

**General Topics :: And in the morning, rising up a great while before day…****And in the morning, rising up a great while before day… - posted by SeanHobson (), on: 2007/8/6 21:31**

Mar 1:35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

Dear beloved brethren,

I would not waste our time on that which hath already been, nor do I think my situation deserving a thread of its own. However, I fear if I depend on my searching into the old threads alone, my finding will be incomplete and insufficient to compel me to imitate our Lord in this area. Therefore, this thread is an inquiry into and open discussion of Morning Prayer.

How do you do it? How do you wake up at 3am, 4 am, or 5am, yea a great while before dawn and seek the face of God?

What advice do the wise old men of God that sit in the gates of this forum have? Links to old threads, articles, sermons, books, whatever means profitable is desired.

Suggestions: I have tried in vain the following: Cell phone under the pillow.

Sleeping on the floor.

Going to sleep at 6 or 7pm.

Two alarm clocks.

Not as if any of these methods are bad or weak in themselves; I'm sure they've been the means for many a saint to wake up unto God each morning. It's just my lack of self-discipline, and sinful, willful choices easily overpowered them. Though a battle is won here and there, for the most part no consistency is established and I lie in bed defeated.

If any that do have discipline in this area respond to this thread, please attempt to answer the following questions and/or leave suggestions:

How did waking up early help your reading/prayer life?

What benefits followed having extra time towards other matters?

How did you remain consistent, disciplining your body?

How do you deal with variables in life? Such as late night/overnight visitors, increased school/work load etc.

What was it like walking throughout the day knowing you spent over an hour with God?

Re: And in the morning, rising up a great while before day… - posted by tjservant (), on: 2007/8/6 23:14

"The men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking Him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, He will be in the last place the remainder of the day."

E. M. Bounds

Re: And in the morning, rising up a great while before day... - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2007/8/6 23:29

Bro Sean

Greetings in Jesus' Name by Whose Blood we are Saved.AMEN.

are you seeking to spend time with God because He is God or do you expect something from Him?

God has oft woken me up in the middle of the night, sometimes i just rolled over and went back to sleep but after a time i took hold of the Grace afforded me and got out of bed. i did have to be checked a few times for wanting to wake up and pray so that i would have a story to tell, rather than wanting to be in His Presence. We all need to watch out for that hence the question i asked above. Prayer is an Empowering thing if one is touched by the Will of God and conforms to it. Whether it is a minute or an hour isn't really an issue, it is whether we have come away from prayer Imbued with the Knowledge and Desire to do God's will.

i let our Lord wake me up or call me as He needs me to, other times i just go before Him to be in awe of Him. He draws me to Himself using His Spirit and burdens me. This can happen at any time and so i find myself praying a work sometimes as i go about my duties.

i pray God extend His Grace to you to desire to be in His Presence and in that i pray God pour His Love into you.AMEN.

Grace and Peace is ours in Jesus' NAME. AMEN.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/8/6 23:34

Brother, if you can somehow deny flesh and get up to study the Word and pray early in the morning, you will make great strides in your walk, and make them very quickly. The best way to get up in the morning is to let God wake up you. Before you go to bed tonight, ask the the Holy Spirit to awaken you early in the morning for this very purpose. He will wake you up...but you must then *get up* or you will quickly fall back asleep.

The mornings are the best time to seek God for strength to overcome the wicked day. Persistence is the secret, brother. Meet God in the secret place, early. Confess your weaknesses, your utter worthlessness and how much you need Him. If you can somehow wait for Him, and finally break through, He will touch your inner man according to the riches of His glory and strengthen you with might. The Word will suddenly come alive on the page, and your prayer will take wings upward to the throne of God.

Brother if you make it though and touch Jesus, you'll have the victory throughout the entire day. You'll commune with God all day long in your heart and you'll bless others just by talking to them. You'll be a vessel filled with salt and light. This is the secret men like Mueller and John Hyde and McCheyne knew about, and it's what I believed sustained their ministries. But it sure takes discipline! It's the hardest thing in the world. Your flesh will squeal and kick and bite and thrash like she's being murdered...because she is! I've failed and given into my flesh innumerable times. When I miss God at the beginning of the day, I fight an uphill battle all the rest of the day, and I am miserable and useless.

