

Monday, March 18th

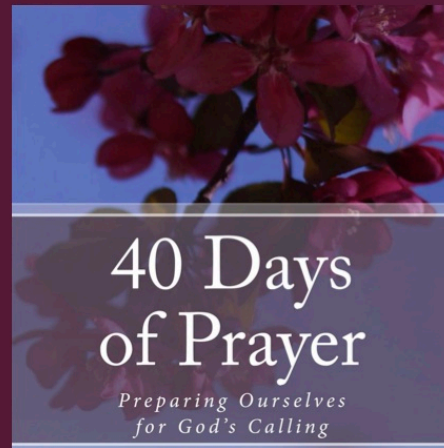
Day 11 – Letting Go and Taking Hold


Hebrews 11:1-3

The trapeze artist makes a decision to let go before she experiences the reassurance of the “catch.” At just the right time, she commits to the flight. There is no turning back then. Free-flying follows...until the catch is made.

Before we can take hold of God’s hopes and dreams for us, we must let go of our comforts, securities and aspirations. We have to let go, flying through the air, trusting that God is there to make the catch. This is what faith is about.

Prayer Thought: Ask God to identify what you are clutching that prevents you letting go. Then ask God for the courage to let go and fly.



 Mark Tidsworth

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Tuesday, March 19th

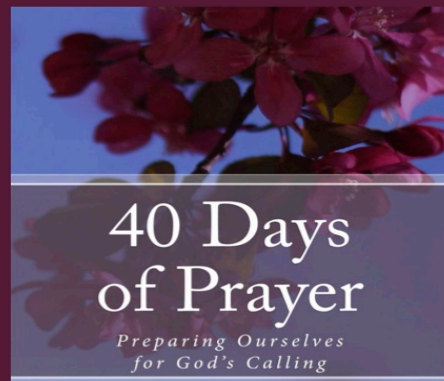
Day 12 – Crucified With Christ


Galatians 2: 19-20

“I have been crucified with Christ.” What does this mean? Are our personalities and personhood wiped away? No. These are gifts from God. Instead being crucified with Christ is more about laying down our wills. By accepting the way of the cross, Jesus accepted and lived the Father’s will rather than his own. This is what being crucified with Christ means for us too. We are called to live out God’s values, ways, and mission in this world.

Years ago, the most Christ-like person I know, shared his secret with me. “Before I get out of bed in the morning,” he said. “I lay down my life again, and ask God to fill me with the Holy Spirit. I commit each day, one day at a time, to God. Essentially, I am crucified with Christ again each day. If I don’t do that (and even do it repeatedly during each day), then I take charge of everything again.”

Prayer Thought: How about an experiment? Consider praying like my friend does...before your feet hit the floor in the morning. You could try this for one day, or one week, or one month and then reflect on how God moves through this experience.



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Wednesday, March 20th

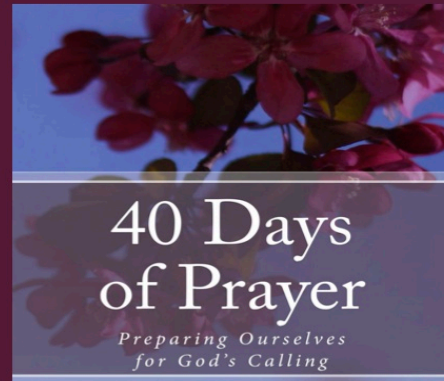
Day 13 – Forgetting Your Credentials

Philippians 3:3-9

Becoming and being competent is a great experience. Most of us train, learn, and develop our skills over time, becoming competent in many activities: vocational skills, sports, relational expertise, homemaking, etc. There is great joy in being competent.

When it comes to formation as faithful disciples, competence is a liability. When we believe ourselves worthy of God's approval, because of our merits, then we shut God out. The Apostle Paul was religiously competent, a religious expert no less. But he gave all that up for the pure grace of God. In fact, he was willing to give up everything, for the joy of knowing Christ. In comparison with life in Christ, all his accomplishments seem like garbage. When we are in Christ, life is sweet.

