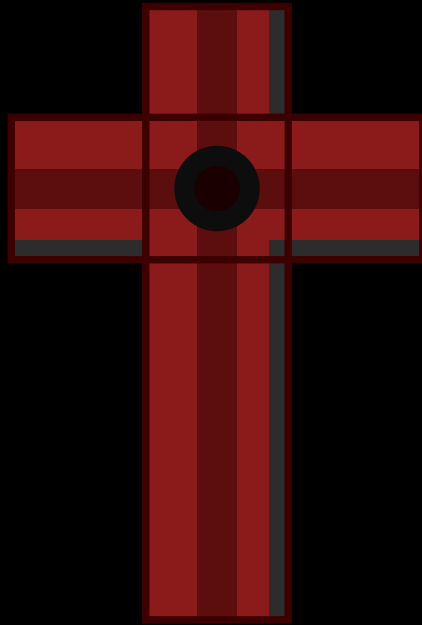




DAILY DEVOTIONALS

Love Like Him

A 365 Day Devotional for Those Called to Walk in His Love

by Mason Davidson



Day 1

Give Everything

*“We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also **ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters** .”*

1 John 3:16 NLT

Real love is selfless. It does not consider self first but others. As followers of Christ, we should always be ready to lay our lives down for those we call brother and sister, as well as those we don't even know or aren't saved, because Jesus has exemplified that for us. He died for people who will probably never even say His name. So where's our excuse? We have more than we should: hurt feelings, grudges, and hate. Sacrifice to us today means setting our phone down for an hour, picking up our Bible for 15 minutes, or simply going out of our way to talk to somebody who makes us a little uncomfortable or that we don't particularly like. The nature of Christ and the love He put into action is such a wild reality that we all must step into. The nature of Christ is selflessness itself. Go the extra mile for Jesus, let go of that grudge, talk to that person you don't like, and stop giving birth to hate. This is what He is urging you to do. Live out this love and believe it is true, because He lives in you. And don't believe for a second that you aren't capable, because He is right there giving you every opportunity to live it out.

Reflect

Who in your life are you finding it hardest to lay your life down for, and what's one small sacrifice you can make for them today?



Day 2

Love Made Flesh

*“Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment for you; rather it is an old one you have had from the very beginning. This old commandment, to love one another, is the same message you heard before. Yet it is also new. Jesus lived the truth of this commandment, and you also are living it. For **the darkness is disappearing, and the true light is already shining** .”*

1 John 2:7-8 NLT

This old commandment is made new because no one could truly live it out in the flesh until it was put into flesh through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He came in the likeness of our flesh, stripped Himself of His own power, and became the perfect human, fully surrendered. Stripped of divine might, yet perfect in every way as a man and still fully God. And all of this was a choice made out of love, not obligation. Amazing. This passage reveals where Christ’s heart was when He came to dwell among us: “Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, He humbled Himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.

Therefore, God elevated Him to the place of highest honor and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:6-11) Out of unconditional love, He surrendered His divine power and clothed Himself in flesh, making love visible. And because of this act of love, the commandment to love became new through Him who gave His life. He is our perfect model because of what He did and everything He does in our life. And because He now lives within us, we have been given everything we need to walk just as He walked.

Reflect

In what area of your life are you still clinging to your own way instead of surrendering it to Christ like He surrendered for you?



Day 3

Lovely Commandments

*“Loving God means keeping his commandments, and **his** commandments are not burdensome .”*

1 John 5:3 NLT

The reason His commandments are not burdensome is because they flow from a place of love, and when you truly love Him, obedience doesn't feel like obligation. At the same time this verse can be a little confusing, because obeying God means you die to yourself, which is never an easy thing to do. Temptation is burdensome, but obedience is not. Getting to the finish line of obedience means you have overcome temptation. The deep love you have for Christ, drawn out by His compelling nature, is what carries you there by His grace.

And the only reason you desire to love Him in the first place is because He first loved you. He wants to restore you to a former glory, the way it was before the fall of Adam and Eve. Honor Him with your body, mind, and soul, because your soul is the thing at stake, and that means death and separation for all eternity.

Reflect

Where in your walk with God does obedience feel like a burden, and what does that reveal about where your heart is?



Day 4

Secure Freedom

*“All wicked actions are sin, but not every sin leads to death. We know that God’s children do not make a practice of sinning, for **God’s Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them** .”*

1 John 5:17-18 NLT

In Scripture, wickedness is often displayed as predetermined actions that go against the will of God, refusing to submit to His authority, or rejection of God. This is not what the life of a believer looks like. A believer does not go out of their way to sin, hurt others, or go against God’s will, and a believer is also one who walks submitted. When you are a believer living under His sonship, sin is no longer something that imprisons you. Rather, you are held securely by Jesus, the One who made it possible for you to walk in freedom from sin and death. But if you do slip up, because your heart already belongs to Him, the sensitivity of the Holy Spirit will rise up within you and you will find yourself becoming increasingly aware of sin.

And guess what? You don’t just mindlessly sin anymore. He has cleansed you! That is what the finished work of the cross does for those who choose Him, desire Him, and accept the reality of His sacrifice. This way you can really live a holy and righteous life. But you must remember that this comes with a cost. You must die every single day. Be dead to yourself and alive in Christ. Believe in His cleansing power every single day, desire His will, and love Him with all your heart.

Reflect

Are you living like someone who is truly held and free, or are you still acting like sin has power over you?



Day 5

True Fellowship

*“And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. **He is the only true God, and he is eternal life .**”*

1 John 5:20 NLT

The reason we are able to have understanding of this new nature is because Jesus came to die a death that nobody else was capable of dying, and through that action He showed a love so profound and everlasting, making it the standard that everyone is to live by if they want eternal life. When Christ accomplished this, it opened up the heavens so the Father could see Christ in you.

Now we had Someone worthy to plead our case of sin to the Father, and after forgiveness and reconciliation, we can have true fellowship with Jesus Christ our Lord. And we also know that fellowship with Christ means freedom from sin. Let us be grateful that Christ is our Lord.

Reflect

What does your daily life actually reveal about the depth of your fellowship with Christ?



Day 6

Be the Light

“Anyone who loves a fellow believer is living in the light and does not cause others to stumble .”

1 John 2:10 NLT

Love is always the evidence that the light of God is within a believer, especially when that love is in action. Whether it's serving others, being self-sacrificing with your time, money, or possessions, or praising God without shame, it's actually doing something and not just saying you're a Christian, but living it out by loving others who are also in fellowship with Christ. We forget to love because of the way our culture runs and just the way modern-day society is. Everything is about protecting your opinion, protecting your feelings, and protecting your things. All this junk that just doesn't matter in the end. Show each other real love so that, in the end, we have true fellowship with Jesus Christ and are loving like Him and not like the world.

Loving a fellow believer doesn't mean you're just a good buddy or a nice pal. No. Loving a fellow believer means you would die for them. When Christ says we are to love like Him, He describes what His love actually looks like, and that is laying your life down unto the point of death. Not worrying about yourself constantly. In Scripture, Jesus never worried about Himself. The King of the universe did not care about how He was treated. He just knew that the will of the Father was greater than what He could say or how He could react.

Reflect

Is there someone in your life you've been treating like a stranger instead of a brother, and what would it look like to love them the way Christ loves you?



Day 7

Lovely Obedience

*“And this is love: that **we walk in obedience to his commands** . As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.”*

2 John 1:6 NIV

To walk in love is to walk in obedience, and obedience is the ultimate picture of love, because you're saying to God, "Your will be done." But it's not enough to only obey. We have to check our hearts and ask where that obedience is coming from. The source matters more than we think. Real obedience has to come from a place of genuine, wholehearted desire to please Him. Because if we're not careful, we can find ourselves doing good works in our own strength thinking we're pleasing God, when really the only one being pleased is us.

That is selfishness, not love. Real obedience is the picture of sacrificial love, and we are called to live this out just as Christ did. He was obedient even unto death, but 100% innocent. He pleaded with the Father if there was another way, but there wasn't. And yet He still rose, walked that road, and went to the cross for every one of us, because of love. Lay your life down and live holy and righteous, just as He has called you to do.

Reflect

When you obey God, is it coming from a genuine love for Him or from obligation, and how can you tell the difference?



Day 8

Fullness

*“No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, **God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us** .”*

1 John 4:12 NLT

No one has ever seen God with their eyes, but love does what sight can't do. It brings God Himself to dwell in us. Not partially, not occasionally, but fully. His love reaches its complete expression in us because He is the life living in you and I, and He is constantly drawing us near to His presence, compelling us and giving us hope. On the flipside, if you're serving the world and practicing its deeds, evil will be brought to full expression. Serving the world is really just serving yourself, because the world satisfies physical desires and produces things like idolatry, wickedness, and false worship of yourself, thinking you are the most important person in the world.

And now you have the believer, full of the Holy Spirit, completely submitted to God, living in a place of total freedom and love, serving God and not yourself. That believer is not striving or performing; they are resting in the finished work of Christ and moving from a place of overflowing, unwavering worship, not obligation. Let the full expression of the Spirit of God rise up within you, because that is His will for you.

Reflect

Are you living in the full expression of God's love, or are you allowing the world to bring something else to full expression in you?



Day 9

Proven Love

*“Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; **let us show the truth by our actions** .”*

1 John 3:18 NLT

To say that you love someone without actually loving them is a dangerous thing, and the reason it’s dangerous is that it reduces love to an emotion. Emotions change and love does not. The danger is found in the deception. You can convince yourself that you truly love someone, while the actions you commit in secret would make you a liar. Words mean nothing without truth behind them. They only mean something when you are actively living them out. If you are not living out the truth, then you are lying, and when you say “I love you” without living it, it becomes nothing more than an illusion.

An illusion to yourself, and to the ones you claim to love. So what does love look like? It is an action fueled by grace, desire, and strength. It defeats the enemy when no one is looking, and it gives glory to God in all situations. It has integrity, honesty, and honor. It turns from temptation, runs to the feet of Jesus, and defeats all evil. One of the best things you can do to ensure you live out this love and this truth is obtaining the ability to obey when it is easy to sin.

Reflect

Does the way you live back up the love you claim, or are your words building an illusion that your actions tear down?



Day 10

Secure Union

*“So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, **you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father** .”*

1 John 2:24 NLT

In order to be in perfect union with God the Father and His Son Jesus, you must remain obedient to the calling which is set before you. The calling is this: the death of yourself and living for Christ, remaining in a state of faithfulness, so that you have perfect fellowship with Him. And we know that fellowship with Christ means freedom from sin. He holds you in a secure union with Him and His Father, and the only thing you have to do is believe in this union, believe in the power that it holds, believe that the Spirit of Truth has really set you free, and has now secured you in His union.

When you allow the Holy Spirit to enter into your heart, Christ is the only thing that matters. He becomes your identity and when the Father sees you, He sees His Son. Be like His Son in this secure union and live out your purpose.

Reflect

Do you actually believe you are securely held in union with God, or are you still living like someone who has to earn their way back to Him?



Day 11

Christ Within

*“Since we know that Christ is righteous, we also know that **all who do what is right are God’s children** .”*

1 John 2:29 NLT

Christ’s character can be exemplified in and through His children because of knowing Him through personal relationship. He is the standard set before us, perfection put into human flesh, placed on the cross for the whole world, so that we could live set apart and holy. And because of what He did, it is now possible to stand in the sight of the Father as a holy child of God and hear those words: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” All because of the Son, Jesus Christ.

Having spiritual knowledge that Christ is righteousness gives you the ability to see Christ within others, because we are all one family under the Sonship of Christ. And if we do what is good and righteous because of the relationship we have with Christ, then others will recognize the finished work that has been done within you. Live righteously.

Reflect

Are you allowing Christ within you to be so evident that other believers don’t have to guess if you’re a Christian, they just know?



Day 12

Love Expels Fear

*“Such love has no fear, because **perfect love expels all fear** . If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.”*

1 John 4:18 NLT

Fear cannot exist in the presence of love. But not just any love. This love mentioned in Scripture is describing a personal, perfect, and beautiful love that shines light into every dark corner of fear, guilt, and shame. And if we let this love shine upon us (Numbers 6:25) and allow it to light up every element of doubt, then what will we have to fear? Nothing! So don't let shame from the enemy tell you that you're not cleansed or that you can't be free, because it is by His blood that you are made worthy, having no fear. If you have been truly cleansed by the blood and you have fully experienced His perfect love, then you have nothing to fear.

But if you still in some way have fear, then you need to open your eyes in order to see the love that's so freeing. If you keep your eyes shut, then fear will keep you pessimistic and in a constant state of anxiety, and shame will cover itself with more shame to keep itself a secret. These will slowly but surely destroy you, crushing you underneath the weight of them. Keeping you condemned. But we know that for those who are in Christ, there is no condemnation (Romans 8:1).

Reflect

Am I condemning myself to hell or am I trusting in the finished work of the cross? Do I really believe that what Jesus did for me is sufficient enough to give me life and freedom from sin, death, and condemnation?



Day 13

The Prodigal

“If you see a fellow believer sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life . But there is a sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it.”

1 John 5:16 NLT

What’s interesting about this verse is that it doesn’t specify whether or not you should confront a struggling believer or call them out. We are often taught in Scripture to handle situations like this by pointing out their wrongdoing. But here it is different. Why is that? The Scripture here is clear in this instance: “if their sin is not leading to death, pray.” This passage is not trying to say “don’t confront wrong,” instead it’s saying that some things don’t need to always be confronted, but instead faithfully prayed for, and this creates a balance. And this matters because prayer like this is an act of faith that says, “I believe Christ is at work in this person’s life and I am not capable of saving them from anything.” That will always ultimately be up to Him. It is Christ’s work to deal with believers when we miss the mark, not ours. Then there are those we aren’t exactly commanded to pray for: those who have experienced the deep love of Christ and His nature, yet chose to walk away and return to sin.

So how should we treat such a “believer?” Galatians 6:1 tells us that “you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path.” Even though we don’t necessarily need to pray for them, we are still expected to treat them the way Christ would. Jesus already showed us how to handle a person like this, and it looks like the prodigal son. Once the prodigal returns, welcome them back. They were once lost, but now are found. So receive them with open arms, not discontent, not shame, not dissatisfaction, not even sadness, but with overwhelming joy and gladness, because the Lord Jesus was always working to bring them back! The key factor when Scripture mentions sin that leads to death is not even that the nature of sin is so dangerous, but the fact that when you walk away, you are cutting yourself off from the only source of eternal life. And that leads to death.

Reflect

Are you treating the people in your life who have walked away from Christ with the overwhelming joy and open arms of the prodigal son’s father, or with discontent and disappointment?



Day 14

Idols

*“Dear children, **keep away from anything that might take God’s place in your hearts** .”*

1 John 5:21 NLT

A clear and direct command, and one that we should always obey. What do idols do? For one, they can lie in secret, tricking you into thinking that your relationship with God won’t become damaged because of them. Idols will trick you into thinking your addiction is okay, that it’s just a “frequent activity” or “it’s what works for me.” The very problem with those statements is that we often don’t realize how selfish they really are, keeping you far from His love. Idols keep you attached to yourself, to what you want and what you desire, and that will slowly suck the life out of you. Being drawn by Jesus is more than just giving up an addiction, saying no to drugs, or stopping what you look at in secret. It’s about being transformed and actually wanting to live differently, not simply escaping what’s trying to tear you down.

Because when you get to the end of the line, you need Jesus more than you need to try and fix yourself. And guess what? You will fail on your own. You will never save yourself. If you want to do practical things to help yourself, go ahead, but if you believe with your whole heart that He can change you, then everything you try to do in your own discipline will mean nothing compared to the glory that is in Christ. If you want a change, and you must genuinely want to change, your heart has to look like Christ’s. Being drawn by His Spirit, overwhelmed by His strength and integrity every single day, devoted to Him and wanting what He wants. Removing an idol doesn’t happen overnight. It takes death to self, a lot of submission, and running from sin so that Jesus can fight the battle He has already won.

Reflect

If you truly love the Father, what are you still holding onto that you know is keeping you from Him, and are you really willing to let it go?



Day 15

Declare Him

“All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God .”

1 John 4:15 NLT

To make a declaration means you believe whatever it is that you are declaring, you are aligned with it, and you agree with it. You could also say that it is a decision. A decision that will give you life. Declaring that Jesus is the Son of God means you truly believe it and you aren't ashamed of it, you love that He is your Savior! Every man who opens his mouth and declares Jesus is Lord is proof of His life in them. Shout His name with no hesitation. God lives in you and you in Him! He gives you love, wisdom, knowledge, and kindness, everything you need to be like Christ.

Just believing in His name and declaring it means He is there. Right inside. Not far off somewhere else. Not waiting for you to clean yourself up first, because you can't fix you, only He can fix you. He is right there, dwelling in you, because His Son dwelt among us. He is moving in you, working through you every single day. So wake up every day filled with His Holy Spirit and declare that He is Lord, and He will give you all that you need.

Reflect

Are you declaring Jesus as Lord with your mouth and your life, or are you keeping your faith quiet when it matters most?