Remember that manna won't carry over. It breeds worms and stinks after 24 hours. And you can't be given manna by John Wesley or Spurgeon; you can't subsist off food that other man collected. You'll have to go out of your tent and collect it yourself *each morning*. Just like the Apostle Paul said, if you don't *work*, you don't eat.

Re:, on: 2007/8/6 23:46

Quote:
-----Remember that manna won't carry over. It breeds worms and stinks after 24 hours. And you can't be given manna by John Wesley or Spurgeon; you can't subsist off food that other man collected. You have to go out of your tent each morning and collect it yourself. Just like the Apostle Paul said, if you don't work, you don't eat.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/7 0:48

Tremendous topic Sean. I love your transparency.

When I do not persist, I also feel it throughout the day. Yesterday the Christian was abiding in Christ, feeding on the bread of life as Paul West says, and so today he feels he can "take a break" and try to live off of yesterday's taste. But in his own strength, the deicietfulness of a spoiled nature can surprise him with unexpected ambitions, easily hurt feelings, fear, political gossip. It's awful...and not a break at all for the Christian but actually quite draining.

But you know all of that ...I am just sharing my own failures with you so that you do not feel all alone and defeated in this area.

I mentioned a similar theme in the recent Healing of the Soul thread...I liken putting on Christ as part of getting dressed for the day. Afterall, being properly clothed is important! Those who are looking to be strong enough that they no longer need to rise each day desperate for a touch from the Lord are under basic misgivings about the Gospel. (I believe) Better we limp feebly and painfully to Christ everyday, then run away like those healed lepers satisfied with their own strength. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?"

Quote:

-----Persistence is the secret, brother.

There is no shortcut to this one. Yet I do have one general tip that I have found helps: stay close to the Lord throughout the day. Prayer is not wearisome, except when we make it so by neglect. This business of entering and exiting is what makes prayer wearisome. Keep your heart well oiled in the Spirit during the day and it will not creak when you open it in the morning.

We might say that a prayer life grows tenderly but steadily like so many flowers. Your morning prayer and devotions is like a well kept garden you tend to. You break the soil, you plant the seed, and water the buds, and with God's blessing, their colors break forth! Yet we cannot stay in our private gardens all day. Abiding in the lord throughout the rest of the day is like walking among the wild flowers. This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears all nature sings. How wonderful, and timely, I are exchanges with the lord while working or driving--- I'm sure many of us can remember some were so natural, growing in unexpected and wild places more beautiful then any man-made garden. Behold the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin,... I need to keep in mind, that I ready myself for prayer best by staying in prayer. "Abide in me, and I in you."

Here is another very practical tip that might help: being that I am an impulsive creative night owl with about 15 ideas in my head all the time, mental discipline for waiting on the Lord in the morning is one of the hardest battles I have had to fight. (alot...) So I stopped beating myself up about it, got myself a cheap mp3 player, downloaded some great bible studies (such as the Zac Poonen through the bible series)...or even some audio scriptures themselves, get up early and jump on the treadmill. After about 20-30 minutes my mind and body are revived, and through listenin to the Word, my heart and spirit is focused intently on spiritual concerns. So once I shower, I'm wide awake, and more ready for prayer! Sometimes I need to leave the house, because it becomes noisy even at 5:00 am with the kids waking for school... I'll take my mp3 player to the gym and then get to the office well enough before everyone where it's still quiet and draw close. I think it sweetens the air there...

I really admire those men who can readily roll out of bed, alert. I've always been somewhat of a night owl...but if I get physical first I can be up and at 'em by 4:30 or 5:00.

Blessings,

MC

Re: How? - posted by Spitfire, on: 2007/8/7 7:51

Hi Sean. I love you, Brother. I shall never forget your beautiful face!...and your heart...Ok. How do you overcome the sleepies to get out of bed and seek God? I'm just going to give you my testimony in this area.

I realized that I was in a spiritual slumber (which you have done). I prayed to God that he would stick me with a pin, shock me with a cattle prod, bring my slumbering soul to attention, and I prayed that he would do whatever it took to cause me to respond to the alarm that I knew was going off in the spirit. It wasn't long until I couldn't sleep. My thirst for God was so overpowering that I was up all hours of the night and it wasn't a matter of having to make myself get up, it was a matter of having to make myself go back to bed so I could work the next day.

