I deny myself what I want most and put God first in my life." Fasting cripples the power of evil spiritual forces in the realm of darkness so they cannot sustain their grip on our lives, our minds, and our circumstances. Fasting and prayer also bring our body into submission by informing it that it is not in charge, but rather, God is.

Whenever we are facing a difficult circumstance or decision, or desiring for a transformation in our family, our nation, and the world, we can be sure that when we fast and pray about it, much is being accomplished in the spiritual realm. But remember that the kind of fast God wants is that of an obedient heart. If we are able to fast, He wants us to do it because we trust Him, love Him, and acknowledge His power.

Have a wonderful 40 days of fasting & prayer journey with our Mighty God!



Foreword

Rev. Hanna Kristanto – HPN Director

Shalom,

Have you ever thought that one day your name will be remembered like Mother Theresa, Thomas Alfa Edison, Albert Einstein, or even Jesus Christ? Why is it that until today their names are still remembered by many people? For one thing, it is because of their influence and dedication for the world. As God's children, we have been called to be a blessing and influence to the lives of many people, such as our family members, our friends, and also those who have not yet known the Lord.

When God gives us the opportunity to live in this world, we are being given a big responsibility for our surroundings. What will we give to the world when we leave it? What kind of footsteps will we leave to stay as a sweet remembrance and example for many people around us and the world?

During the next 40 days, this guidebook will bring you to know and learn about Biblical Characters, like Abraham, Hanna, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Esther, Job, and Jesus who have given up their lives for others, to see their diligence in prayer and persisting in their lives that they became a great blessing to many people. **In addition, not only can this guidebook be used as personal daily reflection material, but it can also be used as discussion material in care group meetings in your local churches.**

I want to ask every IFGF GISI congregation member to open their hearts for the next 40 days to learn and also practice doing what these characters have done, so that the memories we will leave behind in this world can continue to be a sweet and everlasting remembrance. My hopes are that during the 40 days prayer and fasting, our spirits can be revived once again and our lives can become an influence to others. You will be a winner!

Happy Fasting 2011.



Background

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting means humbling ourselves before God and telling Him that we deny our flesh to seek Him instead. As a spiritual discipline, fasting is an act of not eating and drinking to focus ourselves on God and giving spiritual food to our spirit and flesh.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAID ABOUT FASTING?

• FASTING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament, fasting was a moment where people gathered to humble themselves, to receive the purification from sins through repentance, to obtain spiritual renewal, and to find divine help. Fasting was often associated with tears and humbling experiences before God. In the Old Testament, fasting was defined in Joel 2: 12-13.

The people of God to proclaim a fast for God's protection upon the Jews in the Babylonian captivity who were returning to Jerusalem (Ezra 8: 21). In the Bible, there were many occurrences. Moses fasted for 40 days twice until he experienced God's glory (Deuteronomy 9: 9, 18). The bible also recorded the Israelites' fasting days in Judges 20: 26 and in 1Samuel 7: 6 King David fasted in many occasions; before he became a king, during the sickness of his son as well as his enemies (Psalm 35: 13). David also fasted for the sins of his people (Psalm 69: 9-10). Elisa, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel fasted in the time of needs.

• FASTING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lord Jesus gave the example of fasting when He fasted 40 days after being baptized. For Jesus, the most important thing is not the fasting itself, but whether or not we do it. In Luke 2: 36-37 there was a woman of an advanced years, called Anna, who unceasingly served God in prayer and fasted day and night. In Antioch, the prophets and Jesus' early disciples also fasted (Acts 13: 2), and Apostle Paul wrote several times in his letter that "in fasting often, "(2 Corinthians 11: 27). For every child of God, the question is not "do I have to fast?" but "when should I fast?"

FASTING TYPES

There are 3 choices:

1. For those who have previously fasted, it is recommended to skip two meals. End the fasting at 6pm.
The fasting will then continue from 10pm that night till 6pm the next day.
2. For those who have just started fasting, it is recommended to just skip one meal breakfast, lunch, or dinner.
3. For those who are not physically fit, it is recommended to break fast up till noon only.

END THE FASTING TOGETHER

You may determine the time to end your fasting as well as to pray together with others or as a family, in care group, or in each prayer cell. You can coordinate it in your local church. Recommended time is as follows:

- 6pm – 7pm End the fasting together
- 7pm – 9pm Prayer time together

WHAT WE CAN OBTAIN?

God has planned to change individual lives, cities, and nations through prayer. Believers need to make themselves available to pray for their Oikos. You can make a difference with simple prayers:

1. Five blessings for..
2. Five Oikos in....
3. Five minutes day

WHO IS OUR OIKOS?

Oikos are people in our surroundings – families, friends, co-workers, classmates, playmates, or family members (parents, children, siblings, aunties, uncles, ect). In Luke 10, Jesus described our neighbors as the people we have daily contacts with who need our help.

Background

WHY DO WE HAVE TO BLESS OUR OIKOS?

“Prayers can bring them back to God, and the heaven will rejoice to welcome them” (Luke 15: 7, 11-24)

1. Our Oikos are precious in God’s eyes. They are children that God loves. God created them and wants them to return to a righteous fellowship with Him. Prayers can bring them back to God, and the heaven will rejoice to welcome them (Luke 15: 7, 11-24).
2. God commands “all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.” Salvation is being provided for all men, all men including our neighbors who God desires to be saved and come to the knowledge of His truth.
3. When we bless others, we will be blessed.

CAN WE DO MORE AFTER WE PRAY?

Yes! Be open to the works of the Lord and He will lead you to the ministry of sharing and caring. You can impact your surrounding greater. Through prayer, you can release the power of God to the lost souls. Through caring, you can build the bridge of love. Through sharing of the Gospel, you can help people to know Christ and be saved.

HOW CAN I GET CONNECTED WITH MY NEIGHBORS?

The most direct ways for you to get connected with your neighbors is by simply asking what their prayer requests are. Nowadays, many people will respond well. By doing prayer-walk in our neighborhood or in our workplace, we are able to pray spontaneously when needs occur. These will make our neighbors feel our sincerity to pray for their needs.

WILL OUR PRAYERS TRULY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Yes! When we pray, God works! As it written in James 5: 16, all powers within the prayers are God’s own powers. But through our prayers, God will give His power to people and places. Big things will happen when we pray, but nothing will happen if we do not pray

GIVE CONCRETE EXAMPLES

Start with the House of Prayer, we will definitely see people repent and begin coming to church. Those who for years have been absent from church will return to church again. Church growth will increase significantly

HOW SHOULD I PRAY?

Remember to pray with a clean heart. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective (James 5: 16). Pray with a compassionate heart, like Christ Jesus who has a heart full of compassion towards those who need Him (Mat 9: 36). Pray with perseverance. God listens to those who pray earnestly. (Act 12: 5, James 5: 17)

HOW SHOULD I START?

Start making a VIP (Very Important Person) list consisting of 5 names from your Oikos whom you want to intercede for (those who do not know Jesus yet).

No

Write your prayer needs/request in 40 days praying and fasting

[illegible]

Abraham

Day 1

Monday, July 18, 2011

Walking in Faith and Obedience

Today's Reading: Genesis 12:1-9

To Receive

Making a decision to leave a comfortable life for a place full of uncertainties is definitely not an easy thing to do. For sure, we will consider a lot of things, we think about it over and over again and even make some arguments before finally decide to either go or stay. But that's not the case with Abraham.

When God first called and asked him to leave his homeland for a place that he never even had heard before, Abraham responded right away to the calling by asking all of his family to go as the Lord had told him. That is an example of faith that can be clearly seen through actions. Can we do as Abraham did? Can we trust God completely and walk only by faith in His every word?



To Meditate

1. What did God ask Abraham to do when He first called him?
What did God promise him? (verse 1-3)

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2. How did Abraham respond when he received the call?
(verse 4-5)

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3. What did Abraham do when they arrived in Canaan?
(verse 7-8)

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To Do

Through Abraham's life we can learn about faith and obedience. What kind of difficult decisions you are going to make right now? Come to God and put your faith completely in Him. Obey everything that He asks you to do without fear. And worship Him in all things that occur in your life.

To Share

Tell other people how you learnt to have faith in God and to obey Him even during the most difficult situation in your life. Also share what was the outcome of those actions.

Abraham

Day 2
Tuesday, July 19, 2011

Waiving Rights for the Rewards

Today's Reading: Genesis 13:1-8

To Receive

When there was strife between the herdsmen of Abraham's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle about the land where they tended the cattle, actually it was Abraham who had the right to decide to where Lot should go. Abraham was the one who took Lot to come with him in the first place. And don't forget that Lot was his nephew. However Abraham decided to let Lot choose the land himself and that he would go to the part of the land that Lot did not choose. Given the opportunity, Lot chose a land that was good in men's eyes and as the result Abraham was left with part of the land that was less good. But in God's eyes, Abraham's action to waive his right was the higher road and because of that, God transformed the less-good-land to a prosperous land. In the end, God even gave the entire land to Abraham.