Day 16

Lovely Confidence

*“And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we **can face him with confidence** because we live like Jesus here in this world.”*

1 John 4:17 NLT

Love, which is given by God, is already perfect, yet somehow it can become more perfect. How is that? Well, we are finite beings in a finite world, and there is no end to His love. His love will continue to grow in us as we continue to walk like Jesus. We will experience moments of tremendous glory and spiritual gifts, and we will have conversations with the Lord. And in the end, we should be able to look back on our life and have full confidence that we lived like Christ told us to live.

That should be the goal of every single believer, and the reward is heaven. This is the lifestyle we should be reflecting, which on the day of judgment will give us confidence. Thank God that there is no end to His love, and thank God that we get to experience the growth of this infinite love. We get to experience this love because Jesus modeled it for us. Live like Jesus and face God with confidence, because He is the One who gives life eternally.

Reflect

When you meet the end of your life will it be met with peace, and will you have peace knowing that you lived like Jesus?



Day 17

Defeat This World

“And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.”

1 John 5:5 NLT

The battle that is against the world is the battle against flesh, and it is a battle that cannot be fought with flesh (Ephesians 6:12). Flesh will always fail. That’s why those who are under the rule and reign of Christ will always emerge victorious in this battle that we fight. We have the Spirit of the living God, and we live different, we live transformed, and we live free indeed! The most wonderful thing about this battle is that it’s not us who fight on our behalf, but Jesus on ours. Our flesh cannot handle the evil desires of the world.

We’ve already won the battle if we walk with He who has already won. He loves us so much. Walk with Him if you want freedom. Walk with Him if you want life after physical death. Walk with Him if you want to defeat your flesh. Walk with Him if you want to trample on the enemy and the world which is full of wickedness. Walk with Him if you want strength. Walk with Him if you want love. And walk with Him if you want to be a victor over everything.

Reflect

Are you fighting a battle against the world that you cannot win, or are you walking with the One who’s already defeated the world?



Day 18

The Perfect Standard

*“Those who say they live in God **should live their lives as Jesus did** .”*

1 John 2:6 NLT

When John says those who live in God should live their lives as Jesus did, he is setting the standard. Not a suggestion, not something to admire from a distance, but the standard. Jesus is the line in the sand for what a surrendered life actually looks like. He walked it out perfectly in human form so that we would have something real to follow, not just a concept of living, but a Person. The Perfect One. This can feel heavy. Because if Jesus is the standard, then who could ever measure up? On your own, you never will, and that's the whole point. This verse was never a call to try harder in your own strength to measure up to His perfection. If it were, it would crush you every single day and you'd only condemn yourself. Thank God that is not the case!

Here is the beauty of it: the same power that is in Christ now lives in you. The same power that carried that 200 pound cross 600 meters uphill lives in you! The power to become free from sin's pull lives in you! Given as a gift! So when John says walk as Jesus walked, he is not just handing you a demand, he is handing you a promise. And it is possible. Not because you are strong enough, but because He is in you. The standard and the power to meet the standard come from the same place, Him, and you have to believe it. So stop just striving and start actually walking in His Spirit. Let Him live through you. That is what it means to live in God, to let the life of Jesus become your life. He is our life. (Colossians 3:4)

Reflect

Do your actions say you live like Christ, or are they just words?



Day 19

Sin Fades, He Remains

*“And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But **anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.**”*

1 John 2:17 NLT

This verse serves as an important reminder that the world we live in will not last, and we who believe will not fade away with it. The world is fading away, but there is One who will never fade. His name is Jesus, and if you do what He wills, obey His commands, pursue His love, and walk like He calls you to walk, then you can be sure you will live a life with full assurance of your eternity. Think of it this way: if the world is fading away and everything with it, and you are living in the ways of the world, then you will fade away with it as well. Forgotten, cast into hell, all because you gave in to your flesh and feelings and wants and desires.

The only thing that should fade away within you is sin. And as you consume the Word and walk like Jesus, you will begin to see things differently, act differently, and suddenly what used to be a part of you has faded away. Praise the Lord! We have to look at sin this way: it is something that will fade away and cannot touch you if you have full assurance in the Lord Jesus. But if you fear it, identify with it, think that you are too weak, hence forgetting where your strength comes from, then it will catch up to you and you will be in bondage.

Reflect

Are you fading away with the world and its sin, or are you letting your sin fade away as you become more like Christ?



Day 20

The Reward, Christ

*“I have written to you who are God’s children because you know the Father. I have written to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong. God’s word lives in your hearts, and **you have won your battle with the evil one** .”*

1 John 2:14 NLT

No matter how mature you are in the faith, whether you are just starting out your walk or you’ve known Christ your whole life, the reward is the same: eternity with Him. Although you are at different points in your walks, you have both won the battle with the evil one. So you don’t have to wait until you are “mature enough” to walk in victory, because you have won the battle, and Jesus is the One who has won it all. Christ is your life, Christ is your identity, Christ is your God.

The assurance of victory and eternal life is the same at every stage, whether you’re on your deathbed accepting Jesus for the first time or you’ve gotten thousands of people to come to Christ. The reward is Jesus, and there is none greater. So no matter where you are in your walk with Christ, walk in His victory. He paid a great price for it, and He wants you to put on Christ. “Put on your new nature, created to be like God, truly righteous and holy.” (Ephesians 4:24)

Reflect

Do you believe that you are in an inadequate position to live in victory, or are you already living it out?



Day 21

Born to Save

*“God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world **so that we might have eternal life through him** .”*

1 John 4:9 NLT

The humility that this verse holds is beyond comprehension. The fact that Jesus was born is even an amazing thing. He took such a humble position while also being God. He was in diapers, potty trained, taught how to talk and eat, learned how to walk. He went through all the normal things you go through when you grow up. God showed us how to live godly, like Him, by sending Himself in the form of flesh to proclaim the Good News to the whole world in such a humble way. While looking at this beautiful picture of humility that is displayed through Jesus, there is also a proclamation that is made, which makes it irrefutably true with no question about who Christ is.

He is God. And because we have eternal life through Him, that could only mean one thing: we wouldn't be able to receive eternal life through only a man. That man, that perfect man, had to have authority from God the Father. Jesus is the Word in flesh, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and God. Three in one.

Reflect

If God was willing to humble Himself to that degree for you, what pride are you still holding onto?



Day 22

Grace Prevails

*“We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. **God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.**”*

1 John 4:16 NLT

We know that God loves us because of the choice He made: to take up residence within us. Only a loving God would legitimately, from a place of incomprehensible love, want to take up residence in our hearts. The very reason He has decided to live in us hinges on the perfect love that has been displayed through His Son Jesus. And because Christ displayed this love for us, we have the ability to just ask Him to enter in. No steps or special words to get Him to come into your heart. All it takes is confession from your mouth, a desire for Him over your flesh, and a heart humble enough to ask for His forgiveness. His love will flood your entire being, making you more like Him. Once this happens, the evidence of the Holy Spirit will rise up within you. You become different. You don't conform to your old habits anymore, and they actually start to gross you out more than they tempt you.

You begin to have more grace, grace on the person who won't speed up on the freeway, the rude service employee who just needs life spoken into them, not talked about behind their back because you can't believe how they treated you. When you start to see things from a gracious perspective, you begin to understand what true love really is. You start to look at every situation like Jesus and now you're always curious about what He would do over what your flesh is urging you to do. Love is dying to your flesh and your desires no matter what and being alive in Christ, because He is our life. Love is Christ, and Christ's love lives in you because He chose to become like us and live out what being godly is all about.

Reflect

Is Christ's love actually flooding your life, or are you still trying to earn your way into His presence?



Day 23

All About Freedom

*“Anyone who continues to live in him will not sin. But **anyone who keeps on sinning does not know him or understand who he is .**”*

1 John 3:6 NLT

This is what it means to be truly free from sin: all who abide in Him will not commit it, it is no longer a pattern. His grace was sufficient to forgive you of your sins, and now it gives you the same power that raised Christ from the dead to keep away from unrighteousness. Your identity is now secure in this promise with Christ. Christ is your identity, not sin. But if you continue to commit sin and live in a way that will disqualify you from entering into relationship with Christ, then you will not have eternal life. But the worst thing of all is you will not know Him. And if you do not know Him, then how can you be free from sinning?

You can't. So seek Him with all of your heart and all of your strength, and remember that His grace isn't a get out of jail free card (Romans 6:1-2), but rather, be exactly who He calls you to be. A light bearer, a child of God, in perfect fellowship with Him! He wants you to walk in the light, not walk in fear of what wrongs you might do in the future, because then you're doomed to fail and constantly ask yourself, "Why can't I just change?" Just ask Him for His eyesight, His ears, and His lips. He will change you completely from the inside, just as long as you are wanting Him every day.

Reflect

Is your freedom in Christ producing a changed life, or just a more comfortable version of your old one?



Day 24

The Table of Jesus

“ See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world don’t recognize that we are God’s children because they don’t know him.”

1 John 3:1 NLT

The Father’s love is shown just by Him calling us His children, and this truth is where our identity is found. His love gives us the assurance that we need to know that we are His sons and daughters. The Creator of the universe recognizes each individual being that calls on Him as Lord as His child. Think of that. The Creator of everything loves you so much as to call you His child. There is no greater love than the One who created you and calls you His image-bearing child. The people who belong to the world don’t recognize us because they have no knowledge of Him, and the world doesn’t know the Father, so it won’t understand or see your identity as His child.

You may feel like an outsider to people who don’t know Christ, but that’s actually confirmation you belong to Him, not the world. Being free from sin means you are part of a different family, the family of God. Once you were apart from Christ, and we must be careful not to distance ourselves too far from the world, because then we will lose our witness. We don’t want to be closed off Christians. Jesus sat with sinners, so you should too. Be the light of the world.

Reflect

Do people around you see a closed off Christian, or do they see Jesus sitting at the table with them through you?



Day 25

Lovely Restoration

“Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.”

1 John 4:7 NLT

We know that when the love of God is evident in our lives, or another person’s life, it looks like this: self-sacrifice, acknowledging others before yourself, being kind even in the face of persecution, telling the truth in love, and acting like Jesus. This is what the power of grace is all about. Grace is the ability, by His power, to live free as Christ has called you to live. Grace comes from His love. His love is planted within you because you were made in His image from the beginning. Jesus came to restore this love so that we could return to a former state of glory, like in the Garden of Eden. In the beginning we were made to share in the likeness of our Creator (Genesis 1:27 and Colossians 3:10).

Christ came to restore this and show us what true Christian living looks like. The love of God is shown in us because we are His children, and this is the gift He gives us: His love. So you must make the most of every opportunity to faithfully express your love to a world that does not understand it. Don’t let fear be your master. Don’t let the pressure of the world and what it says about you affect the way Christ sees you, because you could be the greatest witness to somebody who does not know Christ. Let the world see Christ in you.

Reflect

Could someone look at your life today and see Christ in you, or would they just see you?



Day 26

Compelled to be Complete

*“But those who obey God’s word **truly show how completely they love him** . That is how we know we are living in him.”*

1 John 2:5 NLT

Obedience in a believer’s heart is the proof of complete love. The best part is that it’s His love that compels us to obey Him in the first place, drawing us into complete love for Him. Not partial love. Not somewhat, kinda, sorta love. No. Complete. Every believer should know what this love feels like in their heart. Picture the Father’s face as He looks down on you. He should see you walking in a worthy manner because you love Him so deeply. He is an awesome force, worthy of love, obedience, and praise. True obedience should never be out of obligation, because His love is so completely perfect.

Obedience to Him means having freedom, not being bound by a set of rules and burdens with no genuine heart change, with God shaking His finger down on you. To be free means you desire Him more than what your body wills and wants because of His great and awesome love! You should know that you are Christ’s if you see that your life produces obedience and true love for the Father. Obedience proves this love, and Jesus is the standard for what a surrendered life looks like.

Reflect

Do you limit how much you love Him because you don’t believe obedience is possible for you?



Day 27

Hate the Hate

*“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don’t love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And **he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers** .”*

1 John 4:20-21 NLT

If you claim to be a child of God yet you hate a fellow believer, the love of God is not in you. This is because we are made in the image of God. If we cannot see each other the way we ought to, the way that the Lord commands, when we say we “hate” someone, whether they be a believer or not, we are really saying that we hate God. There is no hatred in our Lord, and there is nothing about His creation that is to be hated, but rather that we praise Him through it. Remember, Jesus came in the form of human flesh to dwell among us, to be the perfect example for all of us. So if we hate someone in the flesh, we hate what God has created. This commandment is so much heavier than it appears on paper. Here’s why: just generally being hateful is not a reflection of His character, and you are not walking in His light.

Sometimes we like to justify our hatred as righteous anger, and before you say that your anger is righteous, remember Jesus got angry only a couple of times in His entire life. So before you think your anger is righteous, think again. Don’t create a false representation of what a Christ follower is. We must be careful with what we say we “hate.” In the end, the only thing we should hate is sin. Sin is death. And remember, hating something doesn’t only mean you say that you hate it, it’s the actual action of hatred, which there is no love in. Search your heart and be of a humble mind so that you don’t hold resentment, bitterness, or hatred toward anybody. Be the example that Christ wants you to be. Just love.

Reflect

Is there someone in your life, or even something about yourself, that you are not seeing with God’s eyes, causing you to hate?



Day 28

Darkness Consumed

*“This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: **God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all .**”*

1 John 1:5 NLT

Darkness does not exist in Him because He is so completely and utterly pure. It is not as simple as saying “there is no darkness in Him.” No. He shines so infinitely bright throughout all time, across all generations, and all of eternity, that darkness just becomes light when He arrives. Darkness in all forms fears our Lord. Darkness simply cannot survive when He is in the room. It’s an impossibility for it to have power, life, or purpose in the midst of His greatness. What does this mean for you and me? It means we get to cast out demons, every form of evil, and sin, all of which are born of darkness.

As the believer, you are able to shine His light into every dark corner (Matthew 5:14-16, 1 Corinthians 6:19). This is the God who pulled us out of darkness. Every spiritual rut you’ve ever been in, every time you’ve been tempted and fled from sin, every time you had self-control, every time you showed the love of Jesus to someone, He was there, shining His light through you. Without Him there would only be darkness in every one of those scenarios. Let His light shine!

Reflect

Are you going to light up the world?



Day 29

No Mercy for Sin

*“My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But **if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father** . He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous.”*

1 John 2:1 NLT

Our goal in life should always be to not sin. And we're not talking about perfection, we're talking about holiness, walking by the power of the Spirit. So if you do sin, not when, Jesus won't back out. Instead He will be right there to push you back onto course, to tell you He loves you, to remind you of who you are, and love you no matter what. This can be confusing at times, because if this is written for us to not sin, then why does there seem to be the possibility that it might happen again? Here's the difference: willful sin is a decision made with full awareness of what you're doing, because you don't have the Spirit guiding and directing your thoughts, emotions, desires, or actions. There's no wrestling with it, no resistance against it, just getting annihilated by it and choosing your way over what you already know is right.

It's not a stumble or a slip up, it's something you stepped into all on your own. A habit that needs to be broken is different. This is the sin you hate, that you want to kill, the one you turn from to pick up your cross with the power that raised Christ from the dead, the one you're actively fighting, the one that hurts you the moment you fall into it. That hurt, that resistance, is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in you, and that your heart is softened, because a hardened heart doesn't fight against its own wants, it befriends them. When temptation comes knocking, you run or you fight to the death. Either way, it should end in the death of your flesh.

Reflect

*If you sin, does it keep you up at night, or **do** you sleep soundly?*



Day 30

He Is

“We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands . He is the Word of life.”

1 John 1:1 NLT

Before creation, time, and nature were created, Jesus was there. Jesus was also flesh and bone, walking, breathing, bleeding, existing before the beginning. If this doesn't prove to you that He is God, then you must study John 1. Think on it, reflect on it, and most importantly, ask God to open your heart and bring you to a place of such humility that you are able to put aside your own opinion. Because at the end of the day, it just comes to a point where you are flat out rejecting that He is God, and that's a choice, not something you don't have enough evidence for. It's your own pride getting in the way. We wouldn't be able to exist in a holy manner and live out a whole life if Jesus was only a man. He is the man with all authority, He is the man with all life, He is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega, and nothing can stand in His way.

So when you begin to walk like Christ, you're not walking like some man who had good morals and taught what was right, you are literally walking in the light of God (1 John 1:7). He came in the flesh to give us a representation of holy and righteous living, not to just exist as a man. Every step you take in your life as a believer under His authority is also under His will, and you get to express the essence of Him. You get to live out a Christlike life because He chose to strip Himself and humble Himself into human form. So have the same humility, strip everything that is not of God, and put on this new flesh, which is Christ's body.

Reflect

Have you stripped off everything that isn't of God, or are you still wearing your old self alongside Christ?