You are so well on your way, Dear One! Just ask God to do what only He can do. Ask God to help you love him more than anything else in the world. Ask God to tear down everything in your heart and life that is exalting itself above Him. He loves to answer those kinds of prayers, Friend!

Here's a song for you:

You are the air I breathe
You are the air I breathe
Your Holy Presence living in me

Ask God to become your air. Love, Dian.

Re: - posted by death2self (), on: 2007/8/7 10:49

Hi Sean,

It's been a process of sorts as most things are in the kingdom of God. I used to attend a Korean church most early mornings for prayer but heard back in early 2004 that I needed to pray at home. I had no idea of how to begin and actually the first time I fell asleep for a couple of hours.

Ask God to do whatever He needs to do in your life to bring you a place where you can seek Him early in the morning and ask Jesus to order it and He will do it! When I entered into covenant with the Lord about this and was serious about it, He stepped in so I would encourage you to do the same. It's not been a pretty process for me but I can testify that the Lord has been faithful. He's been faithful when I've rolled over, when I've missed it and has lovingly disciplined me when I simply chose to stay in bed because it was warm and I was too tired or too whatever...

When I started getting up to pray, I put my cellphone under my pillow and this worked for a while. Later I heard in prayer not to set my alarm any more. I simply ignored this and said that couldn't be God and begin to miss my early morning time with the Lord when I realized that I failed to obey Him. Once I repented and obeyed, the Holy Spirit has been faithful to awaken me for several years without an alarm clock. If He orders my steps, I don't need to use an alarm clock.

To get up in the morning, requires that I go to bed when the Lord requires as well and I've struggled at times because I didn't want to go to bed early, sometimes quite early. Allow the Holy Spirit to order your steps and he'll tell you what to do.

Here's answers to the specific questions you raised.

Quote:

-----How did waking up early help your reading/prayer life?

Starting your day with the Jesus is the only way to go. You need that daily manna that only Jesus can give you as you seek His face in prayer and in reading the scriptures. There's no substitute for that.

Reading the scriptures will increase your desire to read them and as you spend more time in prayer, you will desire more

e time in prayer. He began to bring more conviction about my ways and began to open the scriptures up to me as I submitted to this discipline. It's not a quid pro quo deal but He will meet you as you obey Him.

Quote:

-----What benefits followed having extra time towards other matters?

For a season, the Lord allowed me to return to bed so I would spend a couple of hours in prayer and the scriptures and then take a short nap before I had to go work. It was a wonderful season of time.

Those days are behind me and if I don't pray and read the scriptures when He directs it, there's no time to do it. The walk is progressive and Jesus has been extraordinarily kind to me but has forced me to become more disciplined.

Quote:

-----How did you remain consistent, disciplining your body?

There have been times when I've been lax and the Lord has made life so dry and barren that I can't live without time in prayer and the scriptures. Whenever I've tried to make it about how I feel, it's been difficult but the Lord wants my eyes to be upon Him.

Quote:

-----How do you deal with variables in life? Such as late night/overnight visitors,

It means that you go to bed when the Lord orders and don't have visitors over unless He directs. If my life is no longer my own, I can't be the decision-maker and the controller of my life.

This sounds trite but it's very true and quite painful because most people want to run their own life.

Quote:

-----What was it like walking throughout the day knowing you spent over an hour with God?

It's been a real blessing. Without my daily manna, it doesn't take long to starve. It was not some great accomplishment because the Holy Spirit orders it and gives me the strength to make it through oftentimes in the midst of weakness.

Blessings to you Sean, the Lord Jesus loves to order our time with Him. He is faithful to do in your heart. I'm excited to see what Jesus is going to do...

Re: - posted by Talkn2u, on: 2007/8/7 11:12

Good Morning!!!

I am not a wise old man of God, but I am a Woman with a Love and Passion for The Word, and our God...

I would love to interject here...

I am awoken early each and every morning; to spend that time in the Word and before my Father.

I do not use an alarm...

My thirst for Truth over the past decade has been Honored by the Lord and He lovingly wakes me up and spend time with Him.

It is in those early, quiet hours that His Word is open and falls in torrents into my spirit.

The Praise and the Fellowship we share is indescribable....

and

when I go out into the workplace, His Word and His Spirit is planted in me and when opportunities arise He pours out of me, onto those in desperation that do not know Him.