To Meditate

- 1. What did Abraham do when the herdsmen of his cattle strived with the herdsmen of Lot's cattle? (verse 8-9)
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- 2. Which area did Lot choose and what were the reasons for him to choose that? (verse 10-11)
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- 3. What was God's reaction to Abraham's action? (verse 14-17)
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To Do

Waiving your rights and giving the first opportunity to other person is not an easy thing to do. But sometimes God wants us to do that so that He can bless us abundantly. How about us today? Would we willingly waive our rights and give the opportunity to others? Or will we demand everyone to follow our decision without hearing others' opinion? We can waive our rights and put others in the first place only when we are totally relying on God and put our hopes in Him through our prayers. Don't forget to involve God in every decision that we are going to make today.

To Share

Tell other people how you learnt to rely on God and to involve Him in every decision that you make. Also share your experience about waiving rights and getting a better reward as the result.

Abraham

Day 3

Wednesday, July 20, 2011

Believing in His Promises

Today's Reading: Genesis 18:1-5

To Receive

Abraham was an extraordinary man. He was blessed by God abundantly and everything he did prosper. But he didn't have a son to inherit all his possessions. To solve this, he decided to take Hagar as his wife and from Hagar he had a son called Ishmael (Genesis 16). The older he got, the more certain he became that this was the right decision, until one day God told him again that Sara would give him a son in his old age. Abraham's faith in God was once again tested and even though the promise sounded impossible, Abraham decided to trust his God. He held on to God's promise and believed Him with all his heart. At the end, Isaac was born as the promised son who inherited all of Abraham's blessings.



To Meditate

1. Who came to Abraham and how did Abraham treat them? (verse 1-5)

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2. What did God promise to Abraham? (verse 10)

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3. How did Abraham and Sara respond to God's promise? (verse 12-15)

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To Do

Even though they may sound impossible, God's promises will never miss and will always prevail. Our task is to believe and hold on to every promise He gave us through His words or through every answer and revelation during our prayer time. Now write down God's promises that haven't been fulfilled in your life. Believe that you will soon see their fulfillment at the best timing.

To Share

Tell other people how you learnt to keep on believing God's promises even in the most difficult situations, and how God has faithfully fulfilled those promises in your life.

Abraham

Day 4
Thursday, July 21, 2011

Prayers that can Turn God's Decisions

Today's Reading: Genesis 18:16-33

To Receive

Have you ever tried to negotiate with God in your prayers? How did that make you feel? May be most of you feel afraid and not worthy to negotiate with God, but today we are going to learn from Abraham who dared to negotiate with God for the sake of Sodom and Gomorrah; and how his prayer has turned God's decision. One thing that we need to remember about Abraham's negotiation with God is that he dared to do that because he knew his God very well.

Abraham understood God's heart desire completely and he knew what God's will was. The way he knew God gave him the courage to negotiate and bid with God. If we want to do the same thing in our prayers, first of all we must make sure that we know God and His will for us. With that, our prayers may be able to change what God has in mind.



To Meditate

- 1. What happened to Sodom and Gomorrah?
Why those things happened? (verse 20-21)

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- 2. What did Abraham do when God told him His plan to
destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? (verse 22-23)

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- 3. What did Abraham really ask God in his prayers?
(verse 22-23)

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To Do

If you feel that you haven't known the God that you worship very well, today you can learn to know Him and His will deeper because knowing Him will help us to understand how to pray and how to ask Him for blessings.

To Share

Tell other people how you learnt to know God and pray with confidence, and how God has answered those prayers precisely.

Abraham

Day 5
Friday, July 22, 2011

Standing Strong

Today's Reading: Genesis 22:1-19

To Receive

Most of us don't like the time when a test comes in our lives and we even tend to run and hide from it. But Abraham had a different attitude toward tests even though the one that he was facing was not an easy one. The test he was about to take was so hard because he had to choose between obeying God and losing his only son, or keeping the child by not obeying God.

Abraham's faith in God made him strong during the test and he even came out from it with a victory. How about us? Do we have enough faith in God that makes us strong in the midst of our tests and enables us to come out with victory? It all depends on how deep we know our God.



To Meditate

1. What did God ask Abraham to do as a test to his faith? (verse 2)

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2. How did Abraham respond? How did Isaac respond? (verse 3-10)

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3. What happened afterwards? (verse 11-14)

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To Do

Learn from Abraham and do not run from the tests that you face in life because all the things that happen in our lives are actually planned by God for our good. God will never leave us and He holds our right hands to give us the victory. So, become the conquerors that stand strong in the midst of all the tests in life.

To Share

Tell other people how you learnt to stand strong in the midst of your tests and how God has helped you to pass those tests with a victory.

Esther

Day 6
Saturday, July 23, 2011

Esther had Godly Characters

Today's Reading: Esther 2:8-18

To Receive

Esther was an orphan who was raised by her uncle. But even without her parents' teachings, she grew up to become a woman with godly characters:

- She was kind and therefore won the favor of Hegai (verse 9a)
- She submitted herself and obeyed the authority above her (Mordecai), verse 10
- She did not manipulate the rights and opportunities she had for her own good. She was satisfied with Hegai's advices (verse 13 & 15). For that reason, Esther won the love from everyone who met her.



To Meditate

1. Who was Esther? (verse 5-7)

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2. Where did Mordecai take Esther? For what purpose? (verse 8-14)

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3. Why did everybody love Esther? How did King Ahasuerus feel about her? (verse 15-18)

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To Do

Esther had godly characters which won everybody's favor. How about you? What are your characters that make people enjoy your companion? Let's have Christ's characters in our lives!

To Share

Tell other people how God sharpen your characters through various problems in your life and how you were able to come out as a conqueror.

Esther

Day 7
Sunday, July 24, 2011

Esther was Chosen for A Purpose

Today's Reading: Esther 3; 4:1-14

To Receive

When God chose Esther through King Ahasuerus to become a queen, His purpose was to save the Jews from Haman's wicked plan.

This was revealed when Mordecai said "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

Likewise, God also chose us for a purpose; it's not for our own ego but for a godly purpose of declaring His glory: proclaiming His great works who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).



To Meditate

- 1. What made Haman angry and filled with fury?
(Esther 3:1-6)
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- 2. What did Haman do to release his anger?
(Esther 3:8-15)
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- 3. How did Mordecai and the Jews react when they
heard the King’s command?
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- 4. What did Mordecai said to Esther as a response to
her statement delivered by Hathach? (verse 10-14)
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To Do

Esther was chosen by God for the good of others, her own people. Everyone is chosen for a purpose. Rev. Rick Warren in his book “The Purpose Driven Life” wrote one statement: “What on earth am I here for?” Let’s find God’s purpose in our lives.

To Share

Tell other people what is your purpose in life according to the Word of God.

Esther

Day 8
Monday, July 25, 2011

Esther was ready for the Consequences of Her Task

Today's Reading: Esther 4:15-17, 5:1-2

To Receive

Esther realized that the reason God made her queen was because He wanted to use her to save His people from Haman's fury. For this reason, Esther was ready to bear all the consequences of her task. Esther was even ready to risk her own life! To prepare for the huge consequences, Esther and all the Jews fasted and humbled themselves before God, prayed and sought God's face; they sought God's favor first before seeking King Ahasuerus' favor. 2 Chronicles 7:14 "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

How do you prepare yourself for the tasks and responsibilities that God has trusted you? Are you still as committed when you face obstacles and hindrances ahead? Learn from Esther who didn't give up despite the hard situations and how she was ready for all the consequences.



To Meditate

1. What kind of preparation did Esther make to come before the king? (Esther 4:15-16)

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2. What did Esther say that shows her readiness for the consequences? (verse 16c)

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3. How did King Ahasuerus react when Esther came to him without being called? (verse 1-2)

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To Do

Esther was ready to be used by God no matter what the consequences were. How about you? Are you willing to be involved in God's plan? Are you willing to pay the price to see His plans fulfilled?

To Share

Tell other people about the commitment you've made in your life according to God's Word.

Esther

Day 9
Tuesday, July 26, 2011

Esther Fought with A Strategy

Today's Reading: Esther 5 & 7

To Receive

Esther knew who she was up against. Her enemy was not an ordinary small man. Esther 5:1 tells us about Haman. He was someone with a great wealth, a prestige position among other officials and servants of the king. Haman was also a very tricky and wicked man. To fight him, Esther had to have a good strategy.

