**Can you hear Me now? DAY 1**

**Verse for the day: John 10:27 “My sheep listen to my voice”**

One of the commercials that a cellular service provider had on TV for a long time, had a guy walking around different places throughout the country asking the question: “Can You Hear Me now”? What would we do without all our new and old gadgets for communicating with each other? You know our cell phones, I-phones, blackberries, I-pads, computers, smart phones, and the old trusted land line.

Isn’t it funny or maybe I should say, not so funny at times how dependent we have become on all our communication toys? While these devices do make life simpler at times and they seem to help us work smarter rather than harder, I also feel like there are times when good old face to face communication is needed. To slow down; sit face to face with someone and truly carry on a conversation, to give a hug, put a hand on a shoulder, wiped away a tear, gave a big smile, or laughed out loud when they might need it the most. You know that heartfelt personal attention someone might need when they are hurting, down, lonely, or want to share a joy and praise that they might be going through in their life. I think the same is true with our communication and relationship with the Lord. While it can be good to use all the newest technology while seeking the Lord and to be in group discussions and studies, I also think the Lord wants much more than this from us. He wants some face-to-face time alone with us. No interruptions, no commercials, no one else speaking for us. Just to be alone with you one on one, with an open heart ready to share your deepest thoughts. Or maybe just sit and say nothing at all allowing His Spirit to speak to you. I know for me some of the most precious moments I have spent with the Lord are those times when I say nothing at all but just sit still and listen for His gentle voice. **Ps 46:10 “be still and know that I am the Lord”** also, we find in God’s Word that His voice is like a **“gentle whisper” 1 Kings 9:12.** It’s pretty hard to hear God when we are doing all the talking or maybe in a big crowd with lots of noise or activity going on. So, how’s your quiet time with the Lord going? Is it full of distractions and gadgets that keep you from hearing His gentle whisper? Can you hear Him saying **“Can you hear Me now”!** If you can’t maybe you need to slow down and spend some quality one on one time with Him. The more time you spend with Him the more you will start to recognize and hear His Voice. I think you will be amazed how clear, loud and better the connection is compared to using your cell phones and other gadgets when you spend that time alone with Him. So, why not try turning off all those gadgets and find a quiet place that you can get alone with God today.

**I Hate Those Things! DAY 2**

**Verse for the day: Romans 12:9 “Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” *(NIV)***

As a farmer there are two words that represent sin to me like none other: prairie dog and gopher. They are difficult to control and the effects of their holes and furrows can destroy a field. I think these two critters symbolize two type of sinner we see in the world today. Like the prairie dogs who stand loud, proud and tall during the day barking out their cries. They are like those we see in the world who don’t care if their sin is seen in public or in the light of day. But I believe the gopher is even more sinister and destructive due to the fact they work in the dark, unseen, unannounced and unlike the prairie dog. You don’t see them working, only the results of the harm they leave behind, especially when you are trying to irrigate your field. The gopher is like the sins in our lives that we try to hide in the darkness for no one to see. But, just like the gopher the effect of those sin will show up sooner or later in a divorce, our family, corruption, lies, death, the list is endless when we allow sin into our lives.

But the Good News is when turn from our sins and seek repentance The Lord is faithful to forgive and redeem us back into His family and to fellowship with as we seek Him with all our heart, mind, body and soul. So, take some time today to think about those areas in your life that might be causing holes or barriers between you and your relationship with Christ and bring them into the light of Jesus for darkness can’t overcome God’s light.

**Hurts to breathe! DAY 3**

**Verses for the day: Acts 17:24-25 “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heavens and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.” (NIV)**

Have you ever had one of those days when it hurts to breathe? I don’t know if you have ever experienced broken ribs before or not, but if you have you know exactly what I mean when I say it “hurts to breathe”.  I have had a couple of horse wrecks which left me with broken ribs. And while broken ribs do make it hard to breathe, they will eventually heal up and life gets back to normal after a short period of time. But what do you do when it hurts to breathe, and it has nothing to do with physical hurt like a broken rib. Those times when you are waiting for test results, someone you love goes into surgery with a 50/50 chance of recovery, kids make bad choices, a spouse is unfaithful, the loss of a job, or the ultimate loss of losing a loved one or friend. Those times when it feels like every breath you take hurts more than the last one. Where do you turn in times like this? Well, this is where today’s verses reminds us that God is the giver of “life and breath and everything else”. When nothing else makes sense and it feels like the pressures of life are weighing heavy on your chest, making it hard to breathe, turn your focus to the Lord and He will give you the very breath you need to keep on going even when it hurts. And while this can be hard to do during a storm, a hurt, or a loss, we can take comfort in knowing that even when we are down and may not be seeking God, He tells us **“…Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” Heb. 13:5 (NIV)** The next time you find it hard to breathe, take God at his word **“my yoke is easy and my burden is light” Mt. 11:30 (NIV)** and allow God to give you your next breaths. After all He not only made you and everything else on this earth, but He also knows how many breaths you will take while you are here. So, what are you doing to seek the Lord today? Do you know someone who might need a word of encouragement from you? And remember even when it hurts to breathe on your own, God has provided you with His Son, Jesus Christ and His Body of believers called the Church to help in your time of need.