How did I come to this Place?

I fell in love with Jesus; when I truly realized that He loved me.

It was an amazing reality.

And once I knew that He loved me...And I recognized Grace for the first time in my life, to the magnitude that I do...

I wanted to Know HIM...

So I began to study His Word...

Not to receive anything, but to KNOW HIM

My study times grew from one or two hours to sometimes 8 and 10...

I was raising four children at that time, as a single mother, so I had to awaken early in the night to get study time in before they got up and the busyness of the day pounced on me.

But it was NO EFFORT to get up.

Do you have to drag a child out of bed on Christmas morning to go open presents...???

I have been that way now for nearly 12 years.. The more I KNOW of Him, the more I want to KNOW of HIM.

I have found that I desire to be in His Presence above the presence of any other...

The cost? Is actually a reward...for I have learned to rejoice in the fellowship of His sufferings....

Pain, heartache and the cares of this world have been remarkable vehicles to drive me to the Cross, to bring me to my knees at the Foot of the Throne.

I live to Glorify Him...

My children are grown and gone..the house is quiet and to myself...I am in the best position EVER...

And

there is a gorgeous view of the mountains outside of my balcony window...

there I go to the mountain and meet with Him. It is the best way in the world to start my day...

and to end it.

Oh I pray that for you and every other person to come to this place of hunger and thirst to KNOW Him...our God, Our Saviour, Our Redeemer, Lord and Master !!!!

thanks for letting spill over...

Bonnie

Re: - posted by LoveHim, on: 2007/8/7 12:38

e m bounds..

Begin the Day with Prayer

I ought to pray before seeing any one. Often when I sleep long, or meet with others early, it is eleven or twelve o'clock before I begin secret prayer. This is a wretched system. It is unscriptural. Christ arose before day and went into a solitary place. David says: "Early will I seek thee"; "Thou shalt early hear my voice." Family prayer loses much of its power and sweetness, and I can do no good to those who come to seek from me. The conscience feels guilty, the soul unfed, the lamp not trimmed. Then when in secret prayer the soul is often out of tune, I feel it is far better to begin with God -- to see his face first, to get my soul near him before it is near another. -- Robert Murray McCheyne

THE men who have done the most for God in this world have been early on their knees. He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, he will be in the last place the remainder of the day.

Behind this early rising and early praying is the ardent desire which presses us into this pursuit after God. Morning listlessness is the index to a listless heart. The heart which is behindhand in seeking God in the morning has lost its relish for God. David's heart was ardent after God. He hungered and thirsted after God, and so he sought God early, before daylight. The bed and sleep could not chain his soul in its eagerness after God. Christ longed for communion with God; and so, rising a great while before day, he would go out into the mountain to pray. The disciples, when fully awake and ashamed

d of their indulgence, would know where to find him. We might go through the list of men who have mightily impressed the world for God, and we would find them early after God.

A desire for God which cannot break the chains of sleep is a weak thing and will do but little good for God after it has indulged itself fully. The desire for God that keeps so far behind the devil and the world at the beginning of the day will never catch up.

It is not simply the getting up that puts men to the front and makes them captain generals in God's hosts, but it is the ardent desire which stirs and breaks all self-indulgent chains. But the getting up gives vent, increase, and strength to the desire. If they had lain in bed and indulged themselves, the desire would have been quenched. The desire aroused them and put them on the stretch for God, and this heeding and acting on the call gave their faith its grasp on God and gave to their hearts the sweetest and fullest revelation of God, and this strength of faith and fullness of revelation made them saints by eminence, and the halo of their sainthood has come down to us, and we have entered on the enjoyment of their conquests. But we take our fill in enjoyment, and not in productions. We build their tombs and write their epitaphs, but are careful not to follow their examples.

We need a generation of preachers who seek God and seek him early, who give the freshness and dew of effort to God, and secure in return the freshness and fullness of his power that he may be as the dew to them, full of gladness and strength, through all the heat and labor of the day. Our laziness after God is our crying sin. The children of this world are far wiser than we. They are at it early and late. We do not seek God with ardor and diligence. No man gets God who does not follow hard after him, and no soul follows hard after God who is not after him in early morn.