When Esther sought God's face in prayer, God the source of all wisdom gave her a brilliant strategy. She held two feasts for the king and Haman. For a moment Haman felt victorious, great and honored because he was invited to private feasts with the king. He didn't know that those were parts of Esther's strategy to destroy him. When the king asked Esther for her wish, Esther pleaded for the deliverance of her life and her people's life from Haman's plan. At the end, Haman was hung on the gallows that he prepared for Mordecai. You need to know that every one of us, like it or not, must enter a spiritual warfare. We need to fight with strategies, just like Esther.



To Meditate

- 1. What was Esther purpose to come to the king without being called? (Esther 5:4)
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- 2. What was Esther request when the king asked her? (Esther 5:6-8)
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- 3. What did Esther asked to the king? (Esther 7:3-4)
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- 4. How did Haman end? (Esther 7:8-10)
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To Do

Esther knew her enemy very well and she didn't act recklessly. In the spiritual warfare, you must know your enemy first in order to fight effectively with great results.

To Share

Tell other people about the strategies that you received through prayers and how you put those strategies into actions in your everyday life to destroy the enemy.

Esther

Day 10
Wednesday, July 27, 2011

God Gave a Great Victory to Esther

Today's Reading: Esther 8 & 9

To Receive

God did not just give a great victory to Esther over Haman, but He also moved King Ahasuerus' heart to give Haman's fortune to Esther. The king heart's was really onto Esther that he said yes to all her wishes and requests. With the king's seal, Esther wrote a decree saying: "the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate any armed force of any people or province that might attack them, children and women included, and to plunder their goods." As per Esther request, ten of Haman's sons were also hung on the gallows.

It is because of Esther, all the Jews tasted a tremendous victory. Mordecai even was promoted as the second most powerful person in the country after King Ahasuerus.

The same God will also give a great victory to you if you are willing to do your task and responsibilities, and put your trust in Him always during the battle.



To Meditate

1. What did the king grant Esther? (Esther 8:1-2)

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2. What was written on the letter that Esther made on behalf of the king? (Esther 8:1-12)

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3. What did the Jews do to the people who hated them? (Esther 9:1-5).

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To Do

Esther experienced a great victory because God was on her side. With God you can do mighty things. Psalm 118:6 says: "The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

To Share

Tell other people about victories that God has given you in your life.

Job

Day 11
Thursday, July 28, 2011

Job's Righteousness

Today's Reading: Job 1:1-5

To Receive

With all his might and strength, Job wanted to please God and live blameless in front of Him. He didn't just turn away from sins but he anticipated sins. In his heart he believed that all the blessings that he has was directly connected to his righteousness. In other words, he believed that sins could take away all God's blessings from him.

There are these people who are "very spiritual" and think that God makes them successful and prosperous because of their righteousness and service. Job almost fell into this kind of "spiritual arrogance" if he didn't come to know God during his hard time.

On the other hand, there are these people who "judge" themselves and others. They think that hard times and sufferings are forms of God punishment on human's sins and transgressions. Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar fell into this category and invoked God's wrath upon them. God does not allow anyone to judge Him because He is the Creator and we all are His creation.



To Meditate

1. What was Job’s first motivation in presenting the burnt offering to God?

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2. Why do bad things happen to good people while the bad people seem to enjoy good things?
See: Ecclesiastes 7:11, 8:17, Rome 9:15.

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3. What is the danger if we are too quick to judge other people?

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To Do

Job was someone who really sought God. But his knowledge about God was based on the ‘blessings – punishment’ pattern. He believed that if he was right, God would bless him and if he sinned then God would punish him. God wanted to teach Job a new dimension in knowing God. God wanted to teach him that there are times when human cannot understand His ways. But even so, God is always right in all He does. Take time to reflect on the unanswered things that happened in your life. Cast your fear and anxiety to God; admit that your understanding is limited to be able to capture Him completely.

To Share

Share to the people you know about God’s way that you cannot understand. When we lost our ways and are wondering, just trust your life in God’s hand. Believe that He will always do what’s best for you.

Job

Day 12
Friday, July 29, 2011

Unshakable Faith

Today's Reading: Job 1:20-21

To Receive

Usually when someone hears a shocking tragedy, he/she will be in a great shock. Hearing that his sons and daughters were killed in these series of tragedy, Job realized that he was alive just because of God's grace. He couldn't base his faith on the temporary earthly possessions. All the things he collected over the years were lost in seconds. This tragedy tested the foundation of faith that Job has built so far. A storm is a good test to see whether the tree's root is strong enough to get it through.

After that period of time, there was a leap of faith inside Job's heart. He did not see God as an object anymore, but as the subject. God is not an object that he can move with his works or services. A new revelation was birthed when he understood that God does whatever He pleases and in all things, God is always right.



To Meditate

1. Discuss several responses people may have when faced with the tragedy of life. How did Job respond? How did you respond?

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2. What is the function of a foundation or root when things are shaken?

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3. What kind of leap of faith did Job encountered through his sufferings?

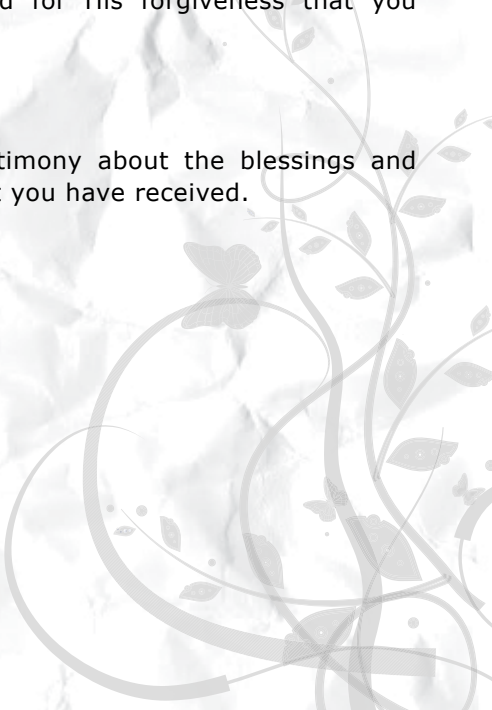
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To Do

There is no effort or goodness that we can do to gain the right of receiving God’s blessings. Likewise, there is no sin or fall that can make us unforgivable. Thank God for all His blessings in your life and for His forgiveness that you received.

To Share

Share your testimony about the blessings and forgiveness that you have received.



Job

Day 13
Saturday, July 30, 2011

Faithfulness that are Tested

Today's Reading: Job 1:20-21

To Receive

It is easy to praise God when everything is going well; we are in good health and are blessed. But it is hard to keep the positive attitude when tragedy comes. Only those who understand their source of life can still completely put their trust in God. Giving our rights to God means that we are submitting to His authority.

There are a lot of unanswered things in this world. Maybe God will disclose the answer to that mystery to us in the future or maybe not. Forcing our limited brain to understand His whole plan often crashes our faith. On the other hand, praising God no matter what the circumstances are will strengthen our faith.



To Meditate

1. What was Job’s attitude toward the wealth that God entrusted him?

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2. What made Job able to praise God through his great sufferings?

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3. Why there are times when we find no answer to our questions and distresses?

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To Do

Giving thanks is a decision. Even though we are surrounded with difficult situations, giving thanks is something that comes out from the inside, not from the outside. Make a decision to give thanks to God in all circumstances.

To Share

Share your testimony about the times when you could give thanks to God despite the difficult situations. Tell what happened when you decided to give thanks instead of complaining.

Job

Day 14
Sunday, July 31, 2011

Heroic Perseverance

Today's Reading: Job 2:1-10

To Receive

We often ask "Why me?" during our sufferings. We question God why those things happen to us and not to someone else. But there are a lot of people who face more difficult situations even though they are more righteous than we are. On the other hand, not so many people will ask "Why me?" when they are blessed and healthy.

When the tragedy first hit Job and all his belongings were lost, Job tried to understand. When all his sons and daughters were also lost, he tried to stand firm. When he was struck with loathsome sores all over his body, he tried not to lose hope. But when his wife told him to curse God, Job finally spoke out. The tragedies that came one after another not only made his faith stronger, but birthed a huge respect towards God's presence.



To Meditate

1. Can we question God about the things He allows us to face?

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2. What leap of faith that Job experienced this time?

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3. Why often times someone’s faith is getting stronger when facing difficulties one after another?

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To Do

Doubting God’s faithfulness, patient and love is the same as doubting God’s characters, which should not be done by any Christians. Have you ever doubted Him and His works? Have you ever asked “Why me?” when you are facing difficulties? Pray for forgiveness and the strength to stand strong.

To Share

Share your testimony about your leap of faith. What made your faith stronger? Encourage friends who have not understood God’s plan to call on to God and wait for Him to show us the answers.

Job

Day 15
Monday, August 1, 2011

Blessings in a New Dimension

Today's Reading: Job 42:1-5

To Receive

When Job was first blessed, he already worshiped God but his worship was based on what he once heard. He heard about God's works from his parents and ancestors. He might have heard about God's great wonders from his friends. He tried to live a blameless life and worship this God that he had heard of.