Prayer Thought: Are you competent in God? No? Great. God is competent in you; in redeeming you. Consider asking God to purify your reliance on God's grace as the source of your life energy.



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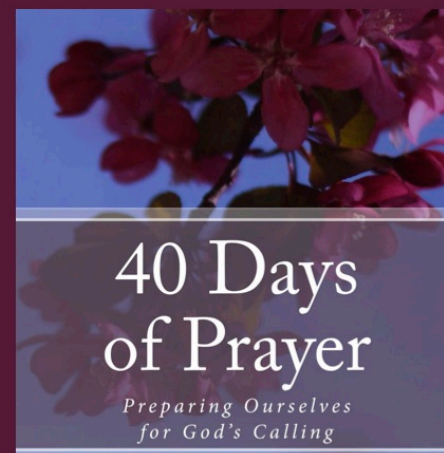
Thursday, March 21st


Day 14 – Mental Models of Church

Acts 2:43-47

What's a good church? What's an effective church? How do we know we are on track? Every Christian person (and most others too) have a picture of a "good" church in their minds. This picture is developed from many experiences, sermons, mentors and cultural influences. In order to discern God's vision for your congregation, you must let go of this picture...whatever it is...as much as you can. It's not that this mental model is wrong or bad – It's simply that it is your mental model for the church. Even this needs to be laid at the feet of Jesus.

Prayer Thought: "Lord, what is it in my mental model that gets in your way?"



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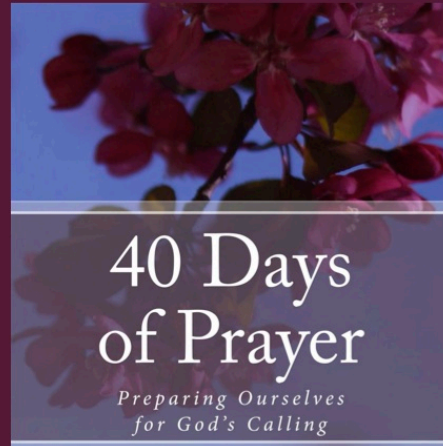
Friday, March 22nd


Day 15 – The Happiness Trap

Luke 9:21–27

Church consultant Gil Rendle writes about “The Happiness Trap.” When our goal in church life is to keep as many people as happy or pleased as much of the time as possible...then we are in the happiness trap. Is this what Jesus gave his life for? For us to be pleased with how our church is running? Is it about our comfort and contentment? When we look at the Jesus we see in the Gospels, we don’t see a Savior overly concerned with the personal preferences or comfort of his disciples.

Prayer Thought: Reflect with God on how you evaluate church. If not the happiness of the members, then what is it about?



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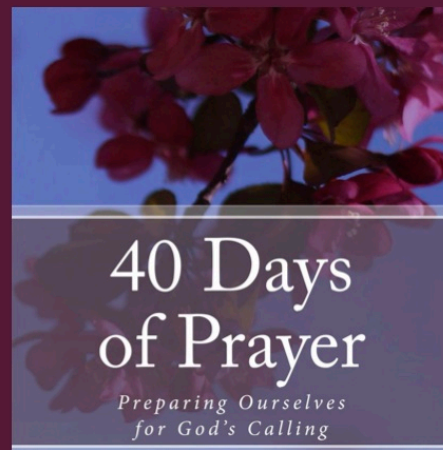
Saturday, March 23rd


Day 16 – It’s Not About You

Philippians 2:3–5

Perhaps Rick Warren read this Philippians passage before he made this saying popular, “It’s not about you.” Everything in our culture tells us the opposite. Get all you can and enjoy it. Whoever has the most toys at the game’s end is the winner. These are the beliefs of popular culture. Most of us bring that attitude to church with us. We want church like we want it...now. If not, we will be Christian consumers, and go elsewhere. Thankfully, church is not about us!

Prayer Thought: Thank God that church is one place or community in the world that is not focused on pleasing you – but has a much higher purpose.



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