Day 31

Die Daily, Live Fully

*“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. **We know we love God’s children if we love God and obey his commandments .**”*

1 John 5:1-2 NLT

You want to know your true identity? Believe in Jesus. To be a child of God does not only mean that you’re called something that sounds good, something that makes you feel all warm and fuzzy. It’s a calling. You are called a special name and given a special purpose from the One who is above every name. Keep in mind that this new name and new purpose will require the crucifixion and death of your flesh every day. If you want to live out your true identity in Christ, you must die. It doesn’t come only because you simply say “I love Jesus!” No. Every day you have to get out of bed ready to serve, ready to love, and ready to die. Wake up every day with this mindset: I’m ready to face anything that comes my way, because I have the mind of Christ and He gives me strength.

It is not I who live, but Christ in me. His love will be shown in and through you as you continue to desire His heart over your flesh. If you want to walk in the victory that Jesus has destined for anybody who believes in Him, and you want to be free from sin and condemnation, you have to actually believe that He is capable, and that you don’t have any tricks up your sleeve to make your flesh less sinful on your own. There is not even an ounce of good in anyone who does not have Christ in their heart. There is only death and separation for those who don’t.

Reflect

Are you ready to live out your life as you’ve been called to by Christ, or are you just going to keep sinning?



Day 32

The Heart Problem

*“Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son. **All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true** . Those who don’t believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don’t believe what God has testified about his Son.”*

1 John 5:9-10 NLT

We as Bible-believing Christians have hidden in our hearts a special gift from God: a soft heart. This softness of heart grants us the ability and freedom to say no to the evils that try to lie to us, and to say yes to the truth. The testimony of God through His Son will always be so incredibly powerful, compelling, strong, and beautiful. And yet it’s hard for some to believe. God knew that it would be difficult for humans in general to believe such a thing, which is exactly why He left us no excuse. He gave witness after witness, the water, the blood, the Spirit (1 John 5:6-8), so that no one could say they never had a reason to believe. This is why rejecting Christ was never meant to be treated as a small thing or a simple difference of opinion. Scripture says if you don’t believe this testimony, you are actually calling God a liar.

That’s the weight of what’s really going on here. God, who cannot lie, testified about His Son with everything He had, testified as a man so that we could have evidence in human form, and the only thing standing between a man and belief is whether his heart is soft enough to receive it, or hard. There are 10-20 manuscripts to prove that Genghis Khan existed, 10 manuscripts to prove that Julius Caesar existed, 7-10 to prove that Plato existed, and there are over 25,000 manuscripts about Jesus, and some still choose not to believe because they can’t give up their sin. A hard heart doesn’t need more proof, because there’s plenty. It just needs the truth. A hardened heart can be shown every miracle, every testimony, every witness, and still find a reason to walk away. The evidence was never the problem. The heart was.

Reflect

What’s stopping you from believing in the truth that has been written in your DNA?



Day 33

33

*“And Jesus Christ was revealed as God’s Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. **And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony.**”*

1 John 5:6 NLT

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended on Him, revealing that Jesus is the Son of God, and an audible voice was heard from the Father declaring Him as the Son of God (Matthew 3:16-17). What stands out about this passage is that Jesus did not reveal Himself until this very moment, and it was precisely then that His ministry began. Before that, He lived a quiet life, working alongside His earthly father, Joseph. This is worth sitting with in our own lives: when you are baptized into Christ, as Christ was baptized, that is when your true life begins. So the next time you find yourself wondering when God is going to move in your life, or when you will begin to impact others through your ministry, remember that Jesus’s own ministry did not begin until He was thirty years old.

You must be willing to walk in humility, work quietly, and remain fervent before the Lord. From there, He moved from a life of obscurity to becoming the greatest miracle worker to ever live, the greatest healer to ever live, the greatest prophet to ever live, and the greatest man to ever live, one with God, with the Holy Spirit testifying. We are also reminded in this passage that Jesus did not cleanse the world from sin through baptism alone, but through His blood. This illustrates that Jesus suffered more than anyone could have ever suffered, for all of humanity, willingly, so that you could share in that suffering with Him. Nor is it through baptism alone that we are cleansed of sin, but through the crucifixion of our flesh, dying the same death with Him (Galatians 2:20).

Reflect

Are you willing to share in the cost of Christ’s suffering?



Day 34

Love to Death

*“And this is his commandment: We **must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another**, just as he commanded us.”*

1 John 3:23 NLT

The love that has been commanded of us to act out comes from Jesus’s example of perfect, righteous living. This means we have to be willing to die for one another, to lay aside our wants and desires for the benefit of someone, whether they’re your enemy or your family. There shouldn’t be a difference in the way you treat anybody, because Jesus treated everybody according to love. Sacrificial love. And we ought to do the same. How is this love obtainable? You must first believe. A lot of you hearing that might think, “Well, that’s easy, even the demons believe.” Still, it’s not as easy as you think. Demons are aware, but they don’t have belief like the believer does. Belief means that no matter what hits you, or how hard a decision is that you have to make, or what happens to your body, it doesn’t matter compared to the glory that He has waiting for you. Nothing that we are affected by in this life matters in the end, and what matters most is that we act like Christ, like He has commanded us to do, and that we believe He has given us the power to do so.

So when somebody gives you a dirty look, where is your belief? When somebody cuts you off on the road, where is your belief? When a family member says something cutting to you and you cut them off, where is your belief? Is your belief set in the things that you can do to protect yourself, or the things that you can do to benefit yourself, or how you’re going to clap back at that family member because they said something that you didn’t like, or is your belief set in the things of God, holding true to the belief that no matter what happens to you, it has no effect on your identity in Christ? Your identity in Christ means that you are overcoming every form of evil with love, especially when the evil is directed toward you, because that’s when it’s hardest to fight off evil (Romans 12:21). Be His mouthpiece, be the hands and feet of Jesus, and spread His holy name with no shame.

Reflect

Is your identity in Christ bigger than the feelings and emotions that came from Adam and Eve?



Day 35

Father, Forgive Them

“ So don’t be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you .”

1 John 3:13 NLT

Take a look at what happened to Jesus. Not only did the world hate Him, but He was killed by His own people. His own chosen people rejected Him because of their pride. No matter what the Jews were capable of doing to Him physically, they could never hinder the promises of God. In the end, Jesus wins. They thought He would just die and go away, but it turns out He died for them and their sin as well. Everything they did against the will of God, and all the evil they committed, will be for our good in the end. He died for the same people who killed Him. Willingly! And they were, and still are, too blind to see it. It should not surprise us, because it is the same today as it was when they crucified Him.

Anyone who follows Him will be hated too. There is nothing different. So what must we do? Let God have His way. In the end, it is not for us to fight. Their sin will testify against them, and they will be done away with, and all the evil they commit will make their lives a waste. This is why we must always be finding a way to be more like Him, because even in their wickedness, Jesus was still willing to forgive. “Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do’” (Luke 23:34). The One who took all that hatred first was Jesus, and of course those who hate Jesus will hate His children. And as His children, we must remain humble and ready to die for our faith.

Reflect

Does it surprise you when the world hates you for following Christ, or have you come to expect it?



Day 36

Binding Love

“We love each other because he loved us first.”

1 John 4:19 NLT

Our love, which flows from Jesus, binds us together as one family under the authority of Christ. His love in us is supposed to produce a constant outflow of actionable, faithful, pure love, especially for one another as believers. We also know that His love is in us if we have the evidence of love, whether that's for a fellow believer or in how we react to hardships and frustrations. But if there is no evidence of love to be found in you, then God is not living in you, and you are not part of Christ's family. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

You have been “called,” meaning you have the will to either reject the light or walk in freedom, away from sin, shame, and the things of your past. To be part of the royal family of God, pick up the call, answer the door, and lay down your life. He's right there waiting to hold you, give you strength, and clothe you with grace.

Reflect

Is the evidence of Christ's love being shown in an undeniable way, or would somebody who isn't a believer never guess that you are a Christian?



Day 37

Our Atonement, Our Fellowship

*“Those who obey God’s commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. **And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us .”***

1 John 3:24 NLT

The Holy Spirit was given to us as a gift after Christ fulfilled the work on the cross. We can now receive the Holy Spirit and be in direct communication with the Father! The reason we are able to be in communication with the Father is because we are found in Him and He is in us, and the image of His Son is found in everyone who believes that Jesus is God, believes that Jesus is perfect, believes that Jesus lived, and believes they can have freedom in Christ, because His sacrifice was so great that it defeated and cut off the sinful flesh, which would otherwise be impossible to get rid of without Him.

Because He dwells in you, obedience is possible, and it’s possible without sacrifices on an altar or traditions. Jesus came to remove what we were capable of doing (burning animals on an altar) to complete a work that nobody else could ever complete, and then, if that wasn’t enough, He literally gives us Himself as a gift so that we are recognized by His Father. What a great sacrifice Christ made for us, so that we could be clean, washed white as snow, and made righteous.

Reflect

Do you communicate with the Father on a daily basis for strength, purity, and obedience?



Day 38

Shame Is a Prison

*“If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. **But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness .**”*

1 John 1:8-9 NLT

Saying that you have no sin before coming to Christ is like saying the sky is purple. No man can become clean and free from wickedness without reflection, repentance, and confession. You have to hate your flesh, pick up your cross, and forget it even existed, otherwise the work of the cross cannot be brought to its fullness in you. You must submit to Him in order to become free. Never let fear turn you away from confessing your sin, because fear will produce shame, and shame will produce lies, and lies will produce sin, and sin will produce death. As soon as your sin is brought into the light, shame flees, because the spirit of shame has always been terrified of the Holy Spirit, and as soon as you let the Holy Spirit into your heart, shame no longer has a dwelling place, but the Spirit of God does.

Shame was the thing keeping you captive, keeping you a prisoner, running your life, keeping you in the same cycle of sin. Thank the Lord God that He has given you the power to break free. “And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death” (Romans 8:2).

Reflect

Will you let the conviction of God give you freedom, or will you continue to let fear and shame control your life?



Day 39

The Terrifying Truth

“So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth .”

1 John 1:6 NLT

How do you know that you are walking in the will of God, being justified in the sight of God? By living in fellowship with His Son. Your life should look like a life that is fulfilling the will of God, and your life should have so much good substance and be producing life, that it's undeniable you are in the will of God and practicing the truth. The Father should be able to look down and see His Son in you, working within you, making you more like Him. If you say your life is aligned with the will of God and yet you continue to live in sin and darkness, you are lying.

In order for a lie to form, you have to be aware of the truth, and that's what's so scary about this verse, because when a lie is created, it is meant to distort truth that you are already aware of. You are lying to yourself and to the Lord. To live in darkness means you are surrounded by it, it's your home, and it's the only thing you know apart from His love.

Reflect

Are the lies about your circumstances, vices, or sinful behaviors becoming your reality, or is Christ becoming your reality?



Day 40

God & Man

*“This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. **And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life** . He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us.”*

1 John 1:2 NLT

We can see all throughout this chapter that the Word is God, and God is the substance of life itself, He is life. And since no one can actually see God in His fullness (because your mortal body could not handle it), He reveals Himself through His Son, who is God. Jesus took on the form of a bondservant, allowing Himself to look like one of us so that we could see Him physically and proclaim the good news of this perfect man. He displayed the nature of God in the flesh, and then He was crucified so that you could inherit this nature and be free from sin, which was condemned on the cross because He became sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV). And He wasn't just a good guy, no.

Not even only the Son of God, He is eternal life, and all who find their hope in Him will have eternal life. Since the Father was revealed through Christ, as this verse says, then how can we ever deny that Jesus is God? We can't. If Christ is literally life itself, and somehow not God, then how could He possibly share a title that belongs to the Father alone (John 5:26)? And Jesus Christ is the Word, not only is He the Word, He is the Word in flesh (John 1:1), yet again another title that Jesus shares with the Father. No one can share titles with the Father, and Jesus, who is God Himself, also holds these titles and proclaims to be them (John 10:31-33).

Reflect

Do you truly believe Jesus is God, or have you left room for doubt because it's easier?



Day 41

Don't Solo It

*"We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. **And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ** . We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy."*

1 John 1:3-4 NLT

The Holy Spirit is present among believers who are in fellowship, and it's proclamations like the one John makes about Jesus that create this kind of fellowship in the first place. He is actively spreading the good news of Christ, and others want to experience what being in fellowship with Christ is all about. Now, being in fellowship with Christ doesn't mean you are required to hang out with other believers all the time, you need your alone time with Jesus. And your salvation certainly does not hinge on how much you are in fellowship with your Christian brothers and sisters. But one thing we must be careful of is making our relationship with Christ so personal that we only care about ourselves and how we and God are doing, instead of how others are doing too, which is why fellowship with other believers can be so vital in a lot of cases.

If two or three or more are gathered in the name of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is there with them. That presence isn't only reserved for private moments alone, it grows rapidly when believers show up for each other and spur each other on in love and good deeds. If you are distant from community because someone hurt you in the past by not living up to the standard of Christ, be encouraged not to let their failure keep you from sharing in this great joy. Watch what happens when you let Jesus work through other people, and the joy that you all share together in the Holy Spirit. You will receive so many amazing things. You will have the opportunity to pour into others, which is fulfilling enough in and of itself, and others will pour into you. Be a disciple.

Reflect

Is your walk with Christ so private that no one else benefits from it?



Day 42

Atonement for All

“He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.”

1 John 2:2 NLT

This verse right here is a beautiful reminder of where our identity is found, and more so, how our identity is found. It is found in Him and in His sacrifice. We must also keep in mind that this sacrifice is out there for those who do not know Him, those who hate Him, and those who won't even say His name. People like that, Jesus died and paid for their sin. We're talking about a person who is literally sending themselves to hell. Why would Jesus make such a great sacrifice for a person like that? Because we are made in His image, and He wants His creation to be reconciled. This is what real, profound love looks like, and it's still your choice to follow it or not. If salvation was an obligation and not a gift, then it wouldn't be worth dying to your flesh for.

And if it was an obligation, it would look something like: “Accept salvation because you suck and you have to,” instead of: “In spite of you sucking, Jesus wants you to live to the fullest and has given you the ability to live and love like Him, but if you don't want to, that's your choice.” If it was an obligation, it would also just look like a set of rules, ceremonies, and discipline that won't last for eternity. Thank God that is not the case, and that when we accept this gift, it will give us life and life abundant. Follow the call of Jesus. He is waiting with open arms.

Reflect

Knowing Jesus died even for those who reject Him, does that change how you see the people who reject you?



Day 43

Under His Light

“But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin .”

1 John 1:7 NLT

Living in His light means we are in fellowship with each other, which ultimately means we are in fellowship with God, and having fellowship with God is the evidence that we live under His light, always drawing close to His nature because of His great love for us, and we know that we are incomplete without Him. Being in relationship with God was never about being a better person or finding niche ways to improve on yourself, it was always about living like Jesus, the One who came to exemplify perfection and completeness to us, and then He died so we could live it out with the help of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:1). If two or more gather under His light, they become connected in a supernatural way. As they continue to walk in His light, pouring into each other, encouraging one another, and loving one another, sin is washed away, because God is in the midst of that fellowship.

Those who aren't living under His light don't gather in His name. They gather in worldliness instead. They are not capable of living this out, because they are not living under the light of God but under the light of the devil. That is a counterfeit light. It is ultimately just darkness. Walk in His light and in His name as He has called you, and do it with others who have the same mind, and you will have the power to pull each other out of darkness. And this power comes from the blood of Jesus, which cleanses us from all sin.

Reflect

Have you actually experienced the cleansing power of Christ's blood through walking with other believers, or has it stayed theoretical?



Day 44

Reborn & Restored

“If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.”

1 John 1:10 NLT

Claiming that you have never sinned, or that you were guiltless before coming into union with Christ, makes it impossible for you to accept the gift of salvation that God has set up as an invitation for you and me to be freed from sin and death. If you deny this invitation and believe you are pure without it, you are calling God a liar by doing so. His word can have no place in the heart of someone who thinks they are blameless without Christ being the Lord of their life. There is an emptiness in every heart that only the Word can fill. But if you believe your own motives, practices, and beliefs have already filled that space, and that you’ve never sinned, then there is no room left for the Word to enter.

“For I was born a sinner, yes, from the moment my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5 NLT). So when you say, “I’m good on my own and I don’t sin,” what you are suggesting is that salvation is obsolete in comparison to what you believe. Since we are born into sin, what must happen? We must be reborn and restored back to our former glory. And there is a man who showed us how to do it. His name is Jesus. The Son of God.

Reflect

Are you living a lifestyle of being reborn, or staying dead in your sin?



Day 45

All or Nothing

*“Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. **For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions** . These are not from the Father, but are from this world.”*

1 John 2:15-16 NLT

Not only will a love for the world separate you from the Father’s love, but it will also make you incapable of loving like the Father. The love of the world is a counterfeit version of what actual love is. It’s nowhere close to what real love is. The world offers lust and pleasure. Things like porn, hooking up, drinking to get drunk, constantly worrying about your social media presence, always prioritizing yourself and your needs over everyone else, and pride in your belongings, endeavors, and accomplishments. All of these things are selfish and self-centered, and will leave you empty with no purpose. If the goals you are setting don’t match the standard that God has set, then you have already failed. You cannot have one foot in serving God on Sunday and one foot out serving the world six days a week, because in reality you’re not even serving Him once a week, your life is evidently prioritizing the world.