But the sufferings had taken him to a new dimension in knowing God. While walking through the great sufferings, Job's eyes were opened and he was able to see God. Those sufferings brought him closer to God. Blessings made him worship God from the distance but sufferings allowed him to know God in person.



To Meditate

1. How did Job know God he worshipped before the sufferings? How do you know God at this point?

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2. After Job walked through the sufferings and was restored, how did his knowledge about God change?

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3. What is the difference between the people who know God in person and those who know Him from the distance?

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To Do

People who are close to God worship Him regardless the place and time. Lift your worship to God all the time in every circumstance. "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

To Share

Share your experience how you worship God with a correct attitude. Tell people what benefits you received from this kind of worship.

Nehemiah

Day 16
Tuesday, August 2, 2011

God Cares About You

Today's Reading: Nehemiah 1

To Receive

Nehemiah lived in a time when the Israelites had returned from the exile to Jerusalem. The Babylonian who had ruled the Israelites since 586 BC was finally defeated by the Persian in the year of 539 BC. Under the Persian, the Jews were allowed to go back to their country. But the walls of Jerusalem lied in ruins and the Israelites were in a great trouble and shame.

On the month of Chislev (around November to mid of December), Nehemiah received the news about the sad conditions of the remnants in Jerusalem. When he heard the news he was upset. Then he prayed and fasted about this particular situation. Are you receiving news that has troubled and made you upset? God cares about you. Seek His face in prayer and fasting. As God had answered Nehemiah's prayer, He will answer your prayer as well and He will show you the way out.



To Meditate

1. What did Nehemiah do when he heard the news about the conditions of the remnants in Jerusalem? (verse 4)

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2. What were the results of his prayer and fasting?

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3. How do you see God’s interference in the Israelites situation through Nehemiah’s prayer?

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To Do

Nehemiah spent about four months to pray and fast for the situation that he faced, from the month of Chislev to the month of Nisan (around mid of March to mid of April). God is always ready to show us the way out from our problems. But many times we do not give Him enough time to speak to us. Let’s take time to pray and fast for the situation that we are facing today.

To Share

Share your experience how God answered your prayer. When He talks, He doesn’t always do that in an audible way. In Nehemiah story, God talked to him by putting the things that He planned for Nehemiah as a burden in Nehemiah’s heart. Likewise, when you pray, you will become more sensitive towards what God’s put in your heart.

Nehemiah

Day 17

Wednesday, August 3, 2011

God Wants to Use You

Today's Reading: Nehemiah 2:1-10

To Receive

Nehemiah took the initiative and the responsibility to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. God gave him favor in front of the Persian King and finally he gave Nehemiah the permission to go back to Jerusalem and start the project. Nehemiah also asked for letters to the governors Beyond the River requesting materials for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. But before he went and asked the king, he took time to pray. Nehemiah depended on God totally.

Nehemiah was not an ordinary man. He was someone with integrity and characters. That was the reason he became one of the king's closest staffs. He was one of a few men who the king trusted. What kind of person are you? Are you someone with integrity and characters? Can God trust you with His big projects?



To Meditate

- 1. God put Nehemiah in a very strategic location and a very special time frame. Nehemiah proved that he was able to take the responsibility on an important task that God had called him to do. Is there any opportunity that God wants you to jump into? Are you ready for it?

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- 2. When the king asked Nehemiah, "What do you want?", Nehemiah knew exactly what he wants. What did he do before he answered the king's question?

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- 3. Did Nehemiah acknowledge that the reason the king fulfilled his requests was the favor of God?

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To Do

Write down some of your characters that are preventing you from becoming your best and ask Holy Spirit to help you to change.

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To Share

We have to be ready to answer any question. Share you experience when God gave you an opportunity to speak about your thoughts and faith with courage.

Nehemiah

Day 18
Thursday, August 4, 2011

Working Wholeheartedly

Today's Reading: Nehemiah 2:11-13

To Receive

Nehemiah didn't talk to anyone about the burden that God had put in his heart. He just took some men with him to do an inspection on the city of Jerusalem at night. As the outcome of that inspection, Nehemiah was able to come up with a strategic plan to finish the project. The work to rebuild the walls was divided into two parts and every family was responsible for different parts of it. The project was big and was not easy so it was important that they all stayed close to each another.

Apart from that he also listed the names of all the people involved in the project, including the families living nearby the walls. This was proven to be a good strategy because it encouraged all the people to work wholeheartedly rebuilding the walls for the sake of the city and their nation.



To Meditate

- 1. Is it wise to talk about what God has put in our heart right away to someone else? In Nehemiah’s case (2:12), by not telling it, he could inspect the city and came up with a plan without any resistance from other people.

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- 2. The word “next to him” written so many times in chapter 2 shows a high level of coordination that was required for the project. By writing down their names, Nehemiah showed how he appreciated everyone who contributed in the project. How well do you know the people working for you? Do you take time to show your appreciation for them?

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- 3. Nehemiah appointed each family to work on the part of the walls close to their home. This was a wise step because then everyone would take more responsibility in building the walls since what they build directly affected their homes. What would you do if you were also involved in this task?

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To Do

Don’t hesitate to share your workload with others. Observe the people around you and find out their strengths and talents. Help them to yield the best results based on their talents and interests.

To Share

Nehemiah showed that he was a good leader. He surveyed the city before making a strategy, he divided the task well and he paid attention to everyone involved in the project. What do you need to do in your work to give the best results?

Nehemiah

Day 19
Friday, August 5, 2011

Facing the Enemies

Today's Reading: Nehemiah 4-6

To Receive

There's always someone who will try to break your spirit when you're walking in God's plan. You may be scolded, intimidated, mocked, insulted and even get physically attacked. Those were the things Nehemiah faced. The threats he faced were so big, he put weapons on his workers hands. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that "each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other."

But the secret to their persistence was the prayers Nehemiah said over and over again. When they were insulted, Nehemiah prayed (4:4-5); when the enemies plotted to attack Jerusalem, Nehemiah and the Israelites prayed (4:9), when the enemies tried to intimidate the Israelites, Nehemiah prayed (6:9). Nehemiah always prayed in all situations. No wonder, the Israelites were able to keep their spirits up and at the end the walls were completed in a very short period of time, 52 days!

How do you face your enemies? You should face them with prayer. Through prayers, Nehemiah received the strategies he needed to fight the enemies. Likewise, to be able to stand firm through tribulations, we have to pray all the time.



To Meditate

1. How did Nehemiah keep his people’s spirits up even though they received a lot of intimidations and insults?

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2. The workers were equipped with weapons during the projects. How difficult do you think it was to keep working while continuously being alert to the enemies?

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3. How did God answer Nehemiah’s prayers about his enemies and their oppression?

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To Do

Pray and read the Word continuously so that you can stand firm.

To Share

The weapon that they had on their hands was the symbol of Word of God in our lives. We need to have the Word of God actively working in our lives in order to win over the devil’s plan (Ephesians 6:27, Hebrew 4:12). Share your praying experience during stressful moments.

Nehemiah

Day 20
Saturday, August 6, 2011

Be Holy

Today's Reading: Nehemiah 13

To Receive

Managing the new residents of Jerusalem was a huge and difficult task. Everyone needed to be registered, one family after another; then the laws needed to be read in front of all the people. Confessions of sins had to be done and the new walls needed to be dedicated to God. There were a lot of things to be done in that new city. But there was no strong leader who can manage and control everything because Nehemiah had to return to the Persian. And the city ended up being in a total chaos. The priests corrupted and allowed the enemies of the Israelites to have their own rooms inside the House of God. What should belong to the Levites was not properly distributed. People were working on Sabbath day. Mix marriage occurred between the Jews and the gentiles.

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, he took over the leadership to bring back order. He was so passionate to bring the nation back to God's way and as the result he brought a transformation to the nation.

How about you? Do you have a burning passion for God which enables you to live in holiness and obedience to His Words? When our love for God is burning, we will become people with influence and we can transform our city for Jesus.



To Meditate

1. In what aspects was the House of God neglected?

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2. What did Nehemiah do when he found out that the House of God was neglected?

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3. Why the Jews were not allowed to marry the gentiles around them? (Nehemiah 13:23-28)

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To Do

God wants us to live in holiness. Write down the things around you that affect you negatively on this term.

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To Share

Our body is the temple of God. We have to live in holiness before God; filter the things you see, listen or think and don't let destructive words come out from your mouth. Tell your experience how you try to live in holiness before God.

Daniel

Day 21
Sunday, August 7, 2011

Dare to Be Different

Today's Reading: Daniel 1

To Receive

"But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself." (Dan 1:8)

Daniel had a strong resolve that was not easily shaken. They could prison his body, but not his mind and belief. He was faithful to what he believed and dared to risk everything for it. He dared to refuse the food that had been given him. He would not defile himself with what he ate.

