



2024 New Year's Consecration Week 3: Day 15 - Day 21

Day 15: *Don't You Dare Doubt God!*

Today's Reading: Romans 4:18-20

I may lose cool points for this, but today's lesson is birthed directly from my own personal experiences. Recent ones. A great measure of repair came to me on the back end of a disappointing valley as I decided to simply spend one recent evening in devotion and in communication with God. I prayed, I sang, I read his Word, I mediated and I did it over again for a few hours. Just giving God some time gave me the repair and refueling that I needed....and here is something I realized...

Anyone can believe God at the initial onset of a journey - that moment when the fragrance of a promise can still be smelled through the nostrils of your spirit and emotion. However, the test of your faith is in its longevity - the ability to believe when God appears to take too long. The best of us grow weary and begin to rationale that maybe it won't actually happen for us. I was there. I wanted to recant my excitement, appeal my praise, and recall my hope because 'prophetic deadlines' were quickly approaching, and my promises had not yet been birthed. That's were Abraham would be expected to be; yet, the text says that he hoped when there was no [logical] reason to hope.

He was old, Sarah was childless and past age, but he never wavered in believing God. I've been sent to tell someone who feels you have justifiable reason to quit don't you dare doubt God! If you understood how important the promise over your life is, you would take in consideration the reason why things have taken so long. You are not late and God is not done, but your faith must be conditioned for the long-run.

Today, I want you to take your excuses, write them down, ball up the paper and throw it away! Decide today that you will still believe! Do you want to bring the Lord glory? Then don't you dare doubt God!

Consecration/Concentration: No meat.

Starve distractions that hinder time in the Word today. Set aside specific times to get in the Word and shut the world off as best as possible when you do.

Day 16: *Not Without Change*

Today's Reading: Proverbs 13:19

From the time we are children, we are constantly inundated with the existence and significance of dreams. Many people motivate young lads toward the possibility that they should dare to dream in faith that dreams will come true. There is a childlike innocent fervor that becomes an accompanying aroma that follows us along the journey.

Yet, it seems that dreams coming true seems much more simplistic as childhood fantasies rather than adulthood pursuits...and this is why.

The text reveals that as pleasant as it is to see a dream or desire of the heart come true, not everyone is willing to make the necessary adjustments to attain it.

This principle reveals a truth that we are often not automatically prepared to fulfill the desires of the heart. It is possible to have a heart on one level but have a discipline (or lack thereof) on another. Some of the most imaginative and creative people I know are also very lazy because one does not automatically insure the existence of the other. Thus, the scripture highlights the ways of a fool. One is considered a fool for refusing to turn from evil [doing, thinking, living] to attain the desire of the heart. Though I am not calling you a fool, I want you to ask yourself the following question, *What about me is hindering me?*

Simply put, fools don't prosper because they won't change! They assume that they are "fine" as they are, with no need to make personal adjustments. It seems easier to point out "haters" or to talk about "everyone else" who needs to change, but what if the only hindrance to the rest of your life is YOU? My simple point is that some things God wants to do in your life will not happen without change! There must be a desire of the will to match the motive and mentality needed for the desires of our hearts to manifest. God will honor your willingness to grow into what He's put in your heart! Let nothing hold you back! It's yours.

Consecration/Concentration: No sweets. Abstain from social media today.

Day 17: *Moving On!*

Today's Reading: Deuteronomy 2:1-3

What if where you've been is not all God has called you to? Of course, I know that you know that, right. Knowing is one thing but embracing it can often be something totally different. Here's why: embracing God's will for your life requires a Necessary Shift! While the success may be a bit intimidating, the shift is what is often quite horrifying. It is the hard thing that comes before the great thing. Yet, the Lord instructed me to tell you that a great shifting is occurring in your life. It's not the enemy, its destiny calling you from where you've been.

Moving on requires:

1. *Obedience to Prophetic Direction*

The children of Israel's next season depended solely on their ability to hear God. God's instruction to them was that they had gone around the same mountain long enough and that it was time for them to turn north (changing direction). I want to release to you this morning that you will be as successful as you are obedient to the instruction of the Lord. I don't just mean large instructions, but all instructions. Do not ignore your conviction! God is prophetically serving you the agenda for how to move.

2. *Operating in Progressive Demonstration*

While the prophetic direction was key, it is null and void if there is not demonstration. The people began moving in the direction God instructed. It is not God's will for you to be stuck! Stuck in distressful situations, stuck in fear, stuck in a season beneath your potential. God's part is to give divine direction, our part is to operate in progressive demonstration. Why progressive - because God does not expect us to get there overnight. Make today the day that we make a move together. In fact, let's move one step each day toward the promise God has for us!

Consecration/Concentration:

No food before 12 noon (*unless needed for medical reasons*)

Pray scriptures today, throughout the day.

Day 18: BE the Difference

Today's Reading: 1 Peter 2:15-16

I hate to say it, but I feel sometimes that the church has mastered the art of declaration but has nearly forgotten completely the art of display! Current events in the world around us and in our country often become the proof positive that we have mis-prioritized our focus and we live for personal commentary rather than presentable character. However, the above text becomes a rude awakening for this generation of believers. Peter implies through the text that the world's chatter is not as critical as the believer's character. It is God's will that believers lead the kind of lives that silences ignorant people who bring foolish accusations against the church or our Lord. In other words, be the difference!