Re: - posted by SeanHobson (), on: 2007/8/7 17:58

I have read E.M. Bounds power through prayer book twice, and he has a chapter especially on this subject, which I think was quoted twice. What once sparked a zeal in me to do likewise only adds guilt now.

But I am astonished brethren. I literally just posted this *last night* and look wealth of profitable responses! Give me time to digest these things, and I will respond shortly.

Until then, thank you all for stopping in and sharing,

Sean M. Hobson

Re: A Word For Sean - posted by Spitfire, on: 2007/8/10 6:30

Hi Sean. I have a word for you and I have decided to post it here, publicly, because I believe it is what the Lord has instructed me to do.

I awoke very early this morning and you immediately came to my mind. I wasn't praying for you, I was just thinking about you and this thread that you started a few days ago with a question to the saints here on SI.

As I lay there, God spoke to me. He told me to share with you publicly, here on this thread, something which I believe is a huge revelation in God's word that is overlooked quite often.

Proverbs 18:21 says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."

Love what? Death or life. You, Sean, love life. You, Sean, are seeking God. You, Sean, want to eat the fruit of life, so you need to understand where that life is hidden. It's in your tongue.

About 3 years ago, I had already come to SI, but God had really turned up the heat in showing me how far I was from his kingdom, so much of my time spent listening to the sermons I found here sent me to the dust. I had become quite agonized and had begun to arise as early as I could drag myself out of bed to pray. Then, I had a revelation which changed my life forever. I already knew that I was far, far from what God wanted me to be. I could see it quite clearly and I was feeling a bit hopeless that things could ever really change, because I had tried to change, but nothing was happening. Then, I had this revelation.

Somehow, and I guess it was God's mercy, I began to realize that I had the power to call those things that are not as tho

ugh they were. Romans 4:17 says that God "calls those things which be not as though they were."

One thing I started to do was tell the Lord in prayer that I love him more than anything. I did it prophetically. I was calling it forth with my own tongue. I knew in my heart that it wasn't the present fact, but I wanted it to become the fact, so I said it, out loud, in prayer. As I proceeded in this way, over time, a fever began in me. I began to wail when I would pray. I would scream and cry and tell God, "I love you more than anything! You are my life! My breath! I can't breath without you God! I would rather be dead than not know you! If I can't know you, Lord, then kill me now! Just let me love you, Lord! I love you more than anything! Help me, Oh God!"

Sean, it's working. I'm beginning to really love God, and strangely enough, I'm beginning to love other people ;-). You are one of them. Dian.

Re: - posted by SeanHobson (), on: 2007/8/26 15:03

Brethren,

I want to thank you all again for the wisdom that was given from your experiences in this area of walking with Christ. All of you were completely honest and blunt when necessary, and I appreciate that. I created this thread only two days before I had to depart for a trip to Phoenix, Arizona, so that's partly why I've yet to respond till now.

Brother Iron Man: I admire your self-searching; God should not have to follow a scheduled time to have his children get up and intercede. He ought to have the right to dictate when and why his servants pray. However, he demands from me individually that my mornings be a set time for prayer and reading the scriptures. Thank you for the wisdom concerning intentions.

Brother PaulWest: I agree with your words, but I find no strength to perform them. It is true that those who rely on old manna won't last long, and that I cannot get the same refreshment from a secondary source. But I am pathetically weak when it comes to killing my flesh. I can check it here and there, but it as if when I battle to stay awake I don't think reasonably. I thank you for the admonishment and will attempt to apply it.

Brother Mike: I really appreciate the analogies Mike. I also entertained the thought of going to a gym first and then doing devotions, but I ran into the problem that my school's gym doesn't open till 6am. But in a way I did try this; when I was in phoenix I woke up early and hiked with friends before I prayed; and I was no longer sleepy. I also, however, couldn't focus when I attempted prayer afterwards. I will try to listen to a sermon or audio scriptures first tomorrow and see how that helps. But it just goes to show there are no specific rules with this type of thing, but I hope to consistency follow a unique regimen as soon as possible. Thank you for the practical tips.

Sister Talkn2u: I can't imagine what it must have been like trying to raise children and maintain an early morning devotional life. I could study the bible for hours when I had no other responsibilities, but now that school and other things abound I find my devotional time for Jesus challenged, and for some reason my desire to know him has withered away. I also am awakened every morning, but because I don't desire to know him as you do; I stay in bed. But I covet the express joy that permeates your post, and hopefully reading it multiple times will drive me to the love for Christ's presence you have. Thank you for the testimony.