We many times take for granted the choices that we make regarding our lives. Some of those choices look sensible, meaning that, it is the choice that would be made by the majority of the people. But our standard is not based on majority's vote. Our standard is the Word of God. And we must have the courage and resolve to reject anything that is not aligned with God's words.

This will become our standard when we are dealing with ethical issues of our days, such as homosexuality, divorce and remarriage, pornography, piracy, idea theft, corruption, nepotism, etc. When the boundaries become hazy because many people are transgressing them, we must return to the Word of God and make resolve in our hearts to follow the Word, even when by doing so we must stick ourselves out from the rest of the people.



To Meditate

- 1. What are the character qualities that Daniel has shown from his youth?
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- 2. Think of some difficulties that we will face when we are trying to hold on principles different from what people commonly hold.
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- 3. What is the foundation of Daniel’s strength of character?
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To Do

Living in this modern world sometimes brings us face to face too many choices. We must always base our choices on the Word of God, even when the choice may seem old-fashioned or out of sync with the popular lifestyle. Write down what you can learn from Daniel’s character and how you can apply them to your life now. What are the principles that you want to maintain though they may not seem compatible with the condition surrounding you?

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To Share

Share to your friends what you have learned from Daniel’s character and what principles you want to hold on to.

Daniel

Day 22
Monday, August 8, 2011

Dare to Do the Impossible

Today's Reading: Daniel 2

To Receive

And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king." (Daniel 2:16)

Daniel was part of the group of people that the king wanted to eliminate. He should have had the same fate with the Chaldeans and the wise men of Babylon, because they failed to interpret the meaning of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. And it wasn't even their fault, because the King had decided that he would not reveal to anyone the dream that had bothered him all night long. The Chaldeans were not exaggerating when they said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand!" (2:10) But Daniel did not give up. With wisdom, he came up to Arioch, the king's official, and asked him for some time to obtain the meaning of the king's dream. For him, trying will not harm anyone. Rather than giving up in the face of impossibilities, Daniel chose to bet everything on what he had: faith!

Trying like Daniel did would not harm anyone. When we are faced with a seemingly hopeless situation, there is still one door that we have to try. That door is the door of mercy to the LORD Almighty." (2:18) And the key to open that door is prayer and courage.



To Meditate

- 1. What was the fate that awaits Daniel and the Chaldeans when they were unable to interpret the meaning of King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream?

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- 2. How did Daniel choose to deal with the punishment of death that he was about to receive?

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- 3. Where did Daniel obtain the wisdom and courage to come up to Arioch?

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To Do

If you are facing a seemingly impossible situation right now, pray for wisdom and courage! Be prepared to receive your miracle from God by building the correct attitude.

To Share

Share to your friends any impossibility that you are facing and tell them what you choose to believe about the situation.

Daniel

Day 23
Tuesday, August 9, 2011

Dare to Refuse what Was not Rightfully His

Today's Reading: Daniel 5

To Receive

To Receive

"Then Daniel answered and said before the king, 'Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation.'" Daniel 5:17

After he succeeded in interpreting the king's dream, Daniel became famous everywhere. He was known as the person filled by the spirits of the holy gods! His skill was proven, not only to interpret dreams, but also to solve difficult issues. But, was he able also to tell meaning of the mysterious writing on the wall?

Because he had faced difficult situation multiple times, Daniel understood himself. He understood that whatever talent he had came from God. Therefore all glory must be returned to God. That was why Daniel was not attracted by any gift that King Belshazzar had offered him.

Whatever talents that we have, there are several principles that we must be aware of. First, our talents come from God and must be used for His glory. He is the only one that is worthy of all the praises. Second, our talents will be increased if we keep using them for God's glory. In his post as a high official in the Babylon kingdom, Daniel faced increasingly difficult problems. But God, whom he served, always gave him the wisdom he needed to face those problems.



To Meditate

- 1. How was Daniel’s attitude when he became famous and his ability acknowledged by the people?

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- 2. According to you, what do many famous people who have somehow fallen have in common?

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- 3. How can you use the talents you have for the glory of God?

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To Do

Understand the talents that God has entrusted in your life and use them to glorify God’s name. If you can use them for ministry in the church, be involved in a ministry. If you have talents for the secular world, find ways to glorify God in the secular world. Then strive to have the humility just like Daniel, who was not willing to obtain any selfish gain with what God has entrusted to him.

To Share

Share to your friends how God can use our talents. We can maximize and multiply our talents through consistent usage.

Daniel

Day 24
Wednesday, August 10, 2011

Dare to Die for His Faith

Today's Reading: Daniel 6

To Receive

"Then Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously." (Daniel 6:10)

Several people conspired to bring Daniel's down. They discovered a way to realize their evil plan. They knew that Daniel was faithful to do his spiritual routines to pray and praise God three times daily. The people who plot against him managed to persuade the king to prohibit anyone to pray to anyone except the king. Whoever transgressed this rule would be thrown to the lion's cave.

Anybody who heard such a rule would be afraid, but not Daniel. The threat did not change his habit to pray and worship God. He even did his routine on an open space in his room, so that it was very easy for anyone to spot him. He did not try to hide his worship.

Many times we face challenges to our faith. Many people choose to compromise, camouflage, hide or pretend. They feel afraid or embarrassed when other people find out about their faith. But God is able to defend our case, and He is able to deliver us from any snare that our enemies have put against us.



To Meditate

1. What did Daniel do when he was facing the death penalty by being thrown into the lion's den?

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2. Was there any change in Daniel's attitude from the time he refused the king's food to the time he faced the hungry lions?

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3. What was the reason for Daniel's courage to stick to his faith whatever the risk?

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To Do

Every believer needs to have Daniel's radical attitude in sticking to his faith. The challenges that we face right now are not very different from the challenges faced by Daniel. Modern day trials are not much different from ancient time trials. When you are facing challenges that try your faith, pray to God so that He may give you the resolve like Daniel's.

To Share

Share with your friends what part of Daniel's attitude that you want to imitate, and how can you apply those attitudes in your daily life.

Daniel

Day 25
Thursday, August 11, 2011

Dare to Pay the Price for His Nation

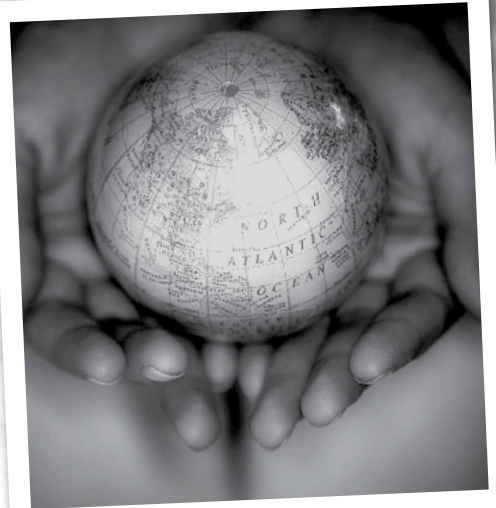
Today's Reading: Daniel 9

To Receive

"Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes." (Daniel 9:3)

Daniel faced a severe spiritual struggle in his heart. His own closeness to God caused his heart to be very troubled when he saw his nation's distance from God. The moral burden of his nation rested upon Daniel's shoulder. Daniel lived righteously before his God, but his people did not. So he prayed and pled for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. He wept for his nation, turned to God and confessed the sins of his people and families.

Daniel's struggles should have been ours also as believers. We must pray and weep for our nation that is so far away from God. We must ask for God's forgiveness for the sins committed by our ancestors and families. We must confess their sins before God. Daniel was willing to take a part in the restoration of his nation, and right now God is looking for such people as Daniel, those who are willing to pay the price for the restoration of our nation.



To Meditate

- 1. Why did Daniel pray and plea with fasting and sackcloth and ashes?
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- 2. Even though he lived as an exile almost all of his life, Daniel did not lose his love for his nation. Why was that so?
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- 3. What is the chief need of our nation, and how can we take part to fill the main need?
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To Do

Pray, plea, fast and mourn for the country where God has put you. Pray for forgiveness for any sin committed by its leaders and people. Weep for the spiritual blindness of our nation and ask God to open their eyes so that they are able to see the salvation in Jesus.

To Share

Share to someone who does not yet believe in Jesus how you came to know and believe in Jesus. Share your life testimony; tell them what God has done in your life. And then pray and fast for that person.

Ezra

Day 26
Friday, August 12, 2011

Restoration

Today's Reading: Ezra 1 & 2

To Receive

After 70 years of exile in the land of Babylon, the Jews began to return to Jerusalem in 538 BC under the reign of Cyrus, the king of Persia. (This thing had been prophesied in Isaiah 44:28). And what's more amazing, the king also returned to the people every article of the Lord's temple that had been taken by King Nebuchadnezzar. The people who had been exiled returned to their cities, and God brought about restoration for the Israelites.