If you can’t serve Him with all of your heart, all of your mind, and all of your strength, like you are commanded to, then you must die to your flesh. And yes, it is possible, because nothing can overcome the love of God. The way you live out your faith has to look like the standard that Christ set, because it is what has been commanded of us, and there is no middle ground and no compromises. If you are truly living out your walk with Christ faithfully, then you will not desire the things that used to drag you down. What used to make you stumble should now gross you out, because of the overwhelming love that has filled the void in your heart.

Reflect

Are you only going to church to feel better about yourself so you can say, “I serve God,” or are you actually living it out?



Day 46

Silence the Accuser

*“Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, **God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything** .”*

1 John 3:19-20 NLT

Genuine faith runs on truth, and a life grounded in truth is wholly committed and connected to His divine nature, in constant, unwavering pursuit of His likeness. That doesn't mean you are perfect. What it means is that your life is oriented toward Him, in such a way that even when you stumble, your direction is still set on becoming like Him, not drifting further away. If your life looks like truth in action, then you will have confidence when you are in His presence. This assurance is only made possible by His Son.

Living a life grounded in truth is not easy, because it means you must die to yourself every day, since to be like Christ is to die the same death. So don't let false guilt or condemnation about who you used to be, or some mistake you made along the way, hinder the confidence you have in this union with God, because ultimately, no matter what you feel, He knows you inside and out. Since Christ's character is what should be shining through you, what you feel about yourself doesn't matter, because your flesh is dead.

Reflect

Are you letting guilt drag you down and kill your potential to live like Christ, or are you canceling out the noise and just focusing on Him?



Day 47

Christ Conscience

*“Dear friends, if we don’t feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. **And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him .**”*

1 John 3:21-22 NLT

Bold confidence flows from a person who constantly draws closer to Jesus, and is always experiencing new feats of faith and righteousness. When you come into God’s presence in this manner, guilt is not even part of the equation, because His life is your life, and the sinful past is cut off, dead, done away with. Guilt is the sign of foggy judgment of yourself, placed there by yourself. Christ died for you to walk in a redeemed light, not a light of shame and condemnation, which only drags you back down into sin.

When your life is structured this way, then what you ask of God will be given to you, because your life is in accordance with His will and His nature. So whatever you are asking flows from a heart submitted to God, not a heart that plays by the rules of the world. Your desires are now set on the future of the kingdom, so when you ask for things, they will be granted to you, because they will benefit the body of Christ instead of your flesh.

Reflect

Are you living with a Christ conscience, or a guilty conscience?



Day 48

Hatred Kills

*“If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. **Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart** . And you know that murderers don’t have eternal life within them.”*

1 John 3:14-15 NLT

Love for another believer is the evidence that you have crossed the great chasm. Once you were lost, and you did not have the love of God in you, because you were not part of the family of God. But now you are, and that is proven by His love shining in and through you. What is this great love that you get to share with brothers and sisters? It is gathering together in the name of Jesus to praise His name, to bring others who are lost into His presence, to spur each other on day by day while drawing closer day by day, and to lay your life down for your fellow believer. This is what the love of God looks like. Having no love is already bad enough if you call yourself a believer, because you are called to a higher standard. Having a form of hatred mixed in is an even worse place to be.

Hatred for another person who you’re supposed to call brother or sister will completely devoid your soul of love, because if you can’t love somebody who was created in the image of God, that begs the question: do you really love God? The way that you love determines how strong your relationship is with Him, which is why this question has to be raised: do you really love Him? Hatred for another brother or sister doesn’t only mean you say you hate that person, it’s how you treat them. Do you treat them with selfless love, like you are commanded to, or do you treat them unkindly and selfishly? Do you hold resentment for something they did? Do you completely steamroll this other person? Do you actually know how to love like Christ?

Reflect

If somebody looked at your life and the way you show love, would they see a strong, Spirit-filled love, a lukewarm love, or just straight-up hatred?



Day 49

He Who Owns Victory

“For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith .”

1 John 5:4 NLT

If you are a child of God, evil already lost. You are no longer part of this world. You belong to God now, and that changes everything. This isn't about how mature you are in your faith, it's not a rank you climb. Being His child means the enemy has already been crushed under your feet. The moment you reject the world and grab hold of Christ, the war is over and you won. You are standing in relationship with the One who owns victory itself, who has never lost, who never will. Heaven erupts when one soul comes to Christ. And somewhere, the devil is losing his mind, because he just lost another one.

No matter how young you are in the faith, do not shrink back. You already won (Romans 8:37). Faith is the evidence of victory. Jesus is the reason for your victory, not how much you've progressed in your faith. Yes, you will continue to become more victorious in your walk with Christ, but the ultimate victory is escaping the enemy's grasp at the very start. This freedom is found in relationship with Him. As soon as you give your life to Him, and as you continue to get to know Him more and cut your flesh right off the bone, you will live in victory. This is real faith.

Reflect

Are you trying to climb the ladder to heaven, or are you letting Jesus take you to the top?



Day 50

Kingdom of Heaven

*“And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and **there is no sin in him** .”*

1 John 3:5 NLT

Jesus was perfect in every single way, and He was the only one who could remove sin, because He could not be condemned by it, He could not be blamed by it, and He could never be found guilty of it. Jesus also faced real challenges, temptations, pressure from everyone who hated Him, and opportunities to fail, but He always displayed victory. Yet He became sin on our behalf as a willful choice, because of His great love for us, a love so great that He died for us, setting the standard of what true love is all about. This love has been given to us as a way to show others who Christ is. He lives in you. We have to remember that Jesus did not come just as a better way to atone for our sins so we could have an easier road into heaven.

No. The whole purpose of His coming was to show us how to live like Him, giving up ourselves to Him as an offering so that our lives can be reconciled and restored, so that He becomes our life, the One steering the ship, and ultimately so we could have victory over sin, and sin could no longer have victory over us. As Christ followers, we must remember not to get too wrapped up in the things to come after we die. Our life on earth is meant to be lived with the intention of bringing the glory of heaven down to earth, so that other people can see the light of God shine in and through you, and know there is something different about you, because you serve the one true living God, Jesus Christ.

Reflect

If someone watched your life closely, would they see heaven's glory in you because you serve Jesus?



Day 51

Just as He Is

*“Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, **for we will see him as he really is**. And all who have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure.”*

1 John 3:2-3 NLT

The thing that keeps us going in our faith is His amazing and compelling nature. He also gives us a name that we do not know yet, but one day, when we get to heaven, He will reveal it to us (Revelation 2:17). But now, as we’re living on earth, we have a secure identity in Him as we eagerly expect what is to come. For this very reason we keep ourselves pure, because we want to be a bride that is prepared, holy, and beautiful. The world and all the evil in it are looking for an easy way out, something instantly gratifying, constantly seeking to satisfy themselves, only to find they’ll need it again and again, because the world is devoid of the love of God. Having eager expectation, and waiting patiently upon the Lord, knowing that He has taken care of you despite what the world believes is right, is what drives us to become pure, just as He is pure.

Notice this passage doesn’t say you need to white-knuckle your faith, struggle your way through life, and dread living on earth. No. Be excited. Be joyful. Be thankful. Be patient about the things of the Lord and what He wants to do in your life, and do not lose sight of Him. Seeing Christ for who He is, once we are face-to-face with Him in heaven, will transform us into His likeness in a single instant. There is no more cutting off of your flesh, taking the advice of a pastor, or hearing an inspiring sermon, because you are literally looking at the essence of glory and perfection itself, and that is what you become as you gaze upon the Holy One. What once was something you could not see, yet had faith in, is now your entire existence.

Reflect

Does your purity reflect how faithful you are willing to be unto God, so that others can see what purity looks like?



Day 52

Die So Love Can Live

*“This is real love—not that we loved God, but that **he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins** .”*

1 John 4:10 NLT

The washing away of our sin by His act of great love is what makes it possible for us to live free from bondage and love Him like we ought to. Real love was shown through Christ in order for us to have a clear understanding of what life in God is supposed to look like. This real love, which has been shown to us, is the hope and belief of every person who knows Christ as their Lord. We believe in this hope because of the great work that the Lord does in our lives, and not only our lives, but also in the lives of others who love Jesus. Now, since He has done this for us, we can embody the love that was shown on the cross.

The road to salvation that has been built was paid for through His blood. Because He loved us first, our lives should reflect His love in every area once we join the family of God. Let the love that He loved you with first be shown through you to everybody that you meet. Let nobody doubt that you are a child of God. It's crazy to think that the love we get to live out isn't something we obtain through rough and tough work, rather it's a gift given to you, so you no longer have to walk in darkness with hope in a futile love. His love endures forever.

Reflect

Are you for real about showing His love, or is it not something you actually want to express?



Day 53

Anti Antichrist

*“But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here. But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because **the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world** .”*

1 John 4:3-4 NLT

Anybody who resists that Jesus is from God and is God is denying Him and calling Him a liar, and we know God cannot lie. This same person might even admit that He was real, but they would never actually commit their lives to Him, because that requires sacrifice, and it would require them to fill the godless void in their heart. It's a sad thing that a lot of people have made up their minds about who Christ is, and their hearts are forever hardened. This is the spirit of the Antichrist. It is here, and it is alive and active, dividing our nation, our world, and our churches. Don't let it deceive you. Despite this, we are offered freedom in Christ, and we will not be harmed by this evil spirit, rather we will be able to war against it.

And this is a war that has already been won. Jesus did it on the cross. He willingly gave His life for the people who wanted Him dead, so think about the believer who calls Him Lord and actually leads a righteous life. The Antichrist can't grab you, can't touch you, can't afflict you. You belong to Christ. You are His child, His loved one. Believe that this is who you are. Believe that this is where your hope lies. Believe that the freedom you get to wake up in every day is yours. He gave you victory over evil. You are already walking in His freedom. And nobody, not even the greatest evil, can take away what Christ has already accomplished.

Reflect

Do you actually believe the war is already won, or are you still living like you have to fight for victory?



Day 54

Let Love Prove It

*“But anyone who does not love does not know God, **for God is love** .”*

1 John 4:8 NLT

To have true love in your heart is to know the Father's character. When God's love is alive in your heart, it proves just how much you know Him, how much you want to get to know the Lord, and of course how you love others. To have no love in your heart means that you do not know Him, because God's love proves who God is to you through knowledge that overflows because of the love He put in your heart. Unfortunately, for some, no matter how much they know about God, their actions don't always align with what they know. Whereas someone who maybe doesn't know Bible verses by heart can actually prove themselves to be more righteous than someone who values knowledge over virtue. Loving God, and knowing God and Scripture, go hand in hand. Knowledge is the proof of love, and love should also prove how much you know the Father and how much you want to know about Him.

Both love and knowledge should be able to testify about the other. Knowledge should never be without love, because that would only mean you understand the Scriptures but don't actually apply them, or in another case, you're still stuck in sin. Love, on the other hand, will naturally produce knowledge that is beneficial for you, because you have first obtained love. And you cannot merely have love with no knowledge, because knowledge is the evidence of love. You can say, “I love God,” but do you know God? Does your knowledge about God prove how much you love Him, or does it make you prideful because you “know so much”? Love and knowledge must both be equally alive and present in the heart of the believer.

Reflect

Have you let your knowledge about God cause you to perceive yourself as better than others because you know so much, or have you let love be the driving factor within the knowledge He has granted you?



Day 55

Burn the Hate

*“If anyone claims, ‘I am living in the light,’ but hates a fellow believer, **that person is still living in darkness** .”*

1 John 2:9 NLT

How can you claim to live in His light if you have hate in your heart? You are stuck in a place where you have come into the family of God, but you don't really see it as part of who you are, and for whatever reason, there's resentment, unforgiveness, or a grudge you cannot shake with another believer. If you cannot have fellowship under the union of Christ with a fellow believer, like Christ wills, because you hate them, then you are living in absolute darkness. Whatever they have done to you, whether they ignored you, said something mean, or simply annoyed you, it must be overcome with love. Remember, Christ died for people who hate Him. Keep in mind that Christ is the standard, and what He did on the cross is expected of us as believers, especially if we claim to know Him. Living out Christ's standard will prove, furthermore, who we belong to.

He has given you the strength to present this love, completely and unconditionally. Lay your desires down. Lay your needs down. Lay your inconveniences down. Lay your life down. All for the glory of Christ. And if you claim to be in union with Christ, but hate is still part of who you are and it consumes your identity, then you are worse off than an unbeliever who has hate. On top of that, you are distorting the image of God that you are supposed to bear. How can you hate what God has created? If you hate a fellow believer, this means you hate the fellowship that God has so clearly created for believers who say they love and know Him. So let the name above all names destroy this hatred you hold so near and dear when two or more gather in His name. Share in this great love, and kill the hate.

Reflect

Are you letting hatred keep you in the darkness, or are you letting His love light up every dark corner?



Day 56

Break Free, Remain Free

“Dear children, don’t let anyone deceive you about this: When people do what is right, it shows that they are righteous, even as Christ is righteous .”

1 John 3:7 NLT

Righteousness is the evidence of a life lived in the light of Christ’s righteousness. It’s not what you do that makes you righteous in the sight of God, it’s because of who Jesus is and because He lives inside of you. His righteousness is put on display for the blind to witness, and even other Christians. Watch out for modern-day heresies and those who tell you that righteousness isn’t possible for you, or that God is only a mere addition onto your depraved self. No. He is your life, and you belong to Him (Colossians 3:3-4). It is Christ’s righteousness that has been given to everyone who accepts, believes, and obeys Him. He has given you the strength to break free and remain free. Let no one tell you otherwise. You are His, and He holds you securely.

To be righteous even as Christ is righteous is an insane standard that no one could ever live up to on their own. This becomes true only if you are not continually walking in the Spirit. If your flesh and sin do not gross you out, because you are walking by His Spirit, then of course it becomes inevitable for you to fall back into sin. Nobody could truly ever live up to this standard before Jesus came to exemplify it. The Holy Spirit testified of everything that Christ did, and the Holy Spirit was given to everyone who believes, as a gift. A gift of power. The Spirit gives us this power to live a life centered around Christ. Christ is not merely an add-on, He is life itself, and you are hidden in it.

Reflect

Have you believed the lie that even as you are in Christ you are still unrighteous?



Day 57

Abundant Sacrifice

*“If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion— **how can God’s love be in that person?** ”*

1 John 3:17 NLT

Your natural instinct as a believer, being full of His love, should always be to respond with compassion to someone in genuine need. If your first instinct isn’t compassion, knowing in your heart that you are capable of providing help but you choose not to, then it might be time for a heart check. Take a look at the widow’s offering in Mark 12. This woman’s offering, at first glance, seems pretty much meaningless, she gave only two mites. But this was all she had, yet she gave it all. When you give, don’t look at it as something merely material, even though that’s what it may look like on the surface. Giving is a sacrificial act through what you give materially, because you should be giving out of gratefulness for what God has already given you. Material possessions and money are worthless and garbage when compared to the glory of Christ (Philippians 3:8). This is why we shouldn’t think twice when someone is in need, it doesn’t belong to you in the first place.

He gave you everything you have. This proves that giving with the intention of making an actual impact on somebody, regardless of how it affects you financially, blesses far more than just giving the minimum amount of what you are capable of giving. And this is the point, it’s not about you and what you’re capable of giving or what makes financial sense to you. What matters most is the effect it has on the kingdom of God. If you give all that you have, how can you expect that He won’t bless you in that effort? If your heart wants to give to someone, and it comes from a place of compassion and a genuine desire to care for that person, it glorifies God. Remember, He gave His life so that we could have life abundantly. Share this abundance that He gifted to you through His Son, Jesus Christ, whether that’s your money, your time, or your expertise, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflect

Are you worried that you’ll be left hanging on the edge of a cliff if you give sacrificially, or do you trust that if you share His abundance, it will actually fulfill you?



Day 58

Father of Victory

*“But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. **Those who have been born into God’s family do not make a practice of sinning, because God’s life is in them .** So they can’t keep on sinning, because they are children of God.”*

1 John 3:8-9 NLT

Jesus did not come only so we could have an easier way to obtain forgiveness. He came to destroy every work that Satan has planned since the beginning. When Satan was cast to the earth, sin was created. When Satan fell, sin was born. Satan is the father of sin. But even before the evil plans of Satan began, there was Jesus. The father of victory. He is God in the flesh, prepared for the ultimate battle, taking on the full weight of our sin, not as a punishment but as a willful act of love, for all humanity, past, present, and future. Satan created the bane of every human’s existence, the very thing that will send most of humanity to hell, but Jesus still had the victory despite this. The victory is that He loved us so much that He gave His life for everyone, no matter who you are. It created a road to heaven, a very narrow path, but obtainable through the power of the Holy Spirit. This victory is free for anyone who wants to do away with the works of the devil. We are free to walk in pursuit of God and, by faith, work toward becoming like Christ. Instead of sin being your intention, you now walk freely in the power of Christ, and you can’t keep on sinning, because you are part of the family of God (Romans 8:2), and His light dwells in you, darkness is not found where the light shines.