**What do You Say to Them? DAY 4**

**Verse for the day*: Colossians 4:5-6 5Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. (NLV)***

Have you ever been around someone who seems to say and do the right things just when you needed it the most? Regardless what you might be doing or facing they provide a word of encouragement or a helping hand that you needed? As Christians, I think it is especially important to display a sense of hope and encouragement to all and especially those who are not believers. As the old saying goes “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”  And in today’s world it is important we take advantage of every opportunity we can to share the Good News of Christ as Lord and Savior. Now this does not mean we beat them over the head with a Bible until they say the sinner’s prayer. That’s why we are told to “***Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.”*** The last thing a non-believer wants to hear is someone telling them how to live their lives and how sinful and lost they are. This is especially true if you have not earned the right to share the gospel with them. When you have earned someone’s respect and trust and they feel like they can trust your words as well as your actions, they are a lot more open to listening to what you have to say and share. If we as Christians don’t intentionally choose to allow our word, our conversations and our actions to be attractive to others the world will offer them something much different that will only lead to heartache, pain and death. And I believe we are seeing the results of people being more attractive to the world rather than the Good News of Christ. Satan’s knows our weaknesses and he knows how to use this world to deceive and attract us into thinking we can do, say, or act any way we want without any consequences for our actions. So, take every opportunity we get to ***Let our conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.***

**I love That Smell!! DAY 5**

**Verse for the day: Psalm 147:8 “He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills” (NIV)**

For me I don’t think there is another smell on earth that can bring me a sense of renewal and refreshment as the smell of rain. I think that is another reason Jo and I love the mountains so much, especially in the summer when the afternoon rains come almost every day. Living in the desert like we do here in New Mexico, rain is a welcome sight as it can be months between showers, and you learn to appreciate every drop of rain we can get.

I love to sit on our back porch with a hot drink and watching and smelling the rain fall, it reminds me of God’s love for us. Just like the smell of rain brings me a feeling of renewal, refreshment and a sense of peace, it also reminds me that God makes all things new. And as the spring rains come and the days get longer, and the temperature continues to get warmer we start to see the evidence of God’s promises of New Life. What appears to be dead and has no life left in it starts to grow and bloom. The flowers and trees start to bud out and the grass turns green, and God once again paints the landscape with His beauty of color and new life.

And God can do the same things in our life and in the lives of our loved ones as we allow His Living Water to flow in and through us. When we allow God to prune, cultivate, and water us He can take those areas that seem dead and unfruitful and bring new life, bearing new fruit. And the more we allow the “SON” to shine on, in and through our lives the more fruit we will bear for God’s glory.

So, if you see a rainstorm on the horizon don’t worry or fret over it but enjoy the sweet smell of the rain and let God starts to nurture your life into a new creation full of joy. Let Him mold and shape you into the image of His SON. I pray you will have time this summer to sit back and enjoy the smell of a few rain showers knowing that **“God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.” Romans 8:28 (NIV)** Let it Rain! I love the smell and the new life it will bring!

**I Wish I Had More Time for That DAY 6**

**Verse for the day**: ***Hosea 10:12 “Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you”. (NIV)***

Have you ever said or heard someone else say there is not enough time in the day to get everything done that I need or want to do? Why is it that some people can get everything they need or want to do completed in a 24-hour period, while other people never seem to have enough time? How we manage our time can make a difference as to whether we feel we have accomplished our purpose for the day.  While listening to Adrian Roger’s radio program the other day he reminded everyone that we all have the same 24 hours in a day, and we can’t add to or take away from those hours. We all have equal opportunity to use those 24 hours some way or another.  The big difference is that some people are trying to do more than God had planned for them to do over that 24-hour period. When we try doing more than God had planned for us to do during any given day, we can become weary, tired and frustrated. When this happens, we start worrying about tomorrow which will drain or pull away the strength that God planned to give us to get through that next day. And this can become an endless cycle which compounds your frustration, doubt, weariness and at times can leave you with a feeling of complete hopelessness. God’s Word tells us in ***1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*** And I truly believe the same is true when it comes to the time, we have each day of our lives. When God planned our lives even before we were born, His plans were never to give us more than we could do or handle each day. We are the only ones who put the extra stuff in our lives each day that keeps us from God’s plans. That’s why He tells us in ***Psalms 118:24 “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it”. (NRSV)*** God doesn’t say tomorrow or the next day or even next week.  He says rejoice today. Gods warns us in ***Matthew 6:34 “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*** It’s hard to rejoice and not worry when we have more to do than 24 hours will allow. So, if you are feeling overwhelmed and like there are not enough hours in the day to get everything done, maybe you are doing more than God had planned for you to do. Why not start out each day with the Lord by asking Him “Lord what is that you want me to accomplish today?” When you are able to focus on God’s daily plans for your life, I think you will find there is more than enough time in each day to get everything done He wants you to do. And you will never have to say “I wish I had more time for that” because 24 hours will be all you need to get everything done that God had planned for you each day.