Maybe the Israelites were discouraged as they were waiting for God's restoration. Their bleak situation seemed to dismiss any little chance they have to return to their own land. But God has given His word, and it would never fail. God worked by sending the Persians to take over Babylon in 530 BC. In the following year, the first wave of Jewish exile began to return to their own land.

Many times we become discouraged as we wait for the restoration / breakthrough from God. Believe that the time has finally come for you to receive your restoration like the Israelites did.



To Meditate

1. 70 years is a long waiting time. The Israelites were waiting for the fulfillment of God's promise. And for some, maybe they doubt if God's promised will ever be fulfilled. Have you ever faced a similar situation in your life, when you seemingly have prayed for years but managed to come to nothing? When God begins to work, a few seconds is enough for him to turn our life around.

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2. Throughout the many years of exile, God was able to keep all of the articles of his temple. And when the time of restoration finally came, God moved the heart of Cyrus to return all those articles to their rightful place. God is able to keep and protect our lives and what belongs to us, if we dedicate our lives fully to Him. What about your life?

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3. When the Israelites finally returned to their land, they no longer felt ashamed. They, who were previously known as a people without land or identity, now had a clear existence as a group of people. Where do we put our sense of security? Is it in anything, any place, any person? One day, all those things will be shaken, and only security in the name of Jesus will not be shaken.

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To Do

Do not cease to pray for the things we've been praying for. Even if it has gone on for years and God seems to tarry, the time of God's intervention would finally come.

To Share

The Israelites' life in Babylon was in reality relatively fruitful. In Jeremiah 29:1-23, the Lord commanded them to build houses to live, to stay there, to work the fields, to get married and to increase. If their lives there were good enough, why did the people still want to return to their own land?

Ezra

Day 27
Saturday, August 13, 2011

Rebuilding the Foundation of Life

Today's Reading: Ezra 3

To Receive

The first thing that the Israelites did after they returned and dwelled in their own land was rebuilt the altar of LORD. The importance of the altar of the LORD went back to the time before the fall, when the Israelites must bring offerings to God at His altar in order to have fellowship with Him. Cain and Abel brought their offering before the LORD to have fellowship with Him (Gen 4:3-4). Noah brought his offering before the LORD's altar (Gen 8:20), and so did Abraham, Isaac, and the others. The important thing is not the building of the altar itself, but rather the fact that the altar is the place where God met His people. Jews from every place would gather in Jerusalem to worship God.

That was why, despite their fears, the Israelites still built the altar and offered sacrifices on it. They knew that their identity was in God and it was at that altar would they be able to fellowship with God. Jesus was the highest sacrifice, offered to God on behalf of all men. And on the cross once again men are united with God.



To Meditate

- 1. The altar symbolizes the place where men can meet with God. When we come into His presence, we are building an altar for the LORD. How is our relationship with Him right now? How often do we meet with God?

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- 2. Despite their fears, the Israelites still built the altar of the LORD. What about us? Are we afraid of the threats of the people when we come into the LORD’s presence?

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- 3. When we are strongly founded in Christ Jesus, no of threat or persecution will hinder us from worshipping the LORD. We must always build our foundation in Christ Jesus so we’ll be able to stand firm in the face of persecution.

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Melakukan

Build the altar of the LORD every day through your daily devotion.

To Share

We know that Jesus is the only everlasting foundation. So how do we know that He is the foundation of our lives?

Ezra

Day 28
Sunday, August 14, 2011

If God is With Us, Who Can Be Against Us?

Today's Reading: Ezra 4 - 6

To Receive

The building of the altar and temple of the LORD did not always go smoothly. When the people were working hard to build the temple of the LORD, the enemies began to try everything in their disposal to discourage the people. When intimidation and threats failed, the enemies began writing false reports against them to King Ahasuerus such that the work was temporarily stopped.

God spoke through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the people to resume the work regardless of the king's order. The enemies reported this violation to the new king, i.e. King Darius. However, this time the plan backfired. Instead of stopping the work, King Darius ordered that the work be continued according to the commandment of King Cyrus, and the king placed the enemies of the Israelites as assistants in rebuilding the temple. It was because "the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews." (Ezra 5:5)



To Meditate

- 1. The enemy will always try to push his way into our lives through loopholes. They will first try the “soft” ways, and then they will try the “hard” ways. An example of the enemy’s “soft” way was when the enemies tried to “help” them in rebuilding the Lord’s temple. (Ezra 4:2). When the Israelites refused the help, they retaliated by using the “hard” ways, that is, by hiring some people to discourage the people. They even made false reports about the people to King Ahasuerus.

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- 2. In His own time, the LORD spoke through His prophets. The rebuilding of the LORD’s temple must be continued. And when God interfered, no one could stop the work. Even the enemies must submit to the LORD’s command given by the mouth of King Darius to help the Israelites finish the work.

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- 3. God took care of His people, even when they had sinned against Him. He disciplined them for a time, but when their enemies rose against them, God stood up and defended them.

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To Do

Do not be afraid to start something new, even when many people are against you.

To Share

Why did God let the work of rebuilding the LORD’s temple stop? Why did He wait for such a long time before He spoke through His prophets?

Ezra

Day 29
Monday, August 15, 2011

The Power of Praying and Fasting in Unity

Today's Reading: Ezra 7-8

To Receive

Because God's hand was with Ezra, he obtained the favor of King Ahasuerus, who gave him gold and silver for the LORD's temple in Jerusalem. The king even declared that "all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates are to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, the teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of [them]... " (Ezra 7:21). In addition, Ezra also taught the laws of the LORD to the people. So great was the favor that the king gave to the LORD's temple.

But Ezra did not ask the protection of the king during his journey to Jerusalem. What he did was fast with the people of Israel. With one heart, they prayed for the LORD's protection throughout their journey, for their children and their belongings; and as a result, they arrived safely in Jerusalem. God's hand was with His people.



To Meditate

1. Why is it important for us to receive God’s favor?

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2. In fasting and praying in unity there is great power.
When we as one humble ourselves before God, He
will answer us. (Ezra 8:23)

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3. Why is it important for us to obtain God’s protection
on our family and belongings?

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To Do

Pray every day for God’s protection upon our
family, belongings, and business.

To Share

Ezra led many people and brought a lot of
valuable things when they were returning to
Jerusalem. They were very vulnerable to attacks
from the enemy, but God’s hand was with them
and protected them.

Ezra

Day 30
Tuesday, August 16, 2011

Confess Our Sins before the LORD

Today's Reading: Ezra 9-10

To Receive

Not long after the Israelites returned to their homes, they began to sin against the LORD by marrying to the people around them. This truly saddened Ezra. He bore the sins of the Israelites upon himself and prayed for God's forgiveness on their behalf.

When the remorse of God fell upon the Israelites, they wept and repented. In the end, they returned to the correct path and separated themselves from the people around them, even from the wives that they had married from among the foreign people.



To Meditate

1. The Israelites sinned not long after they returned to Jerusalem. Why was it so easy for them to fall into sin? Have they so quickly forgotten that it was their rebellion that had brought them into exile? Many times we are like that. We do not appreciate God’s grace and keep on sinning even after we have asked for God’s forgiveness.

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2. Why were the people of Israel commanded to separate themselves from their foreign wives? As the remnant of the Israel nation, there were not many of them. And if they get married to foreign women, they were in danger of worshipping the foreign gods of their wives. And this is something that God could not tolerate.

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3. Ezra was more than simply a teacher of the Law. He was also an intercessor. He prayed on behalf of his nation when they sinned against the LORD. By doing this, he reflected God’s love for his people.

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To Do

Write down the name of the people you have to pray for, such as your family members, colleagues, friends, etc.

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To Share

Why was it very easy for the people of Israel to fall into sin? Have they forgotten God’s punishment for their past sins?

Jesus

Day 31
Wednesday, August 17, 2011

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Today's Reading: Matthew 6:9

To Receive

Jesus is the best role model in prayer. He prayed all night before choosing His disciples (Luk2 6:12-16), He prayed every morning before starting the activities (Mark 1:34-38), and He always prayed in every circumstance (Luke 5:16). He even taught a prayer that can touch the heart of The Father, to His disciples.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name..." When we pray, first we must acknowledge His presence, that is to whom we pray. Our God, who live in heaven, is not like other gods that live in man-made places. Our God's place is our hope in the future – that is a place where no longer sorrow, disappointment, or even pain. Our God is the owner of heaven and everything in it, and all heaven and earth declare Him as The Father; and we should exalt His name anytime ("For You have magnified Your word above all Your name" – Psalm 138:2)



To Meditate

- 1. Jesus is The Son of God, but He taught His disciples to call God as "Our Father". This is a revelation, because all things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows Son except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. (Luke 10:22). This means that Jesus' disciples (that's us) have a special relationship with God that we can call as Our Father. Do you have a special relationship with the Father in heaven?