Satan will now be crushed under your feet (Romans 16:20). He isn’t anything to be afraid of, he is a coward inside and out, and he once had you chained, but now you are full of the Holy Spirit. Since God dwells in you, as you continue to walk by the power of His Spirit, seeing everything with His eyes, letting Him transform your thoughts, and changing your habits, suddenly you will find that God has so much for you that sin isn’t even a thought. It’s a thing of the dead. Sin’s power, where is it? Gone. You are in Christ, so walk like Him, and don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t, because He gave you the power to do so. If you say otherwise, then you lack faith, you lack the ability to understand the point of the cross. It was never just about forgiveness, it was always about sin being destroyed by the Father of victory.

Reflect

Are you claiming that you follow Christ, yet you still make a practice of sinning, or do you truly believe that your old habits and desires can actually disappear?



Day 59

The Two Laws

*“Everyone who sins is breaking God’s law, **for all sin is contrary to the law of God** .”*

1 John 3:4 NLT

Sin and the breaking of God’s law is not only addressed to unbelievers, but also to believers who know better. Jesus came to destroy this, so why keep living under the law of sin (Romans 8:2)? God has a law, and it is perfect, forever flowing with purpose and calling, whereas the law of sin is life lived with no calling and no purpose. He has called you out of the darkness, not only because darkness is contrary to the light, but because of His deep love for you, not just because you aren’t listening to Him. He’s not a God ruling with a stick, pointing out every wrong. But He does want you to see that if there is any darkness in your life, it needs to be expunged, so you can live fully, because this is what Jesus died for.

If you look at it this way, because Christ has opened your eyes through faith, then your soul will surely be saved. The practice of sin is especially against the law of God, because it is a willful, wicked, premeditated action against the will of God. What makes it so wicked is that every time someone sins, the image of God becomes distorted more and more. Bitterness, anger, unforgiveness, and being unloving all go against the image of God. This is what Jesus came for, to restore the image, to restore freedom, and restore real love. We needed a perfect human example of what godliness was all about. Jesus has given it to us, so live it out. Forgive others. Drop the grudge. Have patience. Be loving.

Reflect

If someone who didn’t know Christ were to look at your life, would they see you bearing the image of God, or would you be just another somebody to them?



Day 60

Jesus, the Fire

*“So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. **Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God.**”*

1 John 3:10 NLT

When you live set apart and holy, the veil is lifted, and you can discern the evils of this world. Since you are now a child of God, evil is apparent when you see it. This is one of the greatest gifts given to believers, the ability to see evil for what it is, before it ever gets a foothold in what you watch, what you buy, or what you practice in secret. If you claim to be God’s child and you recognize any evil habits in your own life, cut them off. Ask for His grace, which gives you the power to break free, because that is what He wants for you. When our lives are for Him and only Him, the evil things that were once part of you are no longer. We are set apart and above reproach when the Son is seen within the believer. The things of the devil should disgust you, and the knowledge of God and closeness to Him will reveal to you the dirtiness of the world. But this doesn’t mean you should live in a state of judgment, expecting others to live like you, because they wander blindly.

You must be a shining example of truth to the world if you claim that Jesus lives in you and He is your whole life. Lead by example, not by participating in the things that are evil, but by pursuing holiness and chasing the original design of creation, to live like you are actually made in His image. Never condone evil if it is in your face, rather confront it with the intention of building up and not tearing down. Let the fiery flame of holy passion burn away evil. When you see evil, let God steer the ship. Walk in love like Jesus would, and when you see evil, take away its oxygen. Evil does not thrive in the all-consuming fire who is Jesus Christ. The light of God should shine so brightly through you that darkness has no chance of surviving. The darkness cannot exist in the light. Let the light of God shine.

Reflect

Are you numb to the evil in the world because you think you can’t do anything about it, that it’s just not possible for you to have an effect because there is so much evil?



Day 61

Hated for Righteousness

*“This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. **We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother** . And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous.”*

1 John 3:11-12 NLT

This is not only a call to be righteous, but to be loving. It’s also a reminder that persecution is a real thing. You will be persecuted in many ways when you live out a Christian lifestyle. Cain, who murdered Abel, had no love in him because he belonged to Satan. He did what was evil, which made him an enemy of God. He was full of demonic jealousy. In a world full of Cains, be Abel. In a world full of devils, be like Jesus, and be watchful of Cains. The reason the world wants to persecute Christians, and all forms of objective good, is because the world does not recognize what true good, love, and true righteousness actually are. Evildoers are enemies of God unless brought to full repentance.

Since the love of God is contrary to what the world thinks is good, the world is going to persecute what it can’t recognize. The Cains of the world are jealous, and at the root of this jealousy, they deeply lack the belief that they can be righteous like we are called to be. This is why they persecute, driven by demons who sit in their own shame. Those who follow God do what is actually good, driven by the righteousness of God. Do not be surprised when evil tries to shoot you down. Certainly don’t become offended by it. Jesus tells us this will happen. The devil has been sinning since the beginning, and there is nothing new under the sun.

Reflect

Is there jealousy in your own heart toward someone else’s righteousness?



Day 62

Discernment Doesn't Mean Judgment

*“Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. **This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God .**”*

1 John 4:1-2 NLT

In a world where there are endless podcasts, endless books, and endless theological opinions on social media, it's unfortunate that we can be tricked into thinking that some people do speak by the Spirit when really they don't. This is not to say that you must suspect that everybody is a wolf in sheep's clothing, but that you should take into consideration that not everybody speaks from the Spirit. Often it comes from emotional circumstances and experiences, people claiming they had conversations with God and such. So how do we test people who claim to speak with spiritual knowledge but don't? We must heavily rely on the Spirit that God has given us to recognize what is true and what is not. When the Lord is working in your heart in this way, and He has lifted the veil, it will be almost effortless to notice those who speak on behalf of themselves or the devil, and those who speak on behalf of the Spirit. Those who speak on behalf of the Spirit will never deny that Jesus is Lord, and they know of Jesus's testimony as if it is their own.

As God continues to reveal His character to you, and as you get to know Him more, be careful with this discernment that God is giving you. Don't use it as an excuse to call out every single tiny problem that doesn't determine somebody's eternity or that doesn't match your theology exactly. Rather, if a friend or pastor says something you disagree with, something that doesn't determine your salvation, don't let it change how you see them. If you both believe that Christ is Lord, then the smaller theological differences don't matter. The enemy wants to make you feel like you're doing God a service by defending your theological stance, when in reality you're just causing the division that Satan wants. If you let somebody seeing theology differently than you affect your fellowship with them, then you've already lost, and you don't even know it.

Reflect

Are you testing what you hear while also taking what you can from a message or a word from a friend, or are you abusing the discernment God has given you and judging every opinion?



Day 63

Love Completes Everything

“Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other .”

1 John 4:11 NLT

Not only are we commanded to love one another because His love is so great and amazing for us, but because His love for you and for me is the pure motivation to love others, and it's always perfect and personal. It's not only a command that we must fall in line with, it's also an opportunity to know the Creator by walking in love. We continue to learn more about God as we are compelled to live like Him. Submit to this love that calls you to itself every day, with open arms ready to sanctify, laying down your own inconveniences, fleshly urges, and expunging every little bit of sin.

If you want this love to motivate you to be like Him, then you must be close to Him every single day, and you must have unwavering desire, hope, and strength. God sent His only Son so that we could have a perfect representation of Christian living. God gave up His Son, the sin of the world was placed upon His shoulders, and He died a criminal's death so that you and I could have a complete life. That is the love that we are commanded to live out in our everyday lives. Jesus is the very reason you're able to live differently, holy.

Reflect

Are you running to the love that calls you to itself with open arms, or are you keeping it at arm's length?



Day 64

Be Apart From the Problem

*“Those people belong to this world, so they speak from the world’s viewpoint, and the world listens to them. But we belong to God, and those who know God listen to us. If they do not belong to God, they do not listen to us. **That is how we know if someone has the Spirit of truth or the spirit of deception.**”*

1 John 4:5-6 NLT

“Those people” mentioned are pastors, mentors, or so-called evangelists who deliver false messages to people. We are told that the world listens to them because their messages are sugarcoated and propagated in certain ways to lead astray certain groups of people, even some grounded believers. But thank God we have an assurance so great, and a discerning factor that God has built into us, so that if we belong to Him, we have the ability to counter these types of false teachings and even help others who have been deceived. When we go to help people who have been deceived or led astray, and if they listen, remain humble, and repent, then they truly belong to God, and somewhere along the way they were simply deceived. God can use you, He can use anybody, as a tool of conviction to bring back His beloved children. He is so loving, He will break down every wall, leave the ninety-nine to save the one. As a believer, if you are filled with His love, you will want to chase down the people who listen to “those people.” Your tendency toward those who are lost and deceived should always be to first plant a seed and wait to see growth before you even think of condemnation.

You will always have people who are not willing to listen and have really outright rejected the truth of the gospel for something that sounds better, fits their lifestyle more conveniently, or plain and simply, they have been deceived. But this is no excuse not to present the gospel to a deceived world. We have to be so careful as believers, and remember that condemning people like this feels right at first, it feels comfortable, like justice is being served. Comfort, especially emotional comfort, feels logical to the flesh, but being Christlike is rarely logical to the flesh. And this is how you know who “those people” belong to: if they reject the truth while claiming to know it, the truth was never really in them to begin with.

Reflect

When someone wanders, is your first instinct to condemn or to pursue?



Day 65

The Glory He Restored

“And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.”

1 John 4:13-14 NLT

The way we know we are in God, and that He is in us, is because the Holy Spirit confirms it by being in control of our lives, persuading our decisions, urging us to pray, interceding for us in prayer, and fighting the spiritual battles that rage against us. If you see someone, or see it in yourself, living in a state of gratitude, patience, kindness, faithfulness, and holiness, this is how you know who you belong to, or who somebody else belongs to. You know people by their fruit. In other words, you know whether or not the Holy Spirit is alive and active within somebody if God has given you the ability to discern that. Jesus was seen by all the disciples who were close to Him, and because Jesus was seen and they followed Him, they believed in His power, not only because He did physical miracles that were documented, but because of who He was.

Jesus was the perfect person, God in the flesh, who came to restore the glory that had been destroyed by Adam and Eve because of their sin. Jesus is no longer here in physical form, He has now made His residence in you, and He sits at the right hand of the Father. Now that He dwells in you, others can testify and see Christ in you. They can see the healing power in you, the resurrection power, because the same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in you.

Reflect

Is your life worth living because you're living it for Christ, or is it worth living because you're living it for yourself?



Day 66

Assurance & Identity

*“And we can be sure that we know him **if we obey his commandments** .”*

1 John 2:3 NLT

Having assurance that you know God and belong to Him comes from a life lived following Him and obeying His word. So if you ever question whether you are saved, or think that maybe you aren't doing good enough, keep in mind that true assurance is found in the work of Christ, and that He has robbed the grave you once lived in. Ask yourself a genuine question: does my life reflect Christlikeness? If you are humble enough to even ask yourself this question, it shows that you care, that you are closer than you think, and that you really do belong to Him. The evil one wants you to believe that you are still the old, yucky you, but you belong to Christ if you have chosen to believe in Him.

The enemy's whole purpose is to destroy the reality of Christ in your life. Sin, which was born through Satan, pulls you away from the way God intended you to be. That is the nature of sin, and it has dominion over the earth. You are born into an earth full of sin, so you must be reborn. And as long as you belong to the earth, you belong to the evil one, and sin's byproduct is death. Sin will always try to take out your identity and damn you, but Christ has restored it. He is the Victor. We are made to bear the image of God, defeat death through the power of Christ, and live in freedom. Have assurance. Remain humble. Stay obedient.

Reflect

Do you rely on the assurance of Christ, or do you let the enemy pull you away from your true identity?



Day 67

Hate in Disguise

*“But anyone who hates a fellow believer is still living and walking in darkness. **Such a person does not know the way to go, having been blinded by the darkness .”***

1 John 2:11 NLT

The enemy's ultimate tool of division among believers is hate. The tool of hate is used among believers in stupid things, like a difference in theology that you think determines someone's salvation, or maybe it's something deeper, like unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is fueled by hate. This is another tool of deception that the enemy uses: we think our hate, that we disguise as a dislike, is justified toward another member of the family of God. Sometimes this hate is made right in our heads by saying something like, “Well, they're not a real believer anyway.” How can you be so sure? How can you be so sure that you aren't the fake believer? He knows the heart better than we ever will. So don't let your feelings rule your life and make you hateful toward God's children. We can have our thoughts, our rebukes, our opinions, but don't esteem yourself in a way that makes your judgment of another believer turn into hate.

Some believers are more divided in their hearts than they could ever realize, because they have allowed the darkness to blind them. Do not be one of them. Do not be deceived by feelings and hurts and emotions that Adam and Eve gave you. So what is the opposite of seeing someone with love? Hate, whether you like it or not. What is the opposite of seeing someone with the eyes of Christ? It is seeing them through the flesh. The only thing the flesh was ever good for is death. So kill it every day. We live in a world where it's so easy to hate, so our guards must be so strong, so fortified, always pouring out love before wrath.

Reflect

Have you let mere human mistakes distort how you see other believers, or are you looking through the lens that Jesus Christ has designed for His people?



Day 68

Love Means Obedience

*“If someone claims, ‘I know God,’ but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, **that person is a liar and is not living in the truth** .”*

1 John 2:4 NLT

We know that having knowledge of God doesn’t always mean that you really know Him. If someone claims to know Him but doesn’t obey, they lie. To obey means you truly know Him, not that you just have memorized knowledge of Him. So what does true knowledge look like? It starts with true love. We have to keep in mind that there’s a difference when we look at knowledge in a believer. Does this knowledge come from a place of wanting to know Him so that you can live like Him, or do you just learn about God so you can check a box and feel better about your life? If you really want to pursue knowledge of God because you want to pursue Him, then the more you learn about Him, the more you will want to obey Him. To live in the truth is to know the truth.

We as believers are supposed to embody this truth, not only because we are commanded to, but because we should adapt to it as a natural process of growth. We adapt into His obedience. Obedience should be the natural inclination of every believer, but some teach that it’s “too hard anyway,” or “it’s just not possible,” when really the truth is God sent His own Son to die a death so brutal and impactful, so that you could live in a place of obedience instead of rules and base knowledge about God. Jesus bridged the gap of mere rule following, defeated death, and established freedom. It all starts with a love for God, which produces desire, which produces real obedience. Not obligation.

Reflect

Does your knowledge of God reflect the byproduct of obedience, or is it just mere knowledge of who God is?



Day 69

The Eternal Promise

“And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us .”

1 John 2:25 NLT

We are so blessed to be surrounded by the fellowship of God in a world that is so dark. It is the promise of promises. Nothing can hinder it, nothing can stand in its way, and it will always prevail. God cannot break promises, God cannot lie, and God can do no wrong. This is why His promises are so good in a world that is so depraved. His promises really stand out in a world that can also make promises, but the difference is His promises are eternal, unconditional, and perfect. The promises of the world are only temporary, and they fade away once you die.

The only thing the world ever really promised you was death and eternal separation from God. A world run by Satan is a world run by sin and death. That is why we must be set apart from it. Holy. This promise of eternal life is something that cannot be taken from you if you choose to live by His Spirit daily. Satan has lost, and he is going to try to bring down as many people as he possibly can. Be an example to others, and show them the promises of God, so that they don't have to go down to the pit.

Reflect

Do the world's fading promises still tempt you, even though you know how they end?



Day 70

God So Loved

*“I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray. But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don’t need anyone to teach you what is true. **For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie** . So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.”*

1 John 2:26-27 NLT

The Word has been written to us, and we have gained the Holy Spirit as a gift through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, to see the world that surrounds us, so that we are not led astray, and so that nobody can deceive us. What is contrary to God’s Word will stick out like a sore thumb when you ask for His eyes. The glory of the Holy Spirit, which lives in you, gives you the understanding you need in a world so far from God. As Christ followers, we must continue to draw close to Christ in order to see the truth. If this is not an active effort in your life, lies from the devil are going to pull the rug out from under you. Praise God that the Holy Spirit teaches only what is true. There is no fault, there are no lies, there is no imperfection, because the Holy Spirit gives you the perfect knowledge of the gospel, so that you are able to remain in perfect unity with Christ. Those who are thirsty will want to be brought into this fellowship, so share it. Don’t just use the Holy Spirit as a shield.

This way of life will either attract the world or be rejected by it, but either way, you can’t lose preaching the gospel. Christ has won. The reason we behave this way is because of the Holy Spirit, which was given to us through Christ. Since we have real, true knowledge that comes from the Holy Spirit, we will not be led astray by false teaching. This truth that the Holy Spirit has planted in our hearts will bring us purpose. A purpose to lead our family, to lead our friends, and to lead others we don’t know, people we otherwise wouldn’t have met, unless the Holy Spirit put them in our life for a reason. True purpose is found in Christ, and the world must know. God loved the world so much, despite all of its evil, He sent His only Son so that the world could actually become set apart. God wants to look down on you and see His Son Jesus dwelling in you and living out His purpose. This is the will of God, that every man should come to Him, because God so loved the world.

