

BE YOND

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BEYOND

| 1/24 ▶

BEYOND 21 DAYS: January 24 ►

"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

FOCUS: Daily

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers....

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42, 46-47

It's been said that you'll never change your life until you change something you do daily. The fastest way to implement change is to completely commit to change. A strong commitment will help you to break bad habits and begin to build new, healthier habits.

As we move BEYOND 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting, we are focusing on building a personal lifestyle of consecration, prayer, worship, fasting, Bible study, sharing and serving. An event or a short season of these efforts will not suffice; they must become a part of our way of living. If we want to soar higher, we've got to be willing to go deeper. If we want to move forward, we've got to leave some old ways and habits behind. If we want to change the world, we must begin with changing us!

THE RISKS OF NOT CHANGING

While the thought of change may feel unnerving or intimidating, the risks associated with remaining the same are enormous. For many reasons, stepping outside of our comfort zones can feel risky. We crave the comfortable and familiar, but God calls us out of what we crave into the future He has designed for us. To resist that change is to risk resisting God Himself. We've been called to grow in grace!

Resistance to change often leads to apathy, frustration, anxiety, low self-confidence, the feeling of loss of control, stagnation, a feeling of being stuck or trapped, and even depression. Resisting the pull of God into the greater destiny into which we've been called will eventually lead to prayerlessness, emptiness, fractured faith, and numerous below-the-line behaviors. We simply must understand that not changing and committing to growth is the biggest risk of all.

If you find yourself resisting the change God wants to bring into your life, repent and trust in Him to lead you safely. Remember that God has your best interest in mind. God will enable, empower, and equip you to do everything He asks of you. And you will become the person God has created you to be – the very best version of you!

QUESTION: What are the biggest factors which threaten to hold you back from changing your lifestyle?

QUESTION: If you surrender to God's call to live a fully-invested life, what do you imagine your life will look like?

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE DAILY | Take up your cross

✓ BE WILLING TO LOSE SOME THINGS IN ORDER TO GAIN CHRIST.

Followers of Jesus must practice self-denial and cross-bearing on a daily basis. To “take up your cross,” means to be willing to die in order to follow Jesus. According to Jesus, self-denial and being completely committed to Him are absolute requirements for discipleship. You must make the choice to be completely committed on a daily basis, no matter what it costs you.

*“Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?”*

Luke 9:23-25

*“...I die **daily**.*

1 Corinthians 15:31b

“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 10:37-39

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Am I willing to follow Jesus if it means I may be alienated by some of my family or closest friends?
- Am I willing to continue following Jesus if it means I may be misunderstood, falsely accused, or even persecuted?
- Am I willing to follow Jesus if it would one day cost me my job?
- Am I willing to follow Jesus if it would mean losing my life?

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE DAILY | Offer praise and thanks

✓ **PRAISE THE LORD, GIVING HIM THANKSGIVING.** It is important to take some focused time every day to reflect on the goodness of God, and respond by praising and thanking Him out loud.

“Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.

Psalm 145:2

“Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments.

Psalm 119:164

“I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Psalm 34:1-4

“Seven times a day I praise You, because of Your righteous judgments.

Psalm 119:164

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

Hebrews 13:15

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Do I take focused time during my daily schedule to reflect on God's goodness?
- No matter how things seem to be going in my life, am I still giving thanks to God?
- Since being thankful and expressing thanksgiving are different things, do I take focused time every day to verbally express my thanksgiving to God?

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE DAILY | Pray

✓ **PRAY EVERY DAY.** Although we understand the call to prayer and the power of prayer, many Christians are "on-again, off-again" when it comes to daily devotion. For many the intention is there, but so is the constant distraction.

"My voice You shall hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up.

Psalm 5:3

*"...Lord, I have called **daily** upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You.*

Psalm 88:9

"As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.

Psalm 55:16-17

"pray without ceasing

1 Thessalonians 5:17

"rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer

Romans 12:12

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving

Colossians 4:2

"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints

Ephesians 6:18

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Is my prayer life dynamic and growing?
- What is lacking in my personal prayer life?
- How can I build consistency in prayer into my life?
- Am I making time to hear from the Lord in prayer?

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE DAILY | Renewal

✓ **BE RENEWED.** Life can become unnecessarily wearing without experiencing daily renewal from God. Renewal of the mind, inner man, and strength is one of the benefits of daily prayer.

*“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed **day by day**. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

“...do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:2

“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:22-24

“...those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Isaiah 40:31

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Am I becoming spiritually wearied and emotionally drained?
- I am resisting old thought patterns? Am I presenting myself to the Lord daily, asking Him to transform me by the renovating my mind?
- Regardless of what is happening in my life, am I experiencing a daily renewal from God on the inside?