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- 2. The Power of our God's name is so big. With The Power of His name, the sick will be healed, the oppressed will be freed, lacking will be blessed, etc. But many times we live our lives the recklessly and in sin, we defile His holy name (as if in Ezekiel 36:20-21). Do you believe that His name is very powerful?

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To Do

Review our way of life; is there anything in our lives that defile God's name? If there's any, then we should repent from our wicked ways.

To Share

List the name of God that you know, and how He has fulfilled your needs.

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Jesus

Day 32
Thursday, August 18, 2011

Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

Today's Reading: Matthew 6:10

To Receive

Through the coming of Jesus Christ, The Kingdom of God can be established on earth. When the Kingdom of God comes, man's life and community will be changed, because only God can defeat the power of darkness in the world. With the coming of His Kingdom, man will have hope and live, now and in the future.



One the way so that God's Kingdom can rule in our life, is by surrendering our lives entirely to His will. It's difficult for us to pray for "God's will to be done on earth as if in heaven", because often His will is against our will, because our will is controlled by our flesh. Jesus has also gone through a tough time to accept His Father's will, that is to die at the cross (Matthew 26:42); Paul has to struggle to accept God's will, that is the weakness in him (2 Cor 12:8). But they all accepted His wil, and brought The Kingdom of God into the earth.

To Meditate

- 1. How can we have the Kingdom of God in our daily lives – living in victory, health, abundance, and bringing impact on others?
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- 2. As a Father, He always gives the best for us. But we often don't like His best gift, because it may mean we cannot have what we want instantly. Because we cannot see the future, we can judge from what we see now. But God that gives only for the best, knows the best time and how to answer our prayer too.
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- 3. How do we accept His perfect will in us to bring God's Kingdom into the earth?
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To Do

Write down the things that we would leave behind so that God's will can be happen in our lives.

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To Share

It is unfair to force our will and finally blame God for the "bad result" that we get because of our actions. But this is what we often do. We need to repent and really humble ourselves before Him.

Jesus

Day 33
Friday, August 19, 2011

Give us this day our daily bread

Today's Reading: Matthew 6:11

To Receive

The prayer for our daily life that Jesus prayed, show how much He cares for our wealth. Food is very important in our life, that's why satan use food to tempt Jesus to change the stone to bread with His commandment. Many people hurt other people because they want to survive. Jesus remind us once again that the blessings comes from God and He will surely provide it.

But more than physical food, God wants to give us 'heavenly bread' that is The Word of God through our daily devotion. Only by receiving the heavenly bread – that is The Word of God, that we're not just living, but live in abundance. Physical food only support us temporary, but spiritual food will support our lives eternally.



To Meditate

- 1. Since our daily food comes from God, is enough if we're just ask from God (2 Tes 3:10), or in the other side, why God seems to provide food for those who work hard but don't rely upon Him?

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- 2. What about poor people around us? Is it because they're not working hard enough?

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- 3. Which one is more important: physical or spiritual food?

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To Do

Write down the things that you would do to help someone in need today.

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Membagikan

Discuss this verse: "Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches—Feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, And say, "Who is the LORD?" Or lest I be poor and steal, And profane the name of my God." (Proverb 30:7-9)`

Jesus

Day 34
Saturday, August 20, 2011

Keep us forgiven with You and forgiving others.

Today's Reading: Matthew 6:12

To Receive

Forgiving is a difficult thing to do. In this prayer, Jesus thought that all of His disciples have forgiven those who has done wrong to them ("as we have forgiven..."). Rightfully so, for if only we knew how numerous our sins are and how Jesus had suffered because of them, then we will be unable to not forgive others. Our sin that brought Jesus to the cross, but in the final hour at the cross, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they're doing." (Luke 23:24)

Have you ever been betrayed, used or treated unfairly by others or even by people that you love? Jesus has been through it all and even more than those things, but He with compassion still could say that they do not know what they were doing. And even till today He is still being hurt anytime we come to Him only if we're in need, treat Him unfairly by not giving our best time, betraying Him by being too afraid to admit ourselves as His disciple, etc. But He always forgives us and gives us may chance to us. Shouldn't we do the same thing with others?



To Meditate

1. Why is it so important to forgive others?

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2. Not forgiving others will affect to our physical body, such as: tense in our muscles, pain in the joints, headache, fatigue, stomach-ache, etc. Beside an unforgiving heart will make one become “narrow minded” and filled with negative thinking. Unforgiveness affects us badly, but why do we still not forgive others sometimes?

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3. What happens if we forgive others?

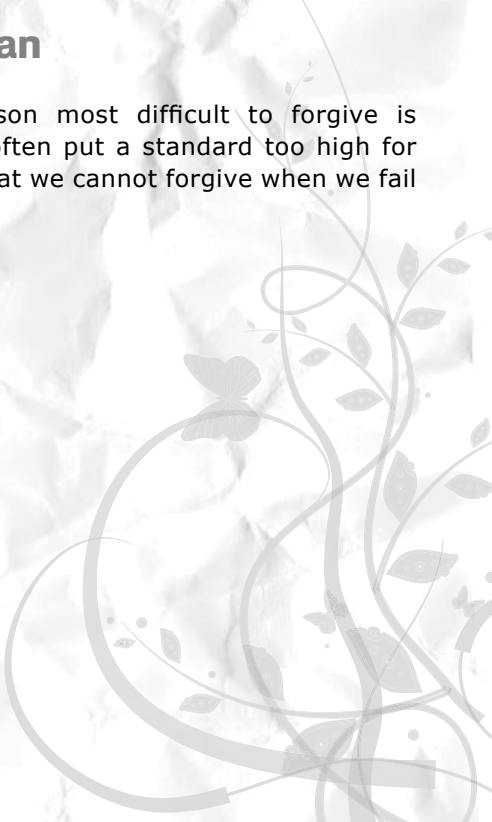
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To Do

Start praying to bless others that have hurt you.

Membagikan

Often, the person most difficult to forgive is ourselves. We often put a standard too high for ourselves, so that we cannot forgive when we fail (fall into sin).



Jesus

Day 35
Sunday, August 21, 2011

And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one

Today's Reading: Matthew 6:13

To Receive

Jesus really knows how bad the damage would the satan do to our live. Without the power of God in our life, we would be a 'sitting duck' for the devil. But when we live according to His word, no evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways (Psalms 91:9-11)

We often waste His grace; when we intentionally put ourselves in a situation where we can fall (into sin), such as: being dishonest in business, going to niteclubs, living in sin, etc. In this case, if we face consequences of our action, it's our own fault. But even so, when we repent He will restore us.



To Meditate

1. Does God test us? (James 1:13-15)

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2. Why does He let us go through test after test?
Does He always have the way out.

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3. The devil always finds a way to make us fall (into sin).

We have to have self-control and sensitivity to be able to resist him be steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world (1 Peter 5:9). How do we so?

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To Do

Stay away from things and places that will lead you to temptations.

To Share

Sometimes God seems to “not keep you away from the evil one”. When trouble keeps coming and going and you’re stressed, keep holding on to your faith, so that you will be the righteous one that goes from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion. (Psalms 84:7)

Hannah

Day 36
Monday, August 22, 2011

Enduring in The Midst of Storm

Today's Reading: 1 Samuel 1:1-8

To Receive

Many people think, that following Jesus means no problem, live an easy life, no test, no struggle. But that's not the reality. In fact if you follow Jesus, problems will still occur, even more, but one thing that He has promised that He will never leave you in every problem that you face as long as we're enduring and keep on depending on Him in everything.

Elkanah's family is also God's faithful follower. They were faithfully offered sacrifice and worshiped God in The Holy Temple, but Hana faced a big problem as a woman. She was barren. That made her sad, not to mention she was being insulted by Penina. But she was faithful by following her husband in worshiping God and believing only in Him, till finally God granted her prayer and gave her Samuel.



To Meditate

1. Who were the wives of Elkanah (verse 2)?

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2. What did Elkanah do every year to show his love to God? (verse 3-4)

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3. What made Hannah so sad? (verse 5-7)

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To Do

What problems are you facing now that often make you wonder why such a thing can happen to someone who faithfully follows God? Maybe you have sickness, problems that come and go in your family, problem in work, spouse, etc. Whatever your problem is, remember Hannah that keep faithful and rely on God in every matter, until God released her from the big problem.

To Share

Share to others how God helped you to get through every problem in your life, and share how you endure in every problems that occurs in your life.

Hannah

Day 37
Tuesday, August 23, 2011

Pray Earnestly

Today's Reading: 1 Samuel 1:9-20

To Receive

Hannah was in sorrow, because as a married woman she was barren. No wonder everytime she prayed, she always cried sadly, asking God to give her a child. Unfortunately, her sadness was perceived differently by Eli, her pastor, which instead of trying to understand her grief, he was accusing Hannah being drunk in the House of God, and rebuked her.