Reflect

Are you taking for granted what the Holy Spirit provides and only using it for yourself, or are you showing others that it’s possible for them too?



Day 71

Faith Alone

*“I am writing to you who are God’s children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus. **I am writing to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning** . I am writing to you who are young in the faith because you have won your battle with the evil one.”*

1 John 2:12-13 NLT

John is making it abundantly clear in this passage that no matter where you are in your walk, just the fact that you have chosen Christ means you have won your battle with the evil one. Victory is possible for somebody who is literal seconds from death. Whether someone is on their deathbed or has just been hit by a car, the moment before they die, if they can humble their hearts, even though they didn’t live a life for Christ, He will still accept them. Victory is not reserved only for the mature, because He paid the highest price. But it has to be genuine, not just a prayer out of fear. This is why works alone can’t save you. Works are merely a shadow of the victory Christ brought when He defeated death. The mature in the faith have to be careful not to become comfortable with where they are, and just take a back seat and think they’ve advanced enough.

God is eternal, and it is impossible to fully comprehend His glory. We are eternal beings inside of flesh and time. This is a wonderful blessing, because it shows that He is worth living for and knowing about. He doesn’t have a limited number of things to learn about Him, because the things of God are infinite and amazing. The deeper you dive, the more your love grows for Him, and the more your mind becomes filled with the things of heaven. So just because somebody on their deathbed can have the same reward as someone mature in the faith does not give license to the mature in the faith to just sit back and relax. It should spur them on even more to learn about God’s love, because how amazing is it that God will accept somebody who is moments from death? Pursue Him with all your heart. Don’t get comfortable. Keep the flames of holy passion burning.

Reflect

Does knowing salvation isn’t earned make you complacent, or does it spur you to pursue Him more?



Day 72

Evil Abolished

*“Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come. **These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us** . When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.”*

1 John 2:18-19 NLT

Since Christ came, the last hour began, because He is coming again. Everything since the resurrection has been the last hour. This is why we must remain watchful and on guard, as though He could return at any moment. The term “antichrist” is not some modern label describing a figure destined to rebuild the third temple. It is a New Testament reality that began the moment Jesus rose from the grave. From that point on, antichrists emerged to distort the truth of who Jesus is, to lie about Him, to deceive others, and to present themselves as truth when there is only one truth. Anyone who denies who Christ is carries the spirit of antichrist. Anything that stands against what Christ came to fulfill is antichrist, and it will be abolished when He comes again. That same spirit is present even among those who attend church, go to Bible studies, and sing praises. How is this possible? Because they never truly belonged to Him. These false believers were convinced they had it all together, yet when their faith was finally tested, they buckled beneath the pressure, and their sin prevailed. They did all the churchy things, they showed up, they served, some even selflessly.

But when temptation came, when persecution came, it was over for them. This is a common problem within the church, because so many have been deceived into believing that true righteousness is entirely, utterly impossible. This lie must be rebuked, because the very Spirit that raised Christ from the dead now lives within us. So why do so many act as though this is not true, as though Jesus did not mean exactly what He said? We were bought with a price, and we are called to receive this gift and take our faith seriously. Our faith is not a formality that simply clears a guilty conscience. His life, which is in you, carries the same victory He secured when He entered death and defeated it from within, because He loved the world so much. When you taste what that victory actually looks like, as you press into Him, whatever your old desires were, whatever your old habits were, the Lord Jesus will replace them with new ones. But you must believe it is genuinely possible, and you must carry the deepest respect and humility, because He accomplished it for you.

Reflect

Would your faith survive under the pressure of real temptation and prove where your faith stands, or would you buckle?



Day 73

Truth Is Your Hope

*“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and **you know all things** . I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.”*

1 John 2:20-21 NKJV

What a beautiful and reaffirming thing, that the Holy Spirit has anointed every single one of His children with truth. His truth. We believers carry that same consecration that kings, priests, and prophets carried when they were anointed with oil. He has given us the ability to know all things, which is rooted in God’s eternal nature and glory. He created us with physical bodies, but whether we go to see Him in His kingdom or are separated from Him in Hades, we are eternal beings. We must be grateful and humble, so that we can take on the knowledge of God that comes from drawing near to Him, not just merely stacking up head knowledge. The moment you received the anointing of the Holy Spirit was the moment truth became your life. Nobody needs to tell you where your hope is found, because your hope lies only in Christ Himself.

Truth and lies cannot coexist. That is why, when the Holy Spirit teaches you versus when somebody is lying to you, the difference is not hard to notice. The truth is rooted in what God teaches. God convicts of sin, reminds you that you belong to Him, and holds you securely, wrapped in His love. The enemy can’t touch you with lies and deception, because Jesus defeated it. This ability to know what is true, because of who God is, should make you scoff at the schemes of the devil. The devil can barely keep his head above water, he grasps at straws every day. The devil thought he’d won when Jesus died on the cross, but death for Him was the doorway into everlasting life.

Reflect

Does the devil’s defeat actually change how confidently you walk today?



Day 74

Sons and Daughters

*“And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. **Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist** . Anyone who denies the Son doesn’t have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.”*

1 John 2:22-23 NLT

The term “antichrist” isn’t simply used to describe someone who lives in a state of unbelief, but denial. This denial is rooted in a sense of pride and arrogance, but most of all, fear. Fear to submit to the Most High. This fear is also rooted in an unwillingness to be obedient. One who lives in denial can also be someone who says, “Lord, Lord,” but lives a life indulging in sin. They lack reverence and respect for what Jesus did to set them free from death. The Father does not have a personal relationship with anyone who denies His Son. But if the Son lives inside a person who believes in Him, the Father sees that. Even more so, He sees His Son within that person, and it is this that justifies them in His sight. A believer who lives a confident life in Christ knows they’ve been justified in His sight, and their life actually reflects the work of the cross.

But those who treat the work of the cross as a license to keep on sinning, which is commonly labeled a “slip up,” just keep on asking for forgiveness. Oh, but this is what God’s grace is for, right? All lies. If you live like this, you are taking the power of the Spirit for granted, and you are spitting on His name. His grace is power, and it gives you the tools to stomp out what used to chain you down. Sin’s power is crushed under the power of the Spirit. His power eliminates every antichrist spirit, and since this is what His Word teaches us, then why do you tell yourself that it’s okay because “we’re only human”? You are much more than a piece of flesh. You are His child. His daughter. His son. Made to be His.

Reflect

Does every second of your life look like the transformation of Christ, or the complacency of sin with the benefit of clearing a guilty conscience?



Day 75

Shame Expelled

*“And now, dear children, remain in fellowship with Christ so that when he returns, **you will be full of courage and not shrink back from him in shame** .”*

1 John 2:28 NLT

If we abide in Christ as though His coming could happen at any second, we will have no shame when He arrives. Instead, we will stand in confidence, because the work of Christ is the absolute center of our lives. If Christ is the center of your life, then it should look different, not just merely saying you serve God, but how you serve God, and nothing should ever be done out of selfish conceit. Christ should be your reason for living, your identity, your passion, your purpose, and your life, if you claim Him. So look at your own life right now. Does it look like Christ's? Does it look like how He said it should? Does your love for Him define who you are and how you live? If you can be confident in these things because He has given you true assurance, and you can honestly say, “Yes, Jesus, You really are Lord of my life,” then shame has no place.

The thing that becomes condemned is shame. There is no condemnation or shame in the life of those whose lives are hidden in Christ Jesus. The enemy's goal is to distort your identity in Christ and make you a slave to shame. This is why our assurance in who we are as God's children remains grounded in who Christ is, and not in what we have done to obtain holiness, but in what Christ has done to make us holy. Our own attempts to be holy apart from Christ will always have fault, which is why the enemy can leverage it for his own gain. Live out the freedom that Christ has already set out for you. He did it on the cross so you wouldn't have to.

Reflect

If Christ came right now, would shame overwhelm you, or would the grace of God which gives you confidence overwhelm you?



Day 76

The Sword

“And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life .”

1 John 5:11-12 NLT

The wages of sin is death, and the consequence of sin and wickedness is death. This is the reality of sin. In its nature, its only purpose is to endlessly enslave you. It manifests in you physically, mentally, and spiritually. The ultimate goal as a Christ follower is to reject sin, relying on the life Jesus has given you through knowing Him and the ability He provides to reject it. Christ has given you a sword, a sword to cut off sin from the flesh. Remain cautious before you think of the sword as something that you alone wield. It is He who lives in you that gives you the sword and defeats death from within, so that you can lead a holy life. The sword holds all life, all victory, all knowledge, all virtue, and all glory and power, so that you can be free from sin and its consequences. You can have eternal life in Christ, or you can have eternal death if you choose sin. Since the life of Christ is the opposite of death, and since the life of Christ is death’s demise, then how can we say we are still bound to sin in some way, yet claim to be in a relationship with Him?

If sin is dead, then why are you still letting it have power over you? If you have truly let Him take control of your entire life, then who are you to deny the work of the empty tomb? The same way He emptied His own tomb, He came into your heart and has emptied yours. If you still live in sin but claim Christ, then you don’t actually believe in the work of the cross, and you fail to understand its true purpose. The purpose of the cross wasn’t just to simply blanket your sin, but rather to expose it, and let it be put to death by the all-consuming fire of Christ, so it could be no more. Don’t let sin kill you. Let Christ kill the sin within you so that you can stand before a righteous God and be known by Him.

Reflect

Have you let the Holy Spirit come in and empty the tomb, commanding sin to die, or have you let sin command you?



Day 77

Christ Our Answer

*“And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, **we also know that he will give us what we ask for** .”*

1 John 5:14-15 NLT

God is most certainly not a vending machine that you go to when it's convenient. If you are living your life out for Christ, and you are actually aligned with His will, you will ask for things according to that alignment as well, leaving your selfish desires out of it, because now that you have the newness of life, your desires become aligned with Christ's desires. This isn't to say that you can't ask for a new job, a new car, or a house. The real requests you should be making to God are things that actually benefit the kingdom of God. So ask yourself the question: do the requests I make known to God align with His will, or only with what I want? If you cannot confidently say that the things you ask for glorify the kingdom of God, then you should not ask for them. In the heart of the believer, one who professes that Christ is Lord, God has instilled new desires that make you feel whole, leaving you without need of anything or anybody else for satisfaction, validation, money, and so on.

He is your satisfaction. He is your fulfillment. He is your life. And because He has instilled new life within you, along with it, new desires come into your heart, so that you can work to please Him and gain true fulfillment and joy. Since this is what the believer has experienced, and this is how we are told to live, then we should only ask for things geared toward building His kingdom further. Ask for His strength, ask for His love, ask for His patience, ask for His kindness, ask for His joy, ask for His fulfillment. He will give you these things in ways you never would have seen coming. And don't ask for them out of fear either, ask for them because you have a true, genuine desire to walk like Him. If you ask to simply be like Him, as He has commanded us, the results are without disappointment.

Reflect

Have you allowed God to come into your life in such a way that it births new desire within your heart, or are you still asking for things that don't matter?



Day 78

Firm Belief

*“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **that you may know that you have eternal life** , and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”*

1 John 5:13 NKJV

Eternal life isn't just some vague or abstract hope if you are a child of God. Eternal life is yours because He commands that it is. What it means to be a child of God is to continue believing in Him, to follow and obey His word, and to always stay faithful to His promises. But it must be rooted in something deeper than simply having knowledge and simply saying, “I believe.” If you claim to be a believer, do not let your belief come only from words, but rather from the fruit that you bear, because of the marvelous work He has done in you, in order for you to be known as a child of God. If you are a child of God, then you must live it out, because of love. When knowledge of God and belief in Him are both genuine and firmly rooted, it is evident that love is the cause of these two things. The difference is obvious between someone who has knowledge and belief because they have love, and someone who has knowledge and belief only to perform.

Everything we know and believe about God stems from how much we love Him. Having head knowledge is not a true indicator that you love Him, it can sometimes mean the complete opposite. Knowledge, when detached from love, becomes a weapon. It gets used to win arguments, to leverage Scripture for personal gain, or to take advantage of someone, rather than being used to glorify God. Don't learn simply to perform, like the Pharisees did. If we have no love, we have nothing. We can't firmly believe in God and continue to want to know more about Him for His glory alone if we don't love Him like we should. Firm belief isn't even rooted in the belief itself, it's found in getting to the point where you recognize that there is something greater than you, and His name is Jesus. The day you set yourself aside and put Christ above yourself is the day you proclaim your love for Him. Real love always is, and always will be, the picture of selflessness.

Reflect

Do you learn about God because you truly love Him and actually want to know Him, or do you only want to learn so you can benefit yourself?



Day 79

Thy Kingdom

*“We know that we are children of God and that **the world around us is under the control of the evil one** .”*

1 John 5:19 NLT

If Jesus is your Lord, your confidence, your assurance, and your only hope, then you are surely a child of God. Our hope should be found in none other than Jesus Christ, who died and rose again so that you could be called His child. There is a clear distinction when you are a child of God. Your life should look different, transformed. It shouldn't look like the rest of the world, because the world is under the sway of the evil one, whose only purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy the image of God. He only gives death and condemnation. The children of God are under the authority of Jesus Christ, who came to exemplify what it really means to live a Christian life. He laid His life down and gave everything He had. He never asked for a single thing in return, never complained, and put the whole world before Himself. He is the One who gives life, and life eternally.

Even though the world is under the sway of the enemy, this is not an excuse to have fear, or even to condemn and judge. Yes, evil must be fought. But following the calling of the Lord Jesus Himself means stepping into a victory Jesus already claimed, one where evil is already defeated. So go into the world, evil and corrupt as it is, and make disciples of all nations, uniting people together to bring about the destruction of hell and the arrival of heaven. If you call yourself a child of God, you must die to yourself every single day. Say no to your flesh. Say no to temptation. Cut off sin. Since you are a child of God, obey like one, so that when the world looks at you, it sees something different, holy and above reproach, never conformed to the ways the world runs.

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

Reflect

Are you actively bringing heaven down, making disciples, or just staying safe on the sidelines?



Day 80

Testimonium Vincentis

“So we have these three witnesses— the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree .”

1 John 5:7-8 NLT

Baptism is a declaration of faith, an expression of Him who has saved you, and now you get to make a declaration through the water. Your new life is a representation of a life found hidden within Christ. He has saved you because of His blood, and the water is the declaration of His saving grace. You have been washed by His blood, willingly shed for you on the cross, and now you can be victorious over death because of Him. You now identify with the work of Christ. You are stepping into a battlefield where the battle is already won, and Jesus is there with the head of your enemy crushed beneath His feet. As you go about your day in Christ, it is no longer just an ordinary day. Every step you take, no matter how small, should be dedicated to Him, a continuation of the victory He has already given you. He has gone before you to defeat the enemy, and He will never stand against you. This is who you are proclaiming to be your God. It must never be taken lightly.

This is the life that Christ lived, and now He has given you the ability to live it through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit testified of all the things that Christ did, and after Christ's death, the veil was torn. Before Christ did this, only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, and only once a year. But now, anybody who calls Christ their Lord can live like this any day, at any time, because Christ, our Great High Priest, became the perfect fulfillment for all. This is where the power of the Holy Spirit comes from, it comes from the work that Christ did to break down the wall. The law was fulfilled in Christ, the work is done, and now He can be your life. No more empty rules that could never save you. Now it's only about believing in Christ, stepping into His victory, and allowing the Holy Spirit to be the only thing you depend on to live out the will of Christ. This is the testimony that has carried you this far, and it's the same testimony that will carry you the rest of the way.

Reflect

Do you believe that the power of the Holy Spirit has given you the ability to start over, with a new record, a clean conscience, and an entirely new life?



Day 81

The Qualifier

*“This letter is from Paul, **chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus** , and from our brother Timothy.”*

Colossians 1:1 NLT

Paul was a man chosen by God to do the will of Christ. The most unlikely candidate, someone who once murdered Christians, became one of the most important Christian men in history. God isn't looking for who's qualified. He looks to see who He can qualify. In order to be qualified, you have to seek His will and then live it out. Once He chooses you, once you are truly His, you are held to the highest standard, which is to bear the image of God. To be chosen by Christ is no small thing, and just like Paul was with Timothy, you need to surround yourself with like-minded believers. Talk about who Jesus is to you and what He has done in your life. Spur each other on. Be in prayer together, exhorting one another and bearing each other's burdens.

Nobody walks as a Christian alone. We are encouraged to surround ourselves with other believers in the name of Christ, because if two or more are gathered in His name, He is there in the midst. Even Paul, who wrote most of the New Testament and was such a force of nature, needed to be around other Christ followers who believed in the same mission. It is quite the advantage to surround yourself with others, but don't let them define who you are in Christ. Don't become dependent on other people or a church to form your salvation and your growth. Don't become a Christian who relies on being “fed,” because then you'll have every excuse to blame others for the reason you're not growing. Be in good fellowship, but don't become dependent, because ultimately Christ is the one you depend on, for He is the author and finisher of your faith.