**Hide and Seek DAY 7**

**Verse for the day: *Genesis 3:8 “….they hid from the Lord God…..”***

I would guess sometime during your life you have played the game hide and seek with someone. Where one person covers their eyes and counts to a given number before yelling out “ready or not here I come” and then proceeds to try and find everyone who is hiding. Our grandkids love to play the game of hide and seek. Most of the time when we play, I am the one counting while they run off and hide. The youngest still thinks if she doesn’t move and he keeps his eyes closed that I can’t see her. When I get to hide, there are many times they have to yell out ally-ally in free because they can’t find me. So, my question to you is, “are still playing hide and seek with God?” Maybe you’re like my older grandkids and you think you’ve gotten pretty good at hiding or maybe like the youngest thinking as long as I stay still with my eyes closed and I can’t see God, then He can’t see me. **Wrong!** Ever since Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden mankind has been playing hide and seek with God as we see in ***Genesis 3:8 “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden”.*** Even though they hide from God, he knew exactly where they were and what they had done.  God always knows exactly where each one of us are regardless how well we think we are hidden. And the sooner we realize there is no hiding from God the easier it will be when it comes to seeking Him. While hide and seek might be a fun game to play with your kids or grandkids I wouldn’t recommend playing the hiding part, especially when it comes to hiding your sins from God. I tried it, wore the tee shirt, and wrote the book and I am here to tell you that God always knows. But the Good News is if you are still trying to hide from God he hasn’t lost or given up on you, He knows exactly where you are, because He still loves you and wants a relationship with you. There is nothing you can do that will keep God from loving you and seeking you. **Listen I hear Him calling again ALLY-ALLY in FREE,** so don’t wait- the game might end sooner than you think and tomorrow might be too late to accept His Free Gift as He yells out **“Ready or Not Here I Come”**

**When is Enough-Enough? DAY 8**

**Verse for the day*: Deuteronomy 6:5-12*** ***5Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts………..12be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.***

Why is it that most people never seem to be content or satisfied with what they have, and they are always seeking or wanting more? It seems to be the American way now-a- days, that whenever something new comes out we feel we need one or we want to change things around because new captured our eye.

I know for me I have seen this pattern way too often in my life. And each time I give into the temptation to satisfy a desire with more stuff, God convicts me of my selfishness. Now don’t get me wrong. God wants us to enjoy life here on this earth, but He also wants us to be good stewards of all He has given us. I confess my lack of self-discipline at times, especially in my younger years, was not being a good steward of what the Lord blessed me with. There is a reason we will never be satisfied with enough here on this earth, it’s because are foreigners this is not our home as we see in ***Hebrews 13:14For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come. (NLT)*** And that’s why no matter how much stuff we accumulate, how much we try to do, fix or change, that we will never be satisfied or content till Christ returns to take us to our final, permanent, and true home. ***Luke 12:20-2120“But God said to him, ‘You fool! ……. Then who will get everything you worked for?’ 21“Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.”***

So, ask yourself today “When is Enough- Enough” or better yet ask the Lord what He wants from and for you.  And when He provides that plan for you and doesn’t include the newest options and treats the world is offering, don’t forget to praise the Lord who sets you free and satisfies all your needs. When we can truly say to ourselves enough is enough is as long as I got the Lord then and only then will we truly be content.

**What Kind of Seeds Are You Planting? DAY 9**

**Verse for the day: Genesis 1:11 “Then God said, “‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’ And it was so.” (NIV)**

Several years back after leveling a field just north of my house, I decided to plant winter wheat so I could see how it irrigated and build the soil back up before buying high dollar grass and alfalfa seed. Shortly after getting it planted a hard freeze setting in. Usually this is not a good thing to have seeds start to germinate and a freeze hits it before it has time to establish a root system. So, I was a little leery of what the spring might hold and how well the field would turn out. Well, as winter started coming to an end and the days got longer and warmer, I started to see signs of life and growth in the field. What brought me the most encouragement is when the early morning sun or late evening sun shines across the field and I was able to see how much new growth there was coming up in the field. Without the reflection of the sun on the field, it was hard to see all the new growth, but with the sun shining on it, it was like someone had turned on an incubator or light switch overnight. And once again I was reminded of God’s ability to take something that was dead, like a wheat seed, and make it new again. Have you ever thought about how it takes something dying before it can be useful for producing more than it could by itself? Or how God can take something that is dead and bring it back to life? Or, how about the SON’s ability to shine on something so that it can reveal its true nature, even when we might not be able to see it on our own? Like my field, are there places in your heart that need realignment, releveling, readjusted. What areas in your life do you need to change, sacrifice, repent, give up or die to, that will allow The Lord to plant new seeds in your heart. Seeds that will be for His glory, others gain and your good

**What GPS are You Using? DAY 10**

**Verse for the day: *Psalms 50:23 “…. If you keep to my path, I will reveal to you the salvation of God.” (NLT)***

Isn’t technology great these days? While NASA, the military, and aviation have had access to global positioning system (GPS) for a long time, it has only recently become more affordable and available to almost everyone. Well, I am not sure what type of GPS you are using or if you even have one to help navigate as you travel through life. But I’d like to recommend my favorite GPS. It’s better than the Tom-Tom, Garmin, Magellan, or any other GPS device regardless of how much you spend on it. This GPS has been around longer and is used by more people than all the other GPS’s combined. And believe it or not this GPS is free and works anywhere and everywhere.  And I guarantee you if you listen to its instructions and follow its advice you will never be lost. So, what is this GPS called? Well, it’s not called a global positioning system because it’s so much more. It’s called God’s Plan of Salvation as found in the Holy Bible. There you have it’s the best-known GPS that mankind will ever know. There is no doubt in my mind if you carry and use God’s GPS, life will be simpler and clearer than ever before. There may be times it convicts you and you hear it saying “make a U-turn as soon as possible, and other time it encourages to keep going you’re on the best path**.** When we use God’s GPS, He will always keep us on track and lead us down the right path that leads to the perfect destination called heaven.

