

Day 3

While our last question yesterday seems straight forward. You most likely had a mixed response. Part of you probably immediately says, "Yes!" But part of you probably also said, "Wait a minute, I really like those things. I don't want to give them up." If your heart desires to set these things aside but you find yourself struggling with the idea of actually following through, you are not alone. You find yourself in very good company.

Sacrifice is hard.

The struggle against the temptations this world is real. The battle is real. Jesus, himself acknowledged the struggle between spirit and flesh.

Read Matthew: 26:40-42

What was Jesus' response to this struggle? He went away and prayed. He prayed for God's will to be accomplished in His life, that God's will would win out over any fleshly, earthly will.

Are you prepared to pray that prayer? It a big prayer and it may feel like you are missing something that you would need to live into that prayer. Maybe you do not even really, completely believe that it is possible.

You are not alone.

Read Mark 9:14-24

This passage tells us of a regular man, desperately needing Jesus help. In verse 23 Jesus tells him that all things are possible for one who believes. Immediately the man is struck with two different realizations, his lack of belief and his desire for greater belief. His response in Mark 9:24 is to acknowledge the deficiency of his faith and to ask Jesus to help him with his unbelief.

Maybe that is your first prayer. "I believe; help my unbelief".

Reflect on your heart. Pray. Use the lines below to offer voice your prayer to God. What do you need God's help with right now in your life? Do you need help with your belief?

Day 4

Once we have established and strengthened our resolve to believe, once we have even a microgram of faith, Luke 17:5 teaches us the immediate sufficiency and the power of a newly acquired grain of faith.

Read Luke 17: 5-6

As I sit and type this devotional, I hear a knock at my door and paused. I hesitated, almost not wanting to have the work I was doing interrupted. However, I arose and opened the door, because a knock at our door is a rare and notable event. I open the door to find two, sweet boys, standing there smiling at me. They introduced themselves and my husband and I had the best conversation we have had with a neighbor since moving to Illinois.

It turns out that one of the young boys used to live in our house. They liked our dogs and had a dog of their own. We told stories about our dogs. I told them how our dogs like to chase the squirrels. He told me about a time while they lived here, that a window was left open and a squirrel got in through the window, ran all about the house, got stuck behind the refrigerator, and they called animal control to come and help it out. We all laughed chatted a bit more and then they continued their adventure around the neighborhood.

The entire time we were talking, I was filled with peace and joy. Although we chatted on the stoop, at a safe distance, I was never afraid of any germs they might have been carrying. I was DELIGHTED to be having a conversation with them.

As I sit here and reflect, I am struck by how our current circumstances aligned to divinely orchestrate our encounter. I also cannot ignore that my immediate reaction was to see the knock at my door as a distraction and an interruption, and that I almost did not answer.

Read Revelation 3:20

God is knocking, can you hear Him now? Will you answer? What things are holding you back as you get up to go answer the door? Write them down your fears or hesitation below and ask God to remove or help you overcome the obstacles?

Day 5

Do not miss what is going on around you. This is an opportunity to slow; to hear; to realize our true mission and realign our lives accordingly.

In Christ Church Children’s Ministry, each week we spend time trying to ignite the spirit of mission in the hearts of our children. We pray that they will have eyes that see the needs around them, that their hearts would be stirred, and that their hands would find a way to help.

That is our prayer now, for you as an individual and for you as a family.

What are the needs around you?

- They may be needs in your own families. Is there a need in your spouse or your child that has gone unknown and unseen?
- Is there a need in your neighborhood? Are there individuals who are alone, with no help, no family? Are there people who do not know Jesus?
- Are there needs at the church? Are there children without mentors in their lives, elderly who desperately need connection, disciples who you can engage in growth with? People who come each week to church seeking to connect with someone?