Reflect

Are you trying to write your faith on your own, or is Christ the center of how your faith ultimately plays out?



Day 82

Grace & Peace

*“We are writing to God’s holy people in the city of Colosse, who are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. **May God our Father give you grace and peace .**”*

Colossians 1:2 NLT

The city of Colosse was quite a small and irrelevant town, overshadowed by its neighbors. Although it was a small city, Paul calls the people of Colosse “holy.” To this city, Paul uses some of the most highly exalted language found in Scripture. This should tell us something. No matter how small, unpopular, or obscure you might be, the words Paul uses to describe the city of Colosse are the same for you and all of God’s holy people, the ones who believe in Him. The very fact that the Colossians are seen by God actually makes them anything but obscure, because they are recognized by the Most High. There is no greater recognition than this. The word “holy” is used to describe a follower of Jesus, which sets you apart from the world. Whatever standards the world has set for you, remember who the world is really run by.

Even if you are seen as obscure in the eyes of the world, or seen as unimportant, remember who you actually belong to. You belong to God, so do you really want to live by the ways of a world that is controlled by Satan? You cannot be set apart in a world that is evil if you conform to it. You belong to, and are recognized by, God. Not only are you recognized by God individually, but as an added benefit, you are now part of the family of God, and you are able to have fellowship with others who believe in Jesus. You will have new conversations, new interests, new desires, because they are all centered around what matters most, which is Christ our Lord. After becoming part of the family of God, peace is among you and those you commune with and have fellowship with. But this peace is not without grace, because grace is the bridge to every good virtue. Grace is power. Grace is the means to defeat sin and death. Grace is love. God is grace.

Reflect

Do you rely on what God thinks of you and what His standards are, more than what the world says your standards should be or who the world thinks you are?



Day 83

Loving Correction

“We always pray for you, and we constantly thank God for you, for we hear that your faith in Christ Jesus is strong and that you love all of God's people.”

Colossians 1:3 NLT

An important thing to notice about Paul is that before he even thinks of opening with correction, he assures the people of Colosse, informing them of the prayers for their people, and gives thanks to God the Father for them. He builds them up with the truth of who they are by telling them what they bring to the table. In the same way, when we see another believer fall into sin, or go back to sin in a habitual manner, whatever the case may be, the goal is to always meet them with love and build them up before you correct them. Doing this shows them that you see their worth so that they don't feel like they aren't worth anything. For example, if you tell a fellow believer they have anger issues before reminding them of who they are in Christ, what's the reaction going to be? Defensiveness. Shame. Shutting down. They hear “you're the problem” instead of “you're not who this anger says you are.” Lead with identity first, and the correction stops feeling like an attack; it becomes an invitation to walk in what's already true instead of a weapon to take them out.

This is what makes correction so effective when it's needed. A person who is far from the Lord is more likely to receive correction when you first remind them of what's true about Christ's work in their life. Paul isn't just praying for them to have knowledge. He's praying that their knowledge of Christ would prove itself in a life built on the finished work of Christ. A lot of the times the reason someone needs correction in their life is because they've lost sight of the value that Christ gave them when they became saved. This is why affirmation of their identity in Christ before correction of an evil behavior is so vital. Edify them by spurring them on, inviting them to a Bible study, speaking scripture over their life, simple things but centered around Jesus. You can be the bridge between somebody coming back to Christ with a fire burning brighter than ever, or you can be responsible for the reason they will never come back. While correction feels good, it feels like you're doing justice; think again, because you are representing a Holy God. Be careful. Be vigilant. Be watchful. Be loving. Be courageous. Be gracious.

Reflect

Before you address someone's sin, are you reminding them first of who they are in Christ, or just pointing out what's wrong?



Day 84

Giving Thanks

*“For we have heard of **your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God's people** , which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News.”*

Colossians 1:4-5 NLT

We now have the why for Paul's gratitude for the city of Colosse. The reasoning behind why you are thankful for a group of people or an individual matters more than you think. It must come from somewhere and it needs to have meaning. In this particular verse, Paul's reasoning stems from the Colossians' faith in Christ and their love for all of God's people, those who put their trust in Jesus. Their love and faith have the ability, because of the power of Jesus Christ, to influence those around them. This is where Paul's gratitude stems from: who they are in Christ. Their faith and love are sourced from something bigger than themselves: what God has already reserved for those who trust in Jesus. That's the hope they're standing on, the expectation of a reward waiting for them in heaven.

The importance of having grounded reasoning is for the purpose of bringing about humility and real gratitude into your heart because of someone else's example. Real gratitude doesn't just look like words or stating the obvious, for example “I'm so grateful for my Christian friend.” Why are you grateful in the first place? Are you just saying it just so that it's said? Real gratitude is brought about because you are touched in such a way that you are legitimately moved into a state of gratitude and humility. This state of being allows you to see things that you otherwise wouldn't have seen before. For example: it can cause you to check your heart for impurities, become more passionate for learning about Christ and actually become more like Him, and teach you to love others more like Jesus.

Reflect

Are you just saying you're grateful so that it's said, or has someone's walk with Christ actually humbled you?



Day 85

Fruit, the Evidence of Truth

*“This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. **It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives** , just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.”*

Colossians 1:6 NLT

The effectiveness of the gospel is evident within the lives that become changed and produce fruit. This is not just some minor change that we are talking about. We are talking about a life that becomes completely transformed, dedicated to the One who became the Word in the flesh and dwelt among us. We don't just understand this gospel by examining what it's done in us. We understand it by watching the same fruit, the same renewal, show up in the lives of people around us. If we do this, not only will it keep us in a state of humility but also in a state of gratitude. We should always be grateful for the way that God works in the lives of other people.

This gratefulness for the work of Jesus in our lives and in other people's lives is the byproduct of good fruit. It shows that we are all part of the same family. The family of God. Since this gratitude and humility stems from the same place, you will have perfect fellowship with others who also bear good fruit. If you claim to hold fast to this truth, then there must be tangible evidence of a change. Instead of just saying with your lips that you believe He has made a change in you, actually live out the change He has made. Don't let the truth of the gospel just go in one ear and out the other. Hear it. See it. Understand it. Believe in it. Once you can understand and truly believe it, then you will see God and yourself in a different light.

Reflect

What would someone see if they watched your life for evidence that Christ has changed you?



Day 86

Christlike Witnesses

*“You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker. He is Christ's faithful servant, and he is helping us on your behalf. He has told us about **the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you** .”*

Colossians 1:7-8 NLT

Here we are shown another great example of gratitude and edification for others, which is shared between Paul and Epaphras. Epaphras shares with Paul the great love that the Colossians have through the power of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't tell Paul all the shortcomings of the Colossians first, he doesn't gossip, he doesn't slander, and he doesn't prop himself up to make himself seem more important to Paul. There is such great value found in someone who can give you accurate details about other holy people, without destroying their reputation but at the same time still bringing about correction through love. This shows not only restraint but a submission to the virtue of patience (James 1:4). Notice how Paul addresses things. First he meets and greets them with love, and only after he has done so does he shift into correction. A correction backed by the love of Jesus.

He had plenty of ammunition to call them out and pretty much destroy them, but he led with love first. Jesus does the same thing with the churches of Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira in Revelation 2. Each one gets real, specific praise before Jesus ever brings the rebuke. Paul imitates Christ even in how he addresses and greets whoever he's writing to in his letters. We must have this same kind of imitation as Paul commands in 1 Corinthians 11:1. We should have the same attitude towards other fellow believers in our life who fall short. It might feel good to only correct them thinking that you're doing it out of love because you are “telling them the truth.” Is that really always the case? Think about it. What does your heart posture look like in those moments? Are you calling them out just to prove a point or some theological stance? The worst case scenario: you have a posture of anger that you deem righteous. You are trying to bring about justice that only God can provide. If the correction and judgment you are bringing aren't backed by love, then your flesh is what's really at work, and you are weaponizing Scripture for the benefit of being right instead of bringing them out of the darkness.

Reflect

Is correction with the goal of being correct your motivator, or does the love of Christ, which brings people out of the darkness, motivate you?



Day 87

Shield of Faith

*“So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to **give you spiritual wisdom and understanding** . Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.”*

Colossians 1:9-10 NLT

Epaphras gave Paul both the means to pray for the Colossians and insight into their spiritual character. Once Paul understood how they were serving God, he prayed that they would continue in that same faithfulness because a life devoted to the Lord is a weapon against the enemy. Paul's prayer comes at a critical moment: the Colossians are in the process of being exposed to a false doctrine. Paul reminds them that they already possess spiritual knowledge and understanding, and that this knowledge produces the wisdom needed to keep them from being deceived. Paul isn't just praying for them to have knowledge. He's praying that their knowledge of Christ would prove itself in a life built on the finished work of Christ. It is God's will for them to grow and bear fruit as they come to know Him more fully.

As the united people of God, we stand under the sonship of Jesus Christ, a people whose lives are marked by assurance and by knowing the true character of God, and nothing can alter that. Knowing Him will shield you from the demonic schemes of this world. Getting to know our Lord is a continuous journey of learning because He is completely eternal. It is a gift that we get to discover new things about Him every day! The reason we believers ought to know His character is because we were created to bear the image of His goodness, and our lives have to look different than the world if we claim that He is the one in control of our lives. This is where our identity stems from, our purpose, our whole life. A person who is aligned with the will of God is a person who cannot be pierced by anything evil. Stand firm and be strong.

Reflect

If something false were to be taught about Jesus in front of you, would you have the discernment to recognize it, and would you have enough courage to address it?



Day 88

Strength, Joy, & Gratitude

*“We also pray that **you will be strengthened with all his glorious power** so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy, always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light.”*

Colossians 1:11-12 NLT

Paul now also prays for the Colossians' strength and endurance under pressure so that they can withstand the hardships coming their way. He isn't praying that they find an easy escape or comfort. He's praying that they have strength to fight back against their adversaries. In the midst of this, Paul also prays for them to have joy in this hour. Why is that? Possessing strength and endurance often looks like you must clench your fists and grit your teeth, or kick and scream, but spiritually speaking it means quite the opposite. Real strength produced during hard times comes from the ability to find joy no matter the circumstances. The reason you're even able to stand against the enemy is because of Christ's victory. Christ's victory is our gratitude, our strength in the midst of battle, our resting place.

Your ability to oppose the enemy doesn't come from your own strength, built up by how many hardships you've faced. It comes from the endurance the Lord has already given you. He is the reason you're able to endure at all. Since we are children of the light, this is something we have already inherited, not something we earned or gained through hard work. It is ours because Jesus says it is and the work of the cross says that it is. Embrace it. Having gratitude is the greatest weapon against the enemy because gratitude also reminds us of where our identity lies. Our identity isn't found in how hard we can fight against the devil. It's found in how much we believe in Christ, and in the truth that there is no battle we face that He hasn't already died for. The enemy can't throw anything at you to hinder what Christ has already promised you. Be grateful and find joy in every circumstance because Christ is your God.

Reflect

Is Christ your sword in battle, or are you trying to use your own?



Day 89

Rescued & Free

“For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.”

Colossians 1:13-14 NLT

Our freedom is purchased by Jesus because He waged war against hell by defeating death through a willful sacrifice. There's a lot of debate about who killed Jesus, and it makes sense, since we want to defend our Lord. But in reality, nobody killed Jesus. Though many wanted Him dead, it was Jesus who gave His life willfully. He did it all out of love. Who knew that an act of love was actually an act of war for the souls of mankind? Through His sacrifice, we have atonement for sin, and this atonement is rooted in the war that Christ waged against hell. He tore the gates off their hinges, thus draining hell of its power. Hell has no more strive, just straight up demise. Yes, hell still has dominion over the world, but it has no dominion over those who are called into Christ's union.

Thank God that we are forgiven because of what Jesus did, but even more so that we are free indeed. Jesus did not die only so that you could have an easier way to be forgiven. If we think that's all His death was for, we go against what Romans 6 says without even knowing it. Romans 6 asks a rhetorical question, possibly the most important one of all, which states: shall we continue to live in sin so that grace may abound? Certainly not! Grace isn't a loophole. Don't twist Christ's sacrifice into an easier path toward sin, one you don't even realize you're walking. Christ's sacrifice was made specifically so that you could use His grace to become free from sin, not merely to clear a guilty conscience caused by the flesh. Remember He waged war so that you could have freedom. He waged war so you could love like Him. He waged war so you could make peace like Him. He waged war because He loves you.

Reflect

Do you actually believe Jesus willfully gave His life, or do you still frame His death as something done to Him?



Day 90

Firstborn, Supreme, Divine

*“He is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn over all creation** .”*

Colossians 1:15 NKJV

The reason the nature of Jesus is so beautiful is because, though He had divine nature, He chose to lower Himself down into physical likeness with humanity in order for the invisible image of God to actually be seen in a way that was tangible. Not tangible in the sense of “you wouldn't believe in God unless He sent His Son Jesus,” no. Tangible in the sense that when people in Jesus' time looked to Him, their human senses, which are the same ones we have, were able to comprehend His nature. Although He was human, He was anything but ordinary. This is why we are told in John 1:18 that nobody truly has seen God, although God sent His Son to bear His invisible image while in a state of physical human likeness. God sent Jesus as a man because His full glory would overwhelm anything human eyes were built to hold.

This is another example of how God literally cares about every single detail of our lives, and He knows that we needed something physical. His Son. This gave disciples and others who witnessed His existence the ability to have real comprehension of who God is. Christ influenced more people, nations, and kingdoms than any dictator, president, or world leader. His impact shows, and it speaks loudly through the 25,000+ manuscripts written about Him. This is why we're still talking about Him. He is everything. What makes Jesus even more fascinating is that He is God, He lived in a physical body, and then He willfully gave up His life. He was tortured, humiliated, made a mockery of, and then He carried His cross after what had been done to Him, even though it seemed physically impossible. Nobody would've ever been able to accomplish what Jesus did, and not just physically but spiritually. He is the first among all creation. He is supreme above everything. Jesus is the demonstration of God's extraordinary likeness lived out through a physical life. Jesus, in the utmost divine way, simultaneously gave the human eye, heart, mind, and soul the ability to comprehend His great and powerful works and to testify about them.

Reflect

If you were to die, and somebody were to look at your life in a book, would they see that you really lived with the belief in Jesus that you claim?



Day 91

Divine Authority

*“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. **All things were created through Him and for Him .**”*

Colossians 1:16 NKJV

This verse leaves no room for doubt: Jesus is God. Jesus is King. Jesus is Lord. All things were created through Him, which means just like the Father, Jesus has always existed. Physically, Jesus had a created body, but divinely, everything was created through Him, including His own body. Every spiritual force was created by Him and for Him, and every spiritual force is under the authority of Christ because every created thing is subject to Him. No spiritual force, good or evil, is able to make a single authoritative move without His command. Christ came to Earth to declare authority over Satan and his demons. Christ's death meant Satan's dominion over the earth shall not last. When demons afflict you, it happens for a reason. Jesus allows it. He wants to see if you will succumb to the fear and schemes of the enemy or the promises of God. Even when demons invade, it's because the Lord allows it. They are pathetic and have no power. Jesus' authority speaks over them. This also means you have been given the power to destroy them. The same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in you.

Let this truth be the reason that the posture of your heart is always submitted to Jesus. When you are in the midst of spiritual battle and you become afraid, remember it is all happening for the purposes of building the kingdom of God. He wouldn't allow evil to attack you if there wasn't a strong defense. The way you handle intense spiritual battle, doubt, and temptation will reveal where your faith stands. So the question is: does your faith stand on the promises of God? Have you in any way led yourself to believe that you are the one to carry your own sword, or do you trust in the One who has given the sword of truth? He took this burden off you through His death on the cross. Every created thing was made to glorify God. Nothing was made so that we could bring glory to ourselves, and creation does not exist for us to worship it. Having admiration and gratitude for His creation is a form of worship, but we should never worship creation. Creation is temporary. Christ is forever.

Reflect

Do you wake up every day expecting there to be challenges, but in spite of these challenges, do you rely on the divine power that He has given you through His Son Jesus?



Day 92

Our Creator, Our Sustainer

*“He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. **He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead** . So he is first in everything.”*

Colossians 1:17-18 NLT

Not only did He exist before everything and create everything, but He also sustains all of it. This is yet another aspect of Christ's divine authority. Nothing you see that is material is capable of existing without Christ. To not have the ability to fully understand this, and just the fact that creation is even a reality, is actually a gift. It is simply another reason to keep learning about Him. If the knowledge of God was finite, and we were capable of understanding the nature of God with just our human brains, then we wouldn't need a savior. This is what makes Jesus so special: He is supreme over everything; He took it upon Himself to shrink Himself down by becoming human. The very head of the Church who is supreme over all creation descended into flesh so that we could have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of who He is. The very fact that He did this reveals His supreme power. He bore Himself. He gave His own life. He resurrected Himself. What's more supreme than that? Absolutely nothing. This is what makes Him supreme in every way. He showed the world that death lost its authority. The God of the universe shrank down into flesh to help you understand His nature. If you were intellectually strong enough to fully understand God's infinite being, then the responsibility of saving your soul would be on yourself, and we know that is not possible. This is why the gospel must not be viewed only from an intellectual standpoint. The evidence for it is found in what it actually accomplishes in the lives of the people who claim it as their own.