But what Eli did didn't stop her praying and waiting for God's answer. She prayed without ceasing, till she received the answer of her prayer, and that made God remember her and let Him to open up her womb.



To Meditate

1. What did Eli do when he saw Hannah pray earnestly?
(verse 13-14)

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2. What was Hannah reaction to what Eli said?
(verse 15-16)

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3. What did God give to Hannah as the answer of every
prayer that she prayed ceaselessly?(verse 19-20)

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To Do

When we pray earnestly and wait for His reply, many people may wrongly accuse us, even may try to weaken our faith with their actions/ words. Let's learn from Hannah that prayed without ceasing, whatever people say about her. She knew her God and believed that her God will answer her prayer. That's why she was faithfully praying until it was answered. Write down today what you're longing for, than keep praying without ceasing till you receive the answer.

To Share

Share to others how you have kept praying for something and received an answer, even though many people around you try to weaken your faith, and was trying to make you stop praying. Share how you prove to those people that God answered your prayer according to what you asked for.

Hannah

Day 38
Wednesday, August 24, 2011

Keeping The Promise

Today's Reading: 1 Samuel 1:21-28

To Receive

Have you ever made a promise to God, but then feel sorry because you spoke that promise? Or have you ever tried to deny the promise you've made to God when you already received what you want from Him? For years Hannah was longing for a child, and finally she got it, but within a couple of months, she has 'to loose the child' again because she has promised that she will give the child to God.

If you were Hannah, maybe you will try to keep the child and not keeping your promise to God, but that's not Hannah. With thanksgiving heart, she brought Samuel that she loved so dearly, to stay in the house of God and serve Him for the rest of His life.



To Meditate

1. What did Hannah do when she prayed and asked for a child? (verse 11)

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2. Did she keep her promise? (verse 22, 26-27)

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3. What was the name of the child that Hannah gave to God, and how did God use him when he grew up? (1 Sam 2:26)

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To Do

If Hannah didn't keep her promise, maybe Israel would not have a great prophet and judge, Samuel. What Hannah did was incredible. She knew who gave her the child and she knew what to do to repay God's love in her life. How about you? How often you disappoint GOD because you didn't keep your promise. Today we learn from Hannah to keep our promise to God, and let Him work incredibly through our life and everything that we do.

To Share

Share to others your experience when you learn to keep your promise that you've said, even it's very difficult to do, and how incredible the result was when you keep the promise.

Hannah

Day 39
Thursday, August 25, 2011

Fill His Presence with Praises

Today's Reading: 1 Samuel 2: 1-10

To Receive

Hannah's joy was reflected in the praises that she gave to God. The passage that we read today shows how grateful and joyful Hannah was when she received the answer of her earnest prayer. Every single praises that she gave reflected how she knew her God and how she loved her God so dearly.

Often times we forgot to thank God after God blessed us abundantly. We do not try to please His heart and fill His presence with praises from our mouth, yet He actually deserve to receive all the praises, because all that we have are from Him. Lord, you're highly exalted and worthy to be praised.



To Meditate

1. What was the source of joy for Hannah? (verse 1)
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2. Do you think Hannah knew her God well? (verse 2)
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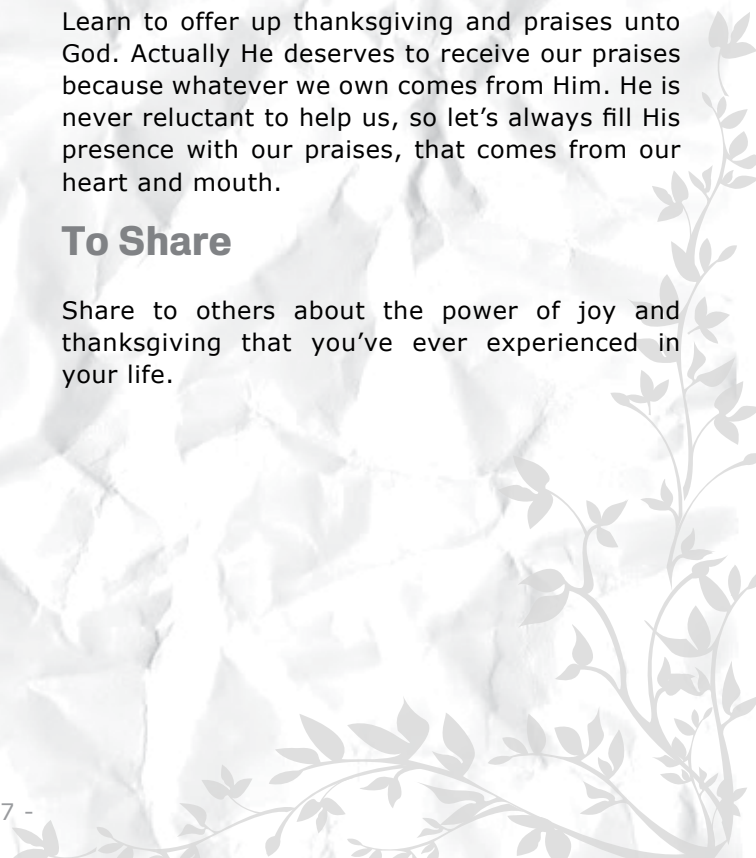
3. Share the things that God can do for His children according to Hannah’s praises! (verse 3-10)
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To Do

Learn to offer up thanksgiving and praises unto God. Actually He deserves to receive our praises because whatever we own comes from Him. He is never reluctant to help us, so let’s always fill His presence with our praises, that comes from our heart and mouth.

To Share

Share to others about the power of joy and thanksgiving that you’ve ever experienced in your life.



Hannah

Day 40
Friday, August 26, 2011

Doubled Doubled Blessings

Today's Reading: 1 Samuel 2: 18-21

To Receive

Everyone of us longs for a doubled doubled blessed life. We want to have a better life, wealthier, healthier, more prosperous in many areas, but often times we do not want to take the first step in order to get the blessings.

When Hannah humbly and joyful heart gave Samuel according to what she has promised before, God saw it from another perspective. What Hannah did apparently opened up the doors of doubled doubled blessings for her and her family. God gave her 5 children, beside Samuel, and Samuel himself was used by God such wonderfully to be one of the greatest prophet and judge, and he was truly respected in the entire Israel. All of those blessings started from Hannah's action, bringing little Samuel to God and offering him up to serve God in His house.



To Meditate

- 1. Who took care Samuel since he was a little boy, and what did he do when He stayed in The Temple of The Lord? (verse 11, 18)

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- 2. How many children that God gave to Hannah 'to substitute' Samuel that she offered to God? (verse 21)

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- 3. How was young Samuel's life, that's faithfully served God in His Temple? (verse 26)

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To Do

Hannah's first step determined the blessings that she received afterwards. Today maybe God is waiting for us to take the first step that'll open up the doors of blessings in our life. Do we want to learn to obey and take the first step? Or do we choose not to do it so we would not get the blessings that He already has in store for us. Learn to do the first things first, and expect a life of double blessings.

To Share

Share to others how you learn to obey and through the obedience you have received blessings beyond your imagination.

A background image of crumpled white paper with horizontal ruling lines overlaid. The paper is crumpled, creating a textured, wavy surface. The ruling lines are thin, horizontal, and evenly spaced, running across the entire width of the page. The overall appearance is that of a piece of lined paper that has been crumpled and then flattened, with the lines still visible through the folds and creases.

No	What I Learned during 40 Days
1	1. I learned that I am capable of more than I thought I was. I pushed myself physically and mentally, and I discovered my own strength and resilience.
2	2. I learned the importance of consistency and discipline. It's not about doing big things once in a while, but about showing up every day and putting in the effort.
3	3. I learned that I am not alone. There are so many people out there who are also striving to improve themselves, and it's great to have a community of like-minded individuals.
4	4. I learned that I need to take care of myself. I realized that I can't give 100% if I'm not getting enough rest, eating well, and staying hydrated.
5	5. I learned that I am capable of overcoming my fears. I stepped out of my comfort zone and did things I was scared to do, and I realized that the only way to grow is by facing my fears.
6	6. I learned that I am capable of being vulnerable. I shared my struggles and insecurities with others, and I realized that it's okay to not have everything figured out.
7	7. I learned that I am capable of being patient. I realized that progress takes time, and I need to be patient with myself and the process.
8	8. I learned that I am capable of being grateful. I started keeping a gratitude journal, and I realized how many things I have to be thankful for, even in the toughest of times.
9	9. I learned that I am capable of being resilient. I faced setbacks and challenges, but I didn't let them defeat me. I got back up and kept going.
10	10. I learned that I am capable of being a team player. I worked with others, and I realized that we can achieve so much more together than we can on our own.



Notes