Here's the revelation: it's not really about what you say! Thus, we do not have to "out talk" the world. Our words do not silence them; our witness does. So, the relevant question this morning is, "how different is your witness"? What is the key to an effective witness? The answer is found in verse 16. An effective witness is the example of someone who is no longer bound by the world system but does not use their freedom as a justification to sin. In other words, an effective believer is one who does not use Christ as a crutch [excuse] to be ungodly. No, we do not merely get to live any way we want, without subjection and accountability, simply because we are saved! Being saved is not a reason to live recklessly but the reason we should live righteously.

So today, I admonish you to be the difference - in your home, on your job, in your family, in your social spheres of influence and in your world. Some will see it and will make a life change in response. However, even those who don't will not be able to falsely charge you of misrepresenting Christ.

Consecration/Concentration: Avoid caffeine and energy drinks. Give up the need for confirmation today from others.

Day 19: Unlikely...

Today's Reading: 1 Cor. 1:26-27;29

I wonder what Jesus would like if He walked the earth today? Would he be adorned in the best priestly robes, covered from head to toe in royal garb? Would he be custom fitted in a Tom Ford or Michael Sahi tailored suit with his initials in his jacket or on his sleeve? Would he drive or be driven in the best of vehicles or stay in 5-star hotels? Well, in truth, I cannot necessarily say; however, the bible seems to speak to a more common reality of Jesus than we would find befitting for a Messiah.

I do not share this to stir controversy. Instead, I share it to suggest that we often look for in others what we perceive about Christ. To that end, many of us assume that Jesus would, consequently, choose the best of the best to represent him in the earth. Thus, we project our 'approval' of Him on those who seem to carry the image of anointing, rather than the anointing itself!

The truth is that God calls the unlikely! Paul identifies the called as unwise in the world's eyes, foolish and powerless. However, these are those God chooses to use!

I wanted to minister today to anyone who feels unworthy to represent Jesus. Maybe you look back on seasons of your life that you feel have disqualified you and you assume that you are not a good fit for kingdom service. I came to tell you that God loves the unlikely. Why? So that no one can glory in the presence of God – it will be obvious that it is the Lord! Get ready for the unlikely: unlikely chosenness, unlikely favor, unlikely opportunities, and unlikely partnerships. Why? Because that's how our God works!

Consecration/concentration: Avoid emotional eating and excessive snacking. Control angry outbursts and unregulated emotions. As much as possible, practice

Day 20: God DOES Care!

Today's Reading: Ps. 37:23

One of the worst things we can ever do is make assumptions about God. The worst. Yet so many people do it on a normal basis. Do not be alarmed; I'm not about to run through a litany of sins. On the contrary, I wish to argue today what the above psalm affirms – God delights in every detail of our lives.

When I forget how much God is into details, I get in my car and I drive. Driving allows me to survey the vast complexity of nature – how the world and its ecosystems operate. I watch how flooding rain on the ground can leave that ground dry within 24 hours. I see how the sun and moon operate in rotating concert and how the stars adorn the sky at night when they are present. The ontological reality reminds me that God is very much into details.

To that end, I want to ask you a question. Do you think it is worth consulting God when you make major life decisions? I know the question sounds pointless because the answer could be so easily assumed. However, so many make major life moves apart from divine direction in the name of 'independence' or maybe 'freewill'. I get it. However, I think I've found the deeper reason why we sometimes fall into this habit. I believe it is because we often think God doesn't care about that. We assume it is trivial to Him and He would not even be concerned about certain things. In truth, I'm not addressing what you wore to work today or whether you eat chicken or fish for dinner. I speak of life decisions that we often fail to seek God about.

Here's the truth – He does care! He delights so much in the details of our lives that he directs the steps of the godly! He's not just in the box seats of our lives watching life unfold; He has a will for us to fulfill. So, the next time you get ready to jump to a decision that will affect your life, remember that God does care! Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths (Prov. 3:5). God cares.

Consecration/Concentration: Avoid caffeine and energy drinks. Connect with at least one person today and provide encouragement through some means.

Day 21: LISTEN!

Today's Reading: 1 Kings 19:9-13

Meet Elijah, the premier prophet of his day. This man was so great that the bible has no record of his death; he was simply caught up in a whirlwind. At the scene of the text, he is but days removed from the biggest victory of his prophetic ministry, as he slayed the heads of 450 false prophets of Baal. Ironically, he is now afraid of one woman named Jezebel and he runs to cave in fear and depression. Isn't it interesting that you can find yourself depressed just after a victory? People who have never sought out great feats cannot relate and they often judge you based upon their surface perception of courage, but it is possible to have courage yesterday and be discouraged today!

God addresses Elijah in the way I feel the Spirit of God is addressing you today. He wants to know what are you doing here? Please understand that God is aware of the answer, thus the question is meant to provoke contemplation more than confession. Elijah complains about the plight of his heart and God seems to reply with a command for Elijah to go stand outside and wait. As Elijah waits, he discovers that this is a test to check to see if he can recognize God's voice in a depressed place! My friend, sometimes the answer to the problem of your season is not the changing of your situation but simply whether you can still hear God! Consequently, the Holy Spirit told me to tell you today to LISTEN!

Ironically, a wind, an earthquake and fire all showed up, but God was not in any of them. Sometimes your most critical moments are not permitted for common confirmation. The same old stuff you are used to God doing will not be what you need. So don't be disappointed by what (or even who) God is not in! After all signs of confirmation had passed, God showed up in a still small voice. Beloved, I appeal to you today to LISTEN for the still small voice. It may not be the kind of confirmation that you are used to when you get in a storm, but there is a reason that God wants to speak to you this way. Don't miss God by focusing more on the cave you're in than the communication He is trying to establish with you. A cave is a great place to LISTEN!

No Fast Required: Just engage a moment of prayer around this word!

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