



DAILY STRENGTH FOR MEN

365 DEVOTIONS



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JANUARY 1

THE OFF SWITCH

“Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God.
On it you shall not do any work.”

EXODUS 20:9-10 NIV

God gave the Israelites a mandatory off switch called the Sabbath. On this day they stopped working to honor God. When you have a rhythm of rest and work, it helps keep you from burning out. Take some time to rest today and do something that honors God, so you can be filled up.

How can you honor God in your rest?

JANUARY 2

YOUR CROSS

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

MATTHEW 16:24 NIV

Following Jesus brings joy, but it is also a big sacrifice. The word *sacrifice* may make you think of a missionary or someone who donates a lot of money. That is sometimes what God calls you to do, but sacrifice also means helping a sick friend in the night, volunteering at a soup kitchen, or praying with a co-worker. These are the little sacrifices that reap the greatest rewards.

How can you sacrifice your time and energy to serve God?

JANUARY 3

AFFIRMATION

Jacob took the food to his father. “My father?” he said.
“Yes, my son,” Isaac answered. “Who are you—Esau or Jacob?”

GENESIS 27:16 NLT

Isaac preferred his older son, Esau, an outdoorsman. Jacob stayed home and cooked. Near the end of Isaac's life, Jacob dressed like Esau and deceived his father. Even though this situation seems farfetched, it is common. You may live without any affirmation of love. Remember that God gave his Son so you may feel his love and be called his kid. That love heals affirmation vacancies and provides an example of how you can love others.

How can you love like God does?

JANUARY 4

OUR FATHER

“This, then, is how you should pray:

‘Our Father, . . .’

MATTHEW 6:9 NIV

Throughout the Bible are many titles for God. In the New Testament when Jesus is teaching his followers to pray, he calls God, “our Father.” Imagine. The infinite, sovereign, Creator wants you to know him as *Dad*. And Jesus speaks about God as a Father who scans the horizon looking for his lost children, and then he runs to them. God is a Father whose love is intimate and protective.

How can you know your sovereign God as your kind Father?

JANUARY 5

HALLOWED BE

“Hallowed be your name.”

MATTHEW 6:9 NIV

Holy may make you think “moral” or “religious,” but those definitions miss the biblical meaning. God is perfect and all-powerful. Jesus says you should call God “Father,” but also understand he is holy. God is beyond and near, powerful and meek, warrior and loving. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus invited you into the beautiful mystery of God’s full identity. Reflecting on this may blow you away. Then you’re on the right track.

Are you close enough to God to be amazed?

JANUARY 6

YOUR WILL BE DONE

“Your kingdom come, your will be done.
On earth as it is in heaven.”

MATTHEW 6:10 NIV

A kingdom used to be all about the king, and it could be good or bad depending on that king. Jesus is the best King. He triumphed over sin through his death and resurrection. As you align yourself with him, you take up the cause of his kingdom. Praying like Jesus causes thoughts and preferences to change. It means having a heart for the sick and the outcast, understanding sacrifice, and making Jesus your first allegiance.

Do your desires align with those of God's kingdom?

JANUARY 7

DAILY BREAD

“Give us today our daily bread.”

MATTHEW 6:11

God is not only concerned with spiritual needs; he is interested in everything and even made our food. Previous generations had an intimate relationship with their food. They raised their meat and grew their vegetables. They depended on the rain and the sun. While you easily buy a loaf of bread, previous generations grew the wheat and made each loaf from scratch. Recognize that God is the God of every bit of creation. And remember that even a slice of toast in the morning is a gift.

Do you appreciate the simple blessing of your daily food?

JANUARY 8

BEAUTIFUL DIFFICULTY

“Forgive us our debts,
as we have also forgiven our debtors.”

MATTHEW 6:12 NIV

Forgiveness sounds beautiful, but it is awkward to practice. Forgiveness is necessary in your life, both from you toward others and from others for you. However, the best picture of forgiveness—the most beautiful of difficulties—is the cross. On the cross, Jesus bore the weightiness of all your sin, and he offered the beautiful gift of divine forgiveness. When you understand that, your call to forgiveness becomes a little less difficult.

Do you remember Jesus forgave you, so you forgive those who hurt you?

JANUARY 9

LEAD US NOT

“Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”

MATTHEW 6:13 NIV

It's easy to focus on a temptation when you are struggling to overcome it, or it is a topic of discussion. The solution to overcoming temptation is to focus on something better than that which is tempting you. Scripture speaks about fixing your eyes on Jesus. Why? Because then your gaze is on something far better than the diversions of culture. Indeed, your gaze is on the one your heart truly craves.

Are you able to take your eyes away from temptations and focus on Jesus?

JANUARY 10

BE ONE

“That all of them may be one, Father,
just as you are in me and I am in you.”

JOHN 17:21 (NIV)

Teams rise or fall based on how relationally unified they are. Bad relationships fracture teams and lead to failure. Although the 2004 U.S. Olympic basketball team had the best players in the world, they fell short of the gold medal because each member wanted to be the star. When voices harmonize, beautiful music results. Jesus prays that his disciples will be one because he wants harmony, not fracture.

Are you in harmony with God's will in your relationships?

JANUARY 11

PROOF

“May they also be in us so that the world
may believe that you have sent me.”

JOHN 17:21 (NIV)

After hearing the advertisements and making the purchase, it really only matters if the product performs as promised. If the product fails, the advertising and purchase were a failure. Jesus prays for unity amongst believers because if the church is unified, the world will believe. The proof of the church is in the unity of its members. The skeptical world needs to see God's love.

Do you radiate God's love so the world will know him?

JANUARY 12

OUR HELPER

“I have given them the glory that you gave me,
that they may be one as we are one.”

JOHN 17:22-23

Have you been asked to do something without the resources to accomplish it? Jesus has thankfully not left you without his help! He said that Christian unity is attainable only because he has placed his presence in each believer. Unity happens as you yield to the Holy Spirit. You have to lay down your agenda. If you want the unity that Christ has prayed for, you have to claim, “Not my will, but yours.”

Do you seek the presence of God through his Spirit?

JANUARY 13

ONE BODY

In Christ we, though many, form one body,
and each member belongs to all the others.

ROMANS 12:5 NIV

A bicycle has many parts: handlebars for turning, pedals for moving, and brakes for stopping. If you were missing one the bike wouldn't work. Consider the people around you. Some love administration; others love people. Pioneers challenge your faith. Creatives inspire awe. Straight shooters tell you what you need to hear. If you took away any one type from your family, church, or workplace, the difference would be noticeable.

Do you value the diversity of the people God placed in your life?