Re: - posted by SeanHobson (), on: 2007/8/26 15:06

Brother DeathtoSelf: If I may, I will from hence answer your words in the order you answered mine.

Quote:
-----For a season, the Lord allowed me to return to bed so I would spend a couple of hours in prayer and the scriptures and then take a short nap before I had to go work. It was a wonderful season of time. Those days are behind me and if I don't pray and read the scriptures when He directs it, there's no time to do it. The walk is progressive and Jesus has been extraordinarily kind to me but has forced me to become more disciplined

May I purpose a question? How do you stay awake? Even in prayer (as you mentioned) I am so sleepy I just repeat myself and when I read I understand nothing. Eventually I get tired of fighting and just go back to sleep. How did you prevent this? I've already tried splashing water on my face or taking a shower.

Quote:
-----There have been times when I've been lax and the Lord has made life so dry and barren that I can't live without time in prayer and the scriptures. Whenever I've tried to make it about how I feel, it's been difficult but the Lord wants my eyes to be upon Him.

I know what you mean brother! I am indescribably dry and barren and I wonder how I continue to live on spiritually. But are you submitting that to remain disciplined is to fear the leanness God sends in his children's soul when they forsake his company?

Quote:
-----It means that you go to bed when the Lord orders and don't have visitors over unless He directs. If my life is no longer my own, I can't be the decision-maker and the controller of my life.

Very, Very good advice brother. Thank you for sharing this. I often feel as if I've sinned if I don't entertain the visitors company. I now know I was mistaken, and God has the right to demand my time even if it conflicts with another's.

Quote:
-----It's been a real blessing. Without my daily manna, it doesn't take long to starve. It was not some great accomplishment because the Holy Spirit orders it and gives me the strength to make it through oftentimes in the midst of weakness. Blessings to you Sean, the Lord Jesus loves to order our time with Him. He is faithful to do in your heart. I'm excited to see what Jesus is going to do...

I covet your humble disposition and walk with the Lord right now. I also am excited about what The Holy Spirit would do if only I might spend time with him. He is able to keep me, and of a truth, he wakes me up every morning, but I suppose the problem lies (as before) in my willing to stay up. Thank you for the experienced advice brother.

Re: - posted by SeanHobson (), on: 2007/8/26 15:09

Sister Diane: I knew not that ye had responded with another post. It wasn't until Linn notified me that I got a chance to read it. I sincerely thank you for the encouragement. I also have experiences where I wake up in the middle of the night, but I never feel the Holy Spirit moving me to pray; I just feel sleepy. If I do pray, I do it because I know I ought to, and they are very short and lifeless prayers.

I am speechless concerning your most recent response sister. To be honest, I don't quite know the exact meaning of the verse you quoted. I have heard so many misuse it to support the doctrine of speaking things into existence; (usually prosperity or good events in their lives) that I have serious doubts concerning speaking myself into a greater love for Christ. Yea and what's worse is that I've done as you have sister. I've made vows to God about my life, career goals, dress, and especially devotional time and broke them ALL. It's just lip service with me and I don't want to add to my condemnation. But I know you mean only the best and I don't have words sufficient to thank you equal to the loving help you've offered me. If I ever do get victory over this sin; you will be the first to get a PM. Thank you for the beautiful song.

Many thanks to all who responded hitherto. I am still sleeping over, but I'm going to try the alarm clock again, as well as listening to a sermon first.

God help us all

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/26 16:51

Quote:
-----But it just goes to show there are no specific rules with this type of thing...
I've made vows to God about my life, career goals, dress, and especially devotional time and broke them ALL. Its just lip service with me and I don't want to add to my condemnation.

You know, often in the forum here we do our best to give only the information and testimonies we believe has led to our successes, discarding anything that has led to failure. It's an unconscious filter we apply to our testimonies, but one that perhaps leaves out the information that would be most helpful.