And the Good News is God’s GPS is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow there is no need to update or correct the system as it is always perfect and will never lead you astray. So I pray today you will invest in the one true and perfect GPS, God Plan for Salvation the Holy Bible and allow God to provide you the perfect route and plan for your life***. Jeremiah 29:8-12 8This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let your prophets and fortune-tellers who are with you in the land of Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams, 9because they are telling you lies in my name. I have not sent them,” says the Lord. 10This is what the Lord says: “…….. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. 11For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. 12In those days when you pray, I will listen.  (NLT)***

**Papa, Will You Leave the Door Open? DAY 11**

**Verse for the day*: Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.***

When our grandkids were little and stayed with us, they always wanted a night light on, and their door cracked open. I am not sure why that was but for whatever reason if the door got closed too far, they will call out for us to open it up a little more. Maybe it’s a fear of getting trapped or stuck or maybe they just want to be able to hear friendly voices and sounds as they fall asleep. I think growing up we all had some kind of fear, especially the fears of the unknown. What fear or closed door do you need to open and let God’s light into today? The only way to find complete and total freedom from hurts, fears, doubts and feelings of abandonment and loneliness is to open the door to your heart and allow God to shine His Light and truth in. People will always fall short when it comes to providing everything you need physical, mentally, spiritually or anything else, but God will never fail to provide you with just what you need, and He will never leave you alone or locked away. ***Hebrews 13:5 God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*** My prayer today is that you will know that God’s door is always open for you. It’s never locked, and He is waiting for you to walk through and claim your freedom. God will never force you to walk through the door it has to be your choice. And when you do you will find there is no darkness as Light and darkness cannot exist in the same place. Light always dispels the darkness and God’s Light has an endless supply which cannot be extinguished or locked away. Finding Jesus doesn't involve a long spiritual search or a strenuous journey. It just involves opening the door to Him and accepting Him into your life. So, if you find yourself feeling like the door to life is closed or maybe not open as wide as you would like it to be, why not be like my grandkids and call out to your Heavenly Father and ask Him “Papa, will You leave the door open for me and help me to walk through into your Light?”

**Preparing for the Storms DAY 12**

**Verse for the day*: John 16:33*** “***I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (NIV)***

When we owned a cabin in Colorado, we learned that yearly maintenance was important. Do you remember old TV commercial where the auto mechanic would say something like “You can pay me now or you can pay me later?” Well due to the lack of maintenance from the previous owner we paid a lot more in time, money and effort to get the logs and decks back in shape and protected. If a steady routine maintenance plan had been put in place and followed there would have been a healthy balance between keeping things protected and looking good. I believe our Christian Walk is a lot like the logs and wooden decks at the cabin in a sense. Without a good continuous routine maintenance plan that is ongoing-always looking and monitoring our heart’s conditions we might find ourselves just like the logs and wooden decks at the cabin in need of some major TLC and repair. When we are not ready for the storms that life can throw at us it can take a huge toll on us and those around us. Our heart can become weathered, dry and parched, due to lack of a covering from God’s maintenance plan and that always costs us more in the long run. Some of those costs I feel we are seeing in our world today in marriages, families, financially, crime, violence, and the darkness that we continue to see each day. The Good News is when we develop the discipline to spend more time with God each day through prayer, His Word, and truly following His plan for our lives, we will be able to withstand the storms of life and repel Satan’s temptations. Just like the new sealer provides a barrier of protection at our cabin from Mother Nature harshest conditions the same will be true for your life when you allow God’s plan of protection and salvation to cover you. This does not mean there won’t be any more storms during your life, just look at today’s verse again ***“In this world you will have trouble”*** but it does mean you will be prepared and equipped to withstand and repel any storm that comes your way. I pray you’re prepared for any storms that might come your way. Don’t be caught like the old saying “You can pay me now or pay me later”. If you are prepared before the storm comes, Jesus has already covered your debt in full and no further payment will be due.