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE DAILY | Study the Word

✓ **Search the Scripture.** The Bible is the Word of God. It provides truth, wisdom, strength, insight, and instruction. It corrects us when we go astray and directs us when we are in need of guidance. It helps us to be complete and equips us for the work God has called us to do. We need to read it, study it, memorize it, pray it, and share it. Given all that the Bible is for us, how foolish it would be to starve ourselves of the Word of God!

*"... they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures **daily** to find out whether these things were so.*

Acts 17:11b

"With my whole heart I have sought You; oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Psalms 119:10-11

"Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

Psalms 119:97

"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

Matthew 4:4 (Ref Deuteronomy 8:3)

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Regarding time spent in the Word, do my actions align with my intentions?
- What habits can I implement to make more time and put more effort into learning the Word of God?

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE DAILY | Pay your vows

✓ **Pay our vows by keeping our promises and commitments.** For followers of Jesus, our word is our bond. When we commit things to God or to others, we must be diligent to keep it.

*“So I will sing praise to Your name forever, that I may **daily** perform my VOWS.*

Psalm 61:8

“My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.

Psalm 22:25

“Make vows to the Lord your God, and pay them; Let all who are around Him bring presents to Him...

Psalm 76:11

“I will pay my vows to the Lord Now in the presence of all His people.

Psalm 116:14

“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed

Ecclesiastes 5:4

“...let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’

Matthew 5:37a

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Am I reliable to do the things I say I will do?
- Have I neglected keeping my commitments to God?
- Do I have a tendency to procrastinate and delay in keeping my commitments to God?
- Do my actions show that giving back to God is a priority in my life?

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE DAILY | Exhort and encourage

✓ **Exhort and encourage others.** To exhort means to call to one's side, or to summon. It carries with it the meaning of entreating, beseeching, admonishing, strengthening through comfort, encouraging, and instructing.

*"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another **daily**, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end*

Hebrews 3:12-14

"...let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

"Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4:18

"Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Am I an encouragement to others?
- Am I stuck in a cycle of needing to be encouraged more than I encourage others?
- Do I consistently make the effort to strengthen, comfort, and edify others with my words and my actions?
- How often do I give of myself selflessly to those outside of my immediate family?
- Do I stir up those who are around me to good works?

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE DAILY | Share the gospel

✓ **Share the gospel with others.** If the church is going to grow daily like happened in the Book of Acts, then we as individuals will need to practice what they practiced. A hallmark of the early church was that they did life together. They consistently reasoned with unbelievers and with those who needed more truth. Whether it was in the temple, in a synagogue, in a school, or in each other's homes, they met together and shared constantly. When we share daily, the Lord can add to the church daily.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers....

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42, 46-47

*"And **daily** in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.*

Acts 5:42

"Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.

Acts 17:17

"...when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Acts 19:9

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Does the concept of daily sharing intimidate or inspire me?
- How can I best work daily sharing into my lifestyle?
- Since logistics and distance may keep us from meeting daily, how can I connect with believers and share the gospel with others on a daily basis?

KEYS TO SCHEDULING YOUR LIFE FOR SUCCESS

1. **Understand that time is a limited resource.** Psalm 90:12 says, *"...teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."* In other words, it is important how we use the time that God has given us. None of us really know how long we have to live on this earth. Every day offers us 24 choices of how we will use each hour. When we waste that time God has given us, we are really *wasting us*. We're wasting our lives.

2. **Remember that Christians are to redeem the time we have been given.** Ephesians 5:15-17 tells us to, *"See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."* Colossians 4 also tells us to redeem the time, this time in the narrower context of how we interact with those who are outside of the faith. To "redeem the time," is to buy it back, recover it, or make wise and sacred use of it.

3. **Schedule Kingdom priorities into your life.** It's been often said, *"What gets scheduled gets done."* Make a daily to-do list. Use a calendar or a planner. Set notifications from your smart device. Only through planning and scheduling will you ensure that you get the most important things done, on time and on purpose. If you don't plan to succeed, you won't.

Schedule at least one daily time for prayer that occurs in a certain place. Build it into your routine. Set notifications as reminders. Do the same for Bible reading and study. Set yourself up for success. Turn off your devices during those times, shutting the door to distractions. And when you get there, be fully present.

Big things happen one day and one choice at a time. Don't put it off; begin right now! Through His Spirit, God has empowered us to live life above and **BEYOND** our wildest imagination. It all begins as we allow the power of His Spirit to flow and work in our lives. Every day and in all our ways, we yield ourselves to him.

Daily!