The bottom line is that discipline, for me at least, is not an effortless habit but a battle of gaining ground, losing ground, and then surging forward again. If we are honest...we are ever balancing ratios in our lives. For instance, we might notice spiritual areas that need tending to and so we surge forward in prayer, bible study, and the like...but soon find our work duties need increased focus. So we turn our attention to learn more about project management, take on a second job, or spend extra time getting our heads around some new piece of software for a couple of weeks, all the while still mindful of holding ground on our spiritual fronts. Perhaps it's not too long afterwards we begin to notice that all of this intellectual and spiritual activity is leaving our bodies flabby and unenergetic so we begin a program of physical fitness. Perhaps with enough discipline and focus you manage to achieve results in all three of these areas, but to your dismay you realize your valient efforts have made you a totally self-absorbed person, working from morning to night on self-maintenance...leaving nothing for other people, including your own family.

Arrggg! Brother, I've learned to see God's grace reflected in the seasons. Not every day offers the same ratio of warm sunshine, and not everyday offers the same volume of refreshing rain. Indeed, if it weren't for the biting cold to come around every year, the old diseases and germs wouldn't be killed off and spring wouldn't be fresh but stagnant. Seasons take time to work through...they do not cycle every single day but over periods of time. Once you are in summer you may feel tempted to believe you will always be in summer, and to become quite intolerant of those who are in winter. Yet I believe the seasons reflect the Lord's patient renewal, just as all of creation reflects something about the Creator.

What I am saying is to not get caught up in daily regiment, which requires more then character, but also fortunate circumstance. Financial instability, extra duties, and sickness are only a few of the external factors that can bring winter upon you...do not imagine the Lord will leave you in these times! Daily regiment is not the greatest evidence of maturity, but growing in love perhaps is.

And if you feel compelled to seek God just to avoid condemnation, then prepare yourself for a long loveless road of failure and frustration. In my experience, Christians who feel they must be in summer all their lives are not under grace, but under the law...and under a heavy burdensome misconception.

Another analogy: to avoid mistakes and reduce inefficiencies, our small business is beginning a process documentation project, to help distribute the best processes and procedures. So, in my typical fashion, I began by trying to find the best examples of Operations Manuals to learn from. I asked a trusted friend "Have you ever come across an operations manual that was so complete and well written that it anticipated every possible mistake and helped the employees all work from the same perspective consistently?" He answered without hesitation, "Yes. It's called the bible and even it is full of grace." Point taken...business can be boiled down to processes buttoned together by people with vaying personalities and dispositions...success is not just the processes themselves. Relationships, whether business, or spiritual, human or divine, are still based on trust. Yet, we saints can sometimes emphasize spiritual principles and processes to the point where we have a hard time simply trusting the Lord.

I'm not discouraging your "Prayer Process Implementation Procedure"...I am only reminding you that Jesus promised he will never forsake you or leave you. Sure, if there is something in your character that needs work, he is working on your behalf...you can trust in him. And if you miss your morning devotionals and prayer because you were up all night studying or meeting a deadline, then feel free to look for time elsewhere to meet with the Lord.

I know some here may be wary of my advice...but I give such grace to my own spouse and children, because I know they still need my support even when their duties keep them from spending regular family time. I do not expect the relationship I have with any of them to be the same 10 years from now. At times we luxuriate in hours of fellowship, and at other t

imes we chat briefly to each other before heading out the door in the morning. Yet never once do they feel my condemnation...I know they are all working hard! How is it that the Lord would have less grace towards his children and bride than me?

And one day, after passing through the fire or through the flood of trials, you find a rich prayer life, don't become tempted to believe you have mastered yourself, and start writing new laws for other weaker saints to follow. Just be thankful that the Lord has brought you to a wealthy place and luxuriate in His fellowship.

Blessings,

MC

Re: - posted by BeYeDoers (), on: 2007/8/26 16:56

David Wilkerson tells the story of when he was younger, he would wrestle with this issue often. All the great men of faith always seemed to pray in the morning, but he was a night owl as well, as often a full day's worth of preaching would keep him up till midnight or 2am. While fighting God in prayer between these hours asking why he couldn't seem to wake up early and pray, he heard God say, "How much earlier do you want it? It's 2am!!"

I must confess, however, that I too have struggled for several years to pray early. Bro. Wilkerson apparently had better control over the flesh than I do, and seems to me that I could avoid much folly and trouble if I would only start the day with prayer. My flesh and the devil always seem to get the better of me. Either my mind wanders to the end of the earth and back, or I succumb to sleep. This indeed has been one of the biggest struggles of my Christian life. I too, Sean, have tried many "methods" to get up, but alas, I fail. God help me!