**Who’s winning the Battle for your heart? DAY 13**

**Verse of the day: 1 John 3: 19-20 19This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence 20whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything. (NIV)**

Well, I don’t know about you, but as I reflect on my hearts it can be overwhelming to think how deceiving it can be. God has so much to say about guarding and protecting our hearts and the consequences that can happen when we let our guard down. This truly is a spiritual battle like none other—light vs. darkness, truth vs. lies, and eternal life vs. eternal death. **Eph 6: 12 “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but…. against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil….”** It is a **matter of the heart** and Satan wants your heart.  So, some might say “why even try, I can never win this battle-- Satan is so much stronger than me; I don’t stand a chance”. And you are absolutely 100% correct; you can’t win this battle for your heart on your own. But the good news is you don’t have to battle on your own. There is One that is greater than our own heart and He is battling for it every second of every day. We just need to claim His victory**. 1 Jn. 3:20 “For God is greater than our hearts.”** We are created in God’s image, and He has put His Spirit in us. And if God is in us then we can claim His promises like  **1 Jn. 4: 4 “…..because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”** Think about that for a moment. **“the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”** And **Ro. 8:31 says “If God is for us who can be against us?”** Wow! What great promises to stand on today and the rest of our lives knowing God is greater than anything Satan can throw at us. I pray you find peace and hope in knowing that God is on your side, battling for your heart. But He will not force himself on you—it’s your decision whether or not you will allow Him into your heart. Don’t wait any longer as He just might allow you to have your way regardless of the cost to you. **Ps. 8:12 “So, I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.”**

**A Shadow of Doubt DAY 14**

**Verse for the day*: John 10:27 “Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” (NRSV)***

Is doubt a good thing or a bad thing in our lives? YES to both. When it makes you dig deeper in search of the truth and not take something at face value or just believe something because someone else said so. But what happens when people act in direct opposition to what they know is right and true, it can cause waves of doubt and fear. You don’t have to look much further than the nightly news to see this happening.

The first time we saw doubt show up in the Bible was with Adam and Eve. When they were first introduced into the Garden of Eden, they were sure of God’s instructions. There was no doubt. They knew exactly what God wanted because they received their instruction straight from God Himself. That was until a simple question came which gave them a shadow of doubt. (“Did God really say …?”)  The serpent asked Eve and the confidence she had in The Truth came into question. And once she questioned what she knew to be true, she became vulnerable to Satan’s temptation. This led to both Adam and Eve violating God’s direct command, and sin invaded what God had planned as a paradise for mankind to live in. And we now see the effects of this disobedience reflected throughout the world today—and, if we’re honest, reflected in our own darkened hearts at times. Even the disciples had their moments of doubt, and they walked with the Lord daily. Even though Thomas had seen the truth and walked with the Lord, until he put his finger in Jesus’s side and felt and saw the nail holes in His hands he had doubts. And Satan can use even the small doubts to hide the truth when we are not prepared. Why not take some time today to write down your core beliefs-God’s spiritual truths that you are sure of. What are you sure of beyond the shadow of a doubt? What do you know to be true? Where does your certainty come from?  All of these are important questions to have an answer for, before you are faced with Satan’s temptations. As I have said in the past Satan starts out small with the little doubts, fears, lies, deceit, and temptations and once you start giving into the little things he won’t stop there but he’ll add to them. And before long if you’re not careful you lose sight of the truth, you start to compromise your value system and all that you once knew as truth is gone. So, write God’s truth on your heart and be prepared to stand against Satan’s lies before he comes testing your faith. That way when Satan comes calling you will be prepared and equipped to tell him I know the truth and you’re not it – so in Jesus Name go take a hike.

**What do You Say to Them? DAY 15**

**Verse for the day*: Colossians 4:5-6 5Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. (NLV)***

Have you ever been around someone who seems to say and do the right things just when you need it the most? Regardless of what you might be doing or facing, they provide a word of encouragement or a helping hand that you needed? As Christians, I think it is especially important to display a sense of hope and encouragement to all and especially those who are not believers. As the old saying goes, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”  And in today’s world it is important we take advantage of every opportunity we can to share the Good News of Christ as Lord and Savior. Now this does not mean we beat them over the head with a Bible until they say the sinner’s prayer. That’s why we are told to “***Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.”*** The last thing a non-believer wants to hear is someone telling them how to live their lives and how sinful and lost they are. This is especially true if you have not earned the right to share the gospel with them. When you have earned someone’s respect and trust and they feel like they can trust your words as well as your actions, they are a lot more open to listening to what you have to say and share. If we as Christians don’t intentionally choose to allow our word, our conversations and our actions to be attractive to others the world will offer them something much different that will only lead to heartache, pain and death. And I believe we are seeing the results of people being more attractive to the world rather than the Good News of Christ. Satan’s knows our weaknesses and he knows how to use this world to deceive and attract us into thinking we can do, say, or act any way we want without any consequences for our actions. So, let’s take every opportunity we get to ***Let our conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.***

**Are you a go-to-person? DAY 16**

**Verses for the day: John 15:13 “No one can have greater love than to give his life for his friends” (NLV)**

If you are anything like me, or for that fact anyone else in this world, during your lifetime you have had someone, or more than likely several people, that you can go to and count on. You know that **“Go-To GUY or GAL”** that seems to always be there when no one else is available. And regardless of what you are going through they are there to help with a word of encouragement, a hug, wise counsel, a helping hand, to pray with you and for you or just provide a listening ear. They seem to go out of their way to make you feel special. And regardless of whether your “Go To” list is only one or several, your life has been impacted and made better because they took the time to care enough about you to make you a priority in their life. And of course, our perfect example and role model for this is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Who gave up the ultimate sacrifice upon the cross for our sins. So, Let’s follow the model of Christ and those who have been there for us to be that “Go-To Person” in someone else’s life. **“So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.” Galatians 6:9**. (NLT) God has gifted each one of us with special gifts to use for the common good of others. Let us not hide those gifts but use them for God’s glory. Be the type of person that someone can count on as a Go-To Person. More importantly be the type of person that God can count on as his Go-To person. I don’t know about you, but I want to be considered one of God’s Go-To People. God doesn’t care about our abilities-He cares about our availability. Are you available to be used by God today as his Go-To Person for someone else?