True full understanding would mean believing that the knowledge of God is infinite. But that raises a question: if you're only viewing 'full understanding' from a human, intellectual standpoint, how can you call infinite knowledge 'full understanding' when it can never be fully grasped? The answer is that true understanding comes from believing in God and that everything about Him is infinite, and it exists for one purpose: to sanctify your existence for the rest of your life. So with that, you must wake up every day with a full understanding that you, as a Christ follower, rely completely on the works and strength of God, and that reliance is what lets you walk in full understanding every single day. In your physical life on earth, God will give you bits and pieces of infinite knowledge. Having full understanding doesn't mean knowing everything right off the bat. If it did, it wouldn't have the infinite depths that it holds. It means knowing how to live like Him in a complete way, because God gives you bits and pieces of His knowledge. Having any sort of true understanding is always rooted in the fact that you don't know everything, and it's for a good reason. It will spur you on, keep you accountable, and you will always have a reason to keep on learning about Him for the rest of your life in order to stay sanctified.

Reflect

Are you taking it upon yourself to understand the message of the gospel with only sheer human capability, or are you allowing the gospel to be the reason you understand who God is?



Day 93

Partakers of Fullness

“For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ , and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.”

Colossians 1:19-20 NLT

The entire fullness of God lived in Christ. That much is undoubtedly true. Because that fullness dwelled within Jesus, everything could be reconciled through Him. This reconciliation was made possible only through His death, burial, and resurrection, the very work that allows the Father to see Christ within us. Nothing needed to be added to Christ during His time on Earth; He was born worthy. As Paul declares in this passage, the fullness of God lived in Christ. The fullness of God isn't just a part of Jesus, the fullness of God is Jesus. The most amazing part about all of this is the fact that He didn't tolerate living in and among flesh; He took joy in it because He knew what had to be fulfilled. The same joy that God had when He inhabited Christ's body is shared with us. Because of His joy, He made us to be partakers of His divine nature. Being a partaker means that you have been blessed by the power of His grace to live set apart from sin.

First, the Lord dwelled within something perfect to display to the whole world what a blameless life looks like. In all of His fullness, God made Jesus the example of perfect living. He then died a death fit for a criminal, taking on the entire weight of sin, being condemned in the flesh by it. Then He rose up from the dead, and as a gift, we get to share this power. Nothing Jesus did was abstract. Everything He came to fulfill became reality for His children because He is supposed to be our life if we claim Him to be ours. Just as the fullness of God dwelt in Jesus, it now also dwells in us. The image of God was restored through the life of Jesus, and Jesus is the fulfillment. He is the remedy for a renewed life. One that is set apart from the world. This means you aren't doing what once quickly gratified your flesh. One that is dedicated to God doesn't need to grant their flesh attention. The one that is truly devoted is one that loves God so much that, when the flesh rears its ugly head, the Spirit which raised Christ from the dead squashes the temptations of it. Wanting what He wants will set you free. Trying to just “be less sinful” only throws you right back into it. The goal was always just to be like Christ and nothing else.

Reflect

Are you settling for being less like your old self, or are you actually partaking in the fullness of Christ today?



Day 94

Christ the Victor

*“And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, **to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight** ”*

Colossians 1:21-22 NKJV

How can there be victory in death? Only if the One dying wasn't bound by it in the first place. That's exactly who Christ is, the Author of life, choosing to die. His life was not taken from Him, and He was not killed. Jesus giveth and taketh as He wills. He gave His own life to reveal the victory found in the resurrection. He proclaims authority over death, and we have that same power. Death of your sinful flesh means you gain Him as a direct result, curing the sickness of sin. Sin is death, but the death of the flesh is life. The very reason He gave up His life was to show you and me that sin and death weren't the end. It revealed that death has no authority over Christ. And for those who live in Him, death also has no power. He rewrote the law of death itself. He died so that we could have the means to defeat it through the power of His resurrection. The power of the resurrection lives in you. He overcame the works of the darkness that you were once a part of by descending into the darkness and defeating it from within.

He tore the gates of hell down just for you, thus turning the power of hell into dust, and now Jesus lives in anyone who calls upon Him. Since Jesus is your Lord, you are seen as holy, blameless, and above reproach in the eyes of the Father. So don't let anybody lie to you about who you are. If Christ has saved you, your life is undoubtedly different; you are no longer under the darkness. Jesus didn't die just so that you would become a better version of yourself. He died so that you could have power over the enemy. Your identity is no longer set in the ways of the darkness. Wickedness has turned into righteousness. Darkness into light. Evil into good. You were once too blemished to enter in by means of the law, but now, because Christ fulfilled the law, you stand before a holy God, and He tells you exactly how He sees you. You are His and His alone. Christ is your life. Your atonement. Your righteousness. Your holiness. Your everything. Praise God, we are no longer alienated! We have become part of the family of God, and we sit at the table with Him feasting on the fruits of righteousness and purity. Behold all things made new! Behold all things made righteous! Behold the Lord Jesus, the Victor of our lives.

Reflect

Jesus didn't die just to make you a better version of yourself, He died to give you power over the enemy. Are you living in that power?



Day 95

Persevering Saints

“But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it . Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.”

Colossians 1:23 NLT

Genuine faith perseveres. It does not waver. It does not fear. It does not drift away. It does not have an ounce of unbelief. Our assurance is found when we firmly stand on the truth, the truth that reconciliation brings. Because you have been reconciled, perseverance must become a part of who you are. Your everyday life has to look as Christ modeled. Growth in Christ requires you to carry your cross like Christ. Continually expand your knowledge of Christ. Never settle into where you currently are; keep discovering more about Him, for He is eternal, and there will always be more to know. In the same way, continually expand your faith so that you come to understand who God truly is. When things get uncomfortable, in times where it feels like all hope is lost, that's when faith will be your greatest weapon against hopelessness. When you are tempted to fall back into your old ways and it feels as though it's impossible to resist, remember there's a way of escape. That way of escape is the perseverance that He provides. It is only achieved through submission to God.

Perseverance requires leaning on Him. When you lean on Christ, don't take what He gives you for granted. Too often, leaning on Him becomes something we only do when life gets hard, when circumstances feel difficult and taxing. Don't let that be the only reason you turn to Him. Truly leaning on Him means submitting everything you do and everything you are to His will. The goal is to be more like Him in every single way. This is a daily practice that you must get used to if you claim Christ as your Lord. When you're driving to work, and someone cuts you off, where is your perseverance? When waiting in line at the gas pump, where is your perseverance? When a family member says something to you that you may not like, where is your perseverance? Seek it. Perseverance will always be something you have to gain more of because our daily lives require it. We must be dependent on His strength. His strength is found the more we depend on Him to strip us of our flesh. Perseverance means you die to everything that you were so that you can live for all that He is. Life is found in the death of your flesh.

Reflect

Does your life look like one that is submitted to the will of God so that perseverance can have its perfect work in you, or have you lost hope?



Day 96

Comfortable with Discomfort

“ I am glad when I suffer for you in my body , for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church.”

Colossians 1:24 NLT

Paul was imprisoned, stoned, beaten, and persecuted for the gospel. The man who once killed Christians was now being persecuted by the same people that he used to be associated with. When we read this text, we should be so grateful for what he was willing to endure for the sake of the gospel. Maybe we should ask ourselves a question as well. Would you suffer for just one person the way that Paul suffered for entire churches? Would you give up even little things? Would you give up being validated the way you want to? Would you give up the need to be right? Would you give up needing to say the right thing in order to be correct? Would you give up the things of the flesh to let Christ shine? We can barely even call these things “hardships” that should be no-brainers for us Christians. So the real question is, if you're not willing to do these little things, then what are you willing to do for the sake of Christ? Let joy be the reason you are even drawn to do such things that are beyond your comfort for the sake of Christ. The joy of the Lord is the reason any hardship is possible to endure.

Where is this joy found? It is found in knowing that your suffering connects you to Christ's own suffering, you're not suffering alone or for nothing, you're suffering alongside Him, for the same purpose He did. Just like we are to identify with the resurrection, we identify with His death, because there would've been no resurrection without His death. This means that no matter how you are afflicted, physically, mentally, or spiritually, if it is for the sake of who Jesus is, your identity in Christ should be the very thing that moves you to be sacrificial. Your identity in Christ allows you to endure anything. Your identity in Christ gives you freedom from what temptation used to produce. Remember that the Lord will always provide you the endurance needed for any such hardships. No matter what it is that you need to give up for the sake of your own soul or for someone else, remember that what you need matters less than what Christ requires from you. Die daily for Him. Die daily to yourself. Die daily for others.

Reflect

Do you live your life in a state of knowing that no matter what you have to endure, no matter what you have to give up, it doesn't matter because Christ is the one in control?



Day 97

Christ Who Is Your Life

“ God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you.”

Colossians 1:25 NLT

We should take Paul's example and the way he was driven to spread the good news and apply it to our own lives. Paul lived in a way that served everyone but himself. Selflessly. Do you serve at church expecting something in return? Do you serve in your home expecting something in return? Do you serve above and beyond at work and expect a pay raise? Most importantly, do you serve expecting only to be seen by God for good works done in secret? Good works done in secret prove true faith and true selflessness. If you are only doing good works to benefit your social image, you are no better than the Pharisees, and your faith produces pride and dishonesty instead of humility and integrity. Works done in secret produce the most precious fruit because of their rarity. Works done in secret please the Lord because they prove that you value His recognition more than human attention.

It's so important to take the great example Paul left when he served the church and apply it to every part of our lives. His only purpose was to serve God and others. We can make excuses all day and say things like “I'll never be.” Says who? You? Sometimes we deceive ourselves with foolish thoughts like, 'I'm only human,' 'I don't feel good enough,' or 'I'm nothing more than a sinner.' Paul tells us to imitate him as he imitates Christ. The only way you will fall short of that command is if you set up your own stumbling block of doubt. Christ has given you the power that raised Himself from the dead to live like Him. This power is in our everyday lives, and you must choose to live in it (Romans 8:2). The power of the Spirit gives life, and the grip of the flesh produces death. Do not take His power for granted, or take lightly what He has given you. If it is for you, then who are you to say that it's not? If you believe you aren't capable of living like Christ, you're already doomed to fail at living victoriously. Satan and his demons rejoice when you treat your salvation as an addition to your life rather than letting your salvation be your life. Take up the yoke of Christ with strength. Take up the yoke of Christ with confidence. Take up the yoke of Christ with integrity. Take up the yoke of Christ with ownership.

Reflect

What is stopping you from living a fearless, confidence-filled, victorious life?



Day 98

Infinite Mystery

*“This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God’s people. For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: **Christ lives in you** . This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.”*

Colossians 1:26-27 NLT

This mystery of God has been revealed to us through Christ. What does Paul mean by 'mystery'? He certainly does not mean a secret society reserved for a select few, something that requires you to climb a hierarchy of spiritual success to access, the way many mystery cults of his day operated. This truly is not the case. Everything that continues to be revealed is a mystery because of its deep, infinite value. A mystery in the sense of 'how can this be?' Is it me who is feeling the love of Christ? Is it really Christ who chooses to live within me? Christ who lives in us is the great mystery. Why you? Why me? Why us? His deep, profound, immense love is why. His love is the reason we can find out the answers to our questions. His love is a love that is beyond understanding and beyond full human comprehension. This is part of the hope we find in Christ. The fact that we aren't going to know everything is what keeps us hoping for more of Him. We get to experience this mystery day by day. When we go to meet with Him, even then we will continue to watch the mysteries of God unfold. As they unfold, we will have no other choice but to worship Him. Not because of obligation, but based solely on who God is. This is His love, which is beyond comprehension. We will experience it like new every day because He is infinite!

In order to understand this mystery, you must press in and continue to live by the hope that is laid up for us. The power of the Spirit is key. It is what allows you to live in freedom, and it will draw you to ask questions. Why me, Lord? Why do I matter? Why do we matter more than all of creation? How are we the greatest among all creatures? You were created to bear the image of God. You hold the most important responsibility: to live out the example Christ left. Jesus Christ is the perfect image. He is the second Adam. He is the image of restored human nature, just as it was in the Garden of Eden. Jesus came as a man so that you could look to Him with awe and say: 'now I understand.' You were made to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. You were made to bear the image of God. You were made to be His. As long as you call on Him and believe in His name, you are then chosen by Him. There is no race. There is no religion. There is no nation. Those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus will be called chosen. We are the church. His people are created to live out the fulfillment of Christ in all holiness, sanctification, and love.

Reflect

Do you believe there's no race, religion, or nation that stands between you and being chosen by Him, or do you still feel like an outsider?



Day 99

Holy, Obedient, Strong

*“So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. **We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ** . That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.”*

Colossians 1:28-29 NLT

Paul's entire mission was based on the investment into the lives of people in need of Jesus. His mission was not easy. He was persecuted time and time again for Jesus' namesake. Although it doesn't stop there, we know that Paul was only reliant on the work of Christ, His mighty power, which Paul identifies himself with. Paul labors with all of his heart and struggles, but he doesn't forget the reason he is doing it, he doesn't make struggle his ultimate identity, and he certainly doesn't forget where his strength comes from. Why do we sometimes forget where our strength comes from? We forget because of the things we can tell ourselves. Things like: I'm not good enough, I'm not strong enough, I'm not resilient enough. In ways we struggle like Paul did. Although there's not much to compare, he was stoned and beaten, but he never lost hope or forgot where his strength came from. Paul held the belief that Christ lived in him so dearly. Paul never gave up because Jesus never gave up. Remember that it is Christ in you that gives you all the victory, freedom, glory, and love.

In order to remember where our strength comes from, we must take the warnings from Scripture with sincerity and reverence. If we forget that we live in a world that hates us and we unknowingly conform to it, we will lose. Paul came to teach the wisdom of the gospel because of Christ's example. We must remember where our strength comes from and to be watchful, and let the power of Christ do wonderful works in our lives, so that we can be a spotless bride. When our Lord comes back, it is His will to find you in a state of holiness and obedience. Live your life as though He is already here, standing next to you. Like the way Paul labored fervently for the souls of mankind, we must also pray, seek wisdom, and be the bride who is prepared for Christ. Being the bride for Christ also means you are bringing others into marriage with our Lord. You must also labor like Paul for the souls of mankind. Depend on Christ's mighty power. His power does wonderful works. Depend on Christ's wisdom. His wisdom will keep you watchful. Take joy in the struggle. It produces righteousness. Love like Him, for it is His will.

Reflect

Do you labor and struggle knowing that it is for the betterment of others and your growth in Christ, or do you worry about how it affects your life?



Day 100

The Advocate

*“I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally. I want them to be encouraged and **knit together by strong ties of love**. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself.”*

Colossians 2:1-2 NLT

The striking thing to notice in this passage about Paul is that he agonized not only for the church at Laodicea, but also for others he had never even met. Why? Because he understood the body of Christ as one. As long as Paul was doing something because the Lord told him to, it did not matter to him. It didn't matter to him whether he was suffering for someone he knew personally or a stranger entirely. This is one thing that we can lose sight of, because we think “what's in it for me?” The thing that mattered to Paul was the kingdom. Paul took joy in the process of struggle. This is a wonderful display of love that continues to echo across generations. We can never lose sight of this kind of love. Self-sacrificial love. Culture will try to get you to lose sight of it, whether that be through setting up a ton of personal boundaries or prioritizing ourselves first, when we are actually called to esteem others above ourselves and put their needs before our own. Jesus is the one who cares for you entirely, completely, and perfectly. You don't need anybody, any methods of psychology, or anything else to tell you who you are. Christ should be everything that you are, so you don't have to rely on anything that culture says you must be. Don't be the shoe that fits in a culture that is subject to evil.

The world has its own definition of normal and moral, and it will hand it to you whether you ask for it or not. But the choice is yours. Choose the world and you will be separated from Him. Culture says look out for yourself, protect yourself, make sure you come first. What did Jesus say? What did Jesus do? Certainly none of that. What example did He leave behind? His life. His ministry. His cross. As He was being nailed to the cross, He asked the Father to forgive the very people crucifying Him. In spite of being crucified, He did not complain, threaten, or defend Himself. Imagine if Jesus had simply given up and told everyone He'd had enough. Imagine if He'd fought to prove Himself right in front of those calling for His death. Imagine if He'd reminded them of every good thing He'd done and demanded the same in return. Jesus didn't have to do any of that. He endured because it was the Father's will. He endured because He loves us so much and wants everyone to be brought back to a former glory. Despite society, we can look back at what Jesus did and be encouraged by His love. Paul understood this, and his mission was to echo Christ. He understood the purpose behind every struggle, and he never identified with the struggle itself. This is because Jesus was his identity. Paul had everything he needed. Jesus. We too have absolutely everything we need in Jesus as long as we live in Him.

Reflect

If Jesus never had to defend Himself, prove He was right, or demand fair treatment, what does it say about your own need for those things?