Re: And in the morning, rising up a great while before dayÂ..., on: 2007/8/27 8:47

Good morning, Sean,

I have one word for you with regard to your sense of failure in the task you have set yourself... and that is *don't wallow* in your failure when you fail.

Take a soldierly attitude to the command you feel in your spirit, and if you only get out of bed for a few minutes, and present yourself in God's presence for His ministrations *immediately* your alarm goes off, it is all good practice for a more grueling war. You will grow. God will see to it.

Now, you need to invite God to work His death in you more actively, and gird up the loins of your mind like a man, and *practise* getting up.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/27 10:08

Quote:

-----don't wallow in your failure when you fail

Amen

Re: - posted by death2self (), on: 2007/8/27 13:53

Quote:
-----May I purpose a question? How do you stay awake? Even in prayer (as you mentioned) I am so sleepy I just repeat myself and when I read I understand nothing. Eventually I get tired of fighting and just go back to sleep. How did you prevent this?

Hi Sean, great to hear from you. How does one stay awake? I don't have a pat answer for you. When I started out, I felt weird and helpless, and oftentimes (and sometimes still do) fell asleep. It seemed as if nothing was happening.

I would encourage you to press on regardless of how you may feel and to simply be honest with the Lord, as you have been here. Lord I'm in your presence but it seems as if nothing is happening and your word is dry. What will it take to change this in my heart and have your word quicken in my heart?

I would honestly confess this and ask the Lord to do whatever He needs to do to change this. If you don't know what to pray, simply acknowledge that. I know that reading the scriptures in the presence of God is precious and oftentimes I read the Psalms aloud in my closet. It's a good place to start.

The first lie that Satan will tell you when you begin to seek Jesus in the prayer closet is that nothing is happening, so why don't you just go back to bed. I believed that lie for a time, so I would encourage you to keep pressing in...

Quote:
-----I know what you mean brother! I am indescribably dry and barren and I wonder how I continue to live on spiritually. But are you submitting that to remain disciplined is to fear the leanness God sends in his children's soul when they forsake his company?

There are many scriptures that show God pulls away to see what is in our hearts. Jesus wants us to seek Him with wholeheartedness. I don't fear the leanness but it's quite painful but don't want to grieve his Holy Spirit. The leanness comes so that we will seek Jesus with a wholeheartedness.

Blessings to you brother, I'm excited to see what Jesus is orchestrating in your heart and life. He is with you my friend...

Re: - posted by SeanHobson (), on: 2007/9/1 21:17

Because of class time and homework I am unable to respond to threads on SI but on the weekends, please do forgive my tardiness.

Mike: I really don't know where to begin with your post. How many drafts does it take to write so fluently? It must be natural. Anyway, you take the heavy yoke off my neck in more than one area; bringing lofty testimonies and larger than life spiritual figures down to reality. That's not to say that I can make excuses for my looseness by pointing out the errors of great men, but it is encouraging (if I may use the word) to know all strove as I do. But I also think of Ravenhill telling the story of John Wesley. He was having dinner with John Bunyan and was asked to stay and have conversation. Wesley refused on the account he had to get home and sleep lest he be unable to have his morning devotions to God.

Even so I yearn for this type of discipline. But you've shown me that circumstances to permit the glorious moments like the one detailed above are a gift from God, not my discipline. But there must be effort on my part; the one thing lacking. And this winter season in my soul as reigned so long I've forgotten what the summer feels like.

I don't know how you juggle everything Mike, but I am making no leeway. I read the other post you made in Warriors thread about setting small goals, and I'm going to try that. It hurts my pride (because I've gone much farther), but at least it's progress. I managed to pray for one hour three out of the last four days, so I'm going to follow the path you've trodden uphill and try to get victory gradually over the loose areas of my life. Thanks for the wisdom.

BeYeDoers: I have no advice for you brother. Nevertheless I know this, we are the most blessed young people to ever live (save those in Christ's earthly life) to have such wise men over us in the local church and SI. We have floodlights of God through the abundance of articles and sermons here; we really are without excuse. Join me will you, in, if not having victory, at least attempting to fight until the end. God help us both.