**Is Life Making You Bitter or Better?   DAY 17**

**Verse for the day*:  James 1:2-5 2Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. 5If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (NLT)***

Throughout all of history and years yet to come every man, woman and child will have or have had things happen in their lives which can make them bitter or better. There is not a day that goes by that you or someone you know is going through some type of trial that tests one’s faith. Sometimes it may seem like there is no hope, no help, no strength to go on or the ability to cope and things seem dark and hopeless, and bitterness can set in. Trials are never fun and we should not be surprised when we find our faith being tested as we see in God’s word ***John 16:33.. here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows.*** Satan is doing his best to steal your faith in God, but his best is not good enough. God is greater than the Satan and has overcome the world. As we see at the end of ***John 16:33 But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”*** So, hang on to your faith! Remember that God is for you. God is on your side. God will help you and see you through.

With God’s help He will make you better not bitter. Just keep putting one foot in front of the other. Keep praising and thanking God -- especially when you don't feel like it. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom the next time you are facing a trial and use it as an opportunity for joy that others will see you as better and not bitter.

Claim God’s promise as you read all of ***Romans 8:24-39 24We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it. 25But if we look forward to something we don’t yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.)…… 38And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. (NLT)*** When you can claim God’s promises even in the midst of trials you will find yourself to be perfect and complete needing nothing and you can then use it as an opportunity to share great joy with others as you become better not bitter.

**Be careful, Be vewy vewy careful! DAY 18**

**Verse for the day:*****Gen. 6: 5 The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thought of his heart was only evil all the time”….It broke his heart.***

One of my favorite cartoons was the Bugs Bunny show where Elmer Fudd was always trying to get the “Wabbit”. One of his saying was “Be careful, be vewy vewy careful” and we are reminded throughout the Bible to be careful, to be vewy vewy careful with our thoughts, actions, words, and deeds, because***“Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5: 8****.* I don’t believe satan minds us being a follower of Christ he just wants to change how we view the world and God’s word. And little by little he starts changing our attitudes and thoughts about things. I had a quote saved on my computer called “Be Careful” that says:  ***Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.*** We are told in **2 Corinthians 10: 5** ***“take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”*** Every time we allow satan to compromise our thoughts and our actions it breaks God’s heart.

When it comes to our thoughts and actions we have to be like Elmer Fudd “Be careful, vewy, vewy careful. I don’t know where you are today in your walk with the Lord, but I hope that you will allow God to direct your steps. ***Proverbs 14:10 says “A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps.” And Pro 21: 29 says “A wicked man puts up a bold front, but an upright man gives thought to his ways.”*** So, I pray that you find yourself being prudent and upright before the Lord. ***“fix your thoughts on Jesus” Hebrews 3: 1*** that He might truly be your path and your way from this day forward.

**Who’s Got Your Back? DAY 19**

**Verse for the day: *Proverbs 3:5-6* *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. (NLT)***

Throughout history, because of someone stepping out of their comfort zone or at least taking an initial step forward into something they had never done or tried before, we now have the opportunity to live more comfortable lives than ever before. They took a risk in order to discover, develop, design, improve, or to make something new or better. People like Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Edison, the Wright brothers, Henry Ford, and Albert Einstein. And most of them had more failures than they had success, but they kept trying until they finally succeeded.

There is One Inventor in all of creation that amazes me more than any other person from the past or yet to come in the future. He took the first step towards us before we even knew we needed Him. He stepped down out of Heaven from His glory to come to this earth and provide us a better life and a way back to the home He created for. Without Him we are nothing--with Him we can do everything He calls us to do, and His name is Jesus Christ. The problem is most people don’t want to step out of their comfort zone or take that initial step toward something they may have never done or tried before. But just like in the days past if someone had not stepped up this world would be a much darker place to live.

So, where is the Lord calling you to step up or step out of your comfort zone? You may be the only Christ someone else might see. Is your reflection something that is drawing people to Christ or driving them away? God is calling each one of us to step out for and with Him through Christ. He won’t let you fall. Can you hear Him yelling out ***“*Go for It I Got Your Back!”**

**What are you waiting for! DAY 20**

**Verse for the day: *1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 “Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. NLT***

As I read today’s verse I am reminded once again how God wants me to live out each day in this journey, we call life. I don’t know about you but there are days when this is much easier to say than live out. To feel joyful can be challenging when you are hurt, betrayed, have too many demands, stressed, over worked and underappreciated, the list can go on and on.

Two statements I hear too often from people are: **“If only”,** as in **“**If only my wife would change”, “if only I had more money”, “if only I had a different job”, “a different boss”.  If only, If only ……… you fill in the blanks. Or how about this statement **“Someday”** as in **“**someday I will make time for that”, “someday I will go to Sunday school”, “someday I will join a men’s group”, “someday I will share my story”, “someday I will ask my friend to church and about his or her relationship with Christ”. Someday, someday………. again, you fill in the blanks.

But I hope you realize **“If only** may never happen and S**omeday”** may never come, so we have a choice each day how we will live our lives and even though we can’t always choose our circumstances, we can choose our attitude and how we will respond to those circumstances.

So, what are you waiting for? Don’t let **“If Only”** or **“Someday”** pass you by. Live your life with no regrets from this day forward. **Joshua 24:15 says “Choose today whom you will serve…….As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord”.** Let’s choose today to be thankful in all circumstances, to pray without ceasing, and rejoice for this is the day the Lord has made!

**When in doubt look up DAY 21**

**Verses of the day: 2 Cor. 4:18 “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (NIV)**

As you try to look into the future what do you see? Does life seem uncertain, and do you have doubts? Are you looking at all the status, numbers, polls and those things which the world has put value in? Do you put your faith in the seen or the Unseen? It’s easy to get caught up in looking at all those things which we can see, feel and touch. You know, all those worldly things like the economy, jobs, our pay checks, health concerns, taxes, world issues-- the list seem endless.  But we are reminded in today’s scripture that we are to fix our eyes on the Unseen, not on that which is seen. In other words, put our faith in the Lord. God’s word tells us in **Hebrews 12: 2-3 2Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith ….3 ……., so that you will not grow weary and lose heart”.** God’s plans are not our plans, and His ways are much higher than our ways. And, while we may not understand and have doubts about what the future holds, we can stand firm on God’s word and know He is in control.

I don’t know if you have ever thought about it this way before-- fixing your eyes on the Unseen. But as the old saying goes, “To get something you never had, you have to do something you never did”. So, I challenge you today when you are in doubt and uncertain- look up and fix your eyes on Jesus. Try and see things as the Lord sees them. He will give you peace which goes beyond understanding. And, when you feel God has taken something from your grasp, He’s not punishing you, but merely opening your hands to receive something better. “The will of God will never take you where the Grace of God will not protect you.” (Unknown source)

I pray that you find comfort in knowing that all we see is only temporary. All those worries, concerns, fear, and those doubts-- God wants to take them from you and give you an eternal hope that comes through Jesus Christ.  So, fix your eyes on Jesus and you will not grow weary or lose heart even in the midst of the unknown.

**Just an ordinary Guy DAY 22**

**Verse for the Day: Acts 4: 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were un-schooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.**

As I reflect back on the last several months of writing devotions I am in complete Awe! To think that God would use me in this way-- someone who had trouble throughout his school years with reading, writing, and grammar and still do. You know just an ordinary kind of guy who just got by in school and didn’t stand out academically in any way. But as we look back in history that is exactly the type of people that God called, and Jesus used throughout the Bible. None of them were considered the elite, top of their class or community or even of their own families for the most part. They were just ordinary people doing common ordinary things in life. And yet God took these ordinary people like a young unmarried woman, fishermen, sheep herders, tax collectors, housewives, and many other common folks and used them to do extraordinary things that produced awesome results. All because they were obedient to God’s calling on their lives. Was it easy? Not at all, it took commitment, integrity, loyalty, perseverance, courage, stepping up, stepping out, stepping down, faith, hope and love to name just a few qualities.  Some other qualities included what we call the fruit of the Spirit which can be found in **Gal. 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control….”** Now does this mean they never made mistakes and used or had all these gifts of the Spirit? Not at all, they were just ordinary people like you and me. They had their moments of doubts, fears, and selfishness, lack of faith or moments of weakness. You know those times when, like you and me, we let down our guard and let our emotions, thoughts, and words take over our heart for following God.

May we grow in God’s love, mercy and grace to become a more fruitful people for His Kingdom here on earth; knowing that we don’t have to be considered the elite, top of our class or community, or even our families to be used by God. We only have to be faithful and obedient to His calling.

My prayer today is that you see yourself as an ordinary person, that God can do extraordinary things through, which produce awesome results.

**I Hate Those Things! DAY 23**

**Verse for the day: Romans 12:9 “Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” *(NIV)***

As a farmer there are two words that represent sin to me like none other: prairie dog and gopher. They are difficult to control and the effects of their holes and furrows can destroy a field. I think these two critters symbolize two type of sinner we see in the world today. Like the prairie dogs who stand loud, proud and tall during the day barking out their cries, we see in today’s world those who don’t care if their sin is seen in public or in the light of day. But I believe the gopher is even more sinister and destructive due to the fact they work in the dark, unseen, unannounced and unlike the prairie dog. You don’t see them working in the darkness; they are hidden from human eyes. But what you do see is the result of the harm they are leaving behind, which is especially true when you are trying to irrigate your field. The gopher is like the sins in our lives that we try to hide in the darkness for no one to see. But, just like the gopher the effect of those sin will show up sooner or later in a divorce, our family, corruption, lies, death, the list is endless when we allow sin into our lives.

But the Good News is when we turn from our sins and seek repentance The Lord is faithful to forgive and redeem us back into His family and to fellowship with us as we seek Him with all our heart, mind, body and soul. So, take some time today to think about those areas in your life that might be causing holes or barriers between you and your relationship with Christ and bring them into the light of Jesus for darkness can’t overcome God’s light.

**Letting go and letting God DAY 24**

**Verse for the Day: Colossians 3: 21 Father, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.**

Why is it that life seems to be easier said than done at times? Well the truth is we make it a lot harder than it needs to be most of the time. After all God has given us His perfect blueprint for living our lives and it’s called the Bible. But, too often we think we know better than God and we try to live our lives on our own terms, beliefs, and desires or worse yet we try and get someone else to live that way. Oswald’s devotion for the day was entitled “What is that to you” and he referenced **John 21: 21-22** which states **“Peter…said to Jesus, ‘But Lord, what about this man?’ Jesus said to him,…’what is that to you? You follow Me’** ”. (NKJV) In other words God is telling us it’s none of our business what He has planned for someone else; just keep your eyes focused on Me and **“follow Me”**. Oswald went on to say in the devotion: *“One of the hardest lessons to learn comes from our stubborn refusal to refrain from interfering in other people’s lives. When you do have to give advice to another person, God will advise through you with the direct understanding of His Spirit. Your part is to maintain the right relationship with God so that His discernment can come through you continually for the purpose of blessing someone else.”*

It’s very hard not to get involved in other people’s lives that we love and care about, especially our own kids. We want to protect them and help them avoid making similar mistakes or hurts we have experienced or seen throughout our lives. And yet as we read in today’s scripture God is telling us once again, “I got this, don’t worry, it’s all part of My bigger plan”. You know, “God does not give us overcoming life; He gives us life as we overcome”. (Oswald quote)

So, while we don’t want to see our loved one’s hurting or making what we feel might be a misstep, lets us take comfort in knowing that God’s plans are always better than ours. And while that might be several years in the making or maybe not until we reach eternity with Christ before seeing His plans completed, let us remember that God is always in control. All we need to do is trust, obey and follow Him. He will not lead us where His Grace will no protect us. **And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose. Rom 8: 28 (NIV)** God has called each one of us for a special purpose in life. May we be open to His calling and follow Him all of our days.

**What’s your weather forecast? (Fog or Son)   DAY 25**

**Verse of the day: Matt. 5: 8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (NKJV)**

Jo and I had a great time in the San Diego area visiting with family awhile back. It has a great view overlooking the valley and we could see the ocean a few miles away.

Well, each morning as I awoke, I couldn’t see very far due to the fog coming off the ocean. One morning the fog was so thick I could barely see the neighbor’s house. But little by little as the sun got higher and the temperature started to rise, the fog would slowly recede back toward the ocean until it was finally gone. I think our lives can be a lot like this. You know those days when you wake up in what seems to be a fog or with an attitude that isn’t quick right? You get up a little grumpy, down, uncertain, depressed, or overwhelmed, wondering what the day might hold for you. Well this is where you have a decision to make. Are you going to stay in the fog or are you going to let the **“SON”** shine in and through you? Allowing Him to give you “your sight” and take away the fog of dismay, doubt, depression or whatever burden might be weighing you down and causing you to have impaired vision. I have found regardless how I feel when I first get up; if I start out each morning seeking the **“SON”** the day will be much clearer and brighter. So, I pray today if you feel like you are living in a fog that you will search for the **“SON”** with a pure heart. And just like the sun each morning in San Diego quickly pushes back the fog, I guarantee when you truly find God’s **“SON”** the fog of life or whatever burdens might be weighing you down will be removed**. Acts 9: 17 “…the Lord Jesus …..has sent me that you may receive your sight…..”** (NKJV) The forecast for today is calling for lots of “SON” shine.

**Integrity of the heart--only you can give it away.** **DAY 26**

**Verse of the day: 1 Sam. 16: 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (NIV)**

Today’s versereally does get to **“The heart of the matter which is a matter of the heart”.** While the world is looking at the outward appearance of a person and saying “Wow what a great man this is. He is a true family man, a leader in his community and church and a great businessman.”  And yet the world may never see his anger issues or that he cheats on his taxes, steals little things from the office, has lust in his heart for a co-worker, looks at pornography, covets his neighbor’s possessions or any number of things which he might be hiding from the world, that are considered sins in God’s eyes. He say’s to himself “no one will ever find out” or “after all I’m not a bad guy—I haven’t killed anyone, the office owes that to me, and it’s not really adultery since we never did anything physically”. This is where today’s scripture reminds us that while the world might think he is a great person, God looks at the heart and sees something totally different. The Bible is full of verses which tell us this**. 1 Ch. 28: 9 “for the Lord searches every heart” Jer. 17:10 “I the Lord search the heart” Acts 1:24 “Lord you know everyone’s heart” 1 Co. 14: 25 “the secrets of his heart will be laid bare” and Pr. 21: 2 “but the Lord weighs the heart.”** These are only a few of the verses which talk about the Lord searching and knowing our true hearts. So, never convince yourself that no one will ever know, because the One person that matters the most, when it comes to your final resting place, already knows and no one had to tell Him.

The world can take a lot of things away from us like our home, a car, a prized possession, even a loved one or our own life, but it can never take away the integrity of our heart.  **ONLY YOU can GIVE that AWAY!** People may determine your reputation, but only you can determine the integrity of your heart.