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Daily Devotions: Too Busy to Pray

APRIL 04TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Daily Devotions: Too Busy to Pray

Mark 1:35 NKJV (35) “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”

Most of us aren’t evil. We aren’t trying to stay away from God on purpose. We race from morning to night to keep up with the pace of our lives. We are just too busy to pray. Can you identify with this?

Have you ever had a conversation with God like this?

God: I’d like to spend some time with you today, Jim.

Jim: Great, I’d love to.

God: How about right now?

Jim: Right now? Uh, I’m already late for an appointment. I’ll catch you later, though. I promise.

God: OK, I’ll be waiting.

Jim: Maybe, I’ll have some time during lunch.

God: OK, I’ll be waiting.

God: Hey Jim, I missed you at lunch. Your body was there but your mind wasn't.

Jim: I know. I'm sorry. I've got so much to do and so much on my mind. I just forgot to pray.

God: Are you ready to spend some time with me now? I know you only have a few minutes before your next meeting.

Jim: Well, uh, I'd like to, but I need to review my agenda. I'll have to catch you later.

God: Okay, I'll be waiting.

(Before bed)

God: Jim, I love you and I miss you. I've been waiting all day to be with you. Let's just focus for maybe five minutes.

Jim: I know. I'm sorry. I really feel bad. I'm so busy. Thanks for being so understanding, God. Thanks for... (Jim falls asleep.)

God: Oh well, maybe he'll have time for me in the morning.

Are you too busy to pray?

If you are, then you are simply too busy. God loves you and wants regular time with you because you are so special in his eyes.

When is your special appointment with God?

This may seem overly simplistic but it is true: People who spend a regular time with God will have a closer relationship with Him.

1. What did Jesus do in Mark 1:35?

2. Do you have a set time and place to meet with God daily? If not, set an appointment with God today.

Psalms 1:1-3 NKJV

(1) Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

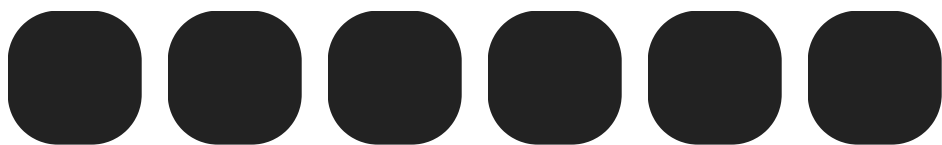
(2) But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

(3) He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

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Chick-Fil-A Hosts Leadercast

APRIL 02ND 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Chick-Fil-A Hosts Leadercast

Written by

Beth Farrah, SMT Writer

Atlanta, Georgia - Chick-Fil-A is sending a shout out to leaders of all kinds. For the past thirteen years, Chick-Fil-A has held their annual Leadercast Conference in places all over the country. They have called out leaders in the church ministry, bosses and employees from both large and small companies and businesses, leaders in the community, and any

other person who is willing to step up.

The idea of the Leadercast Conference is to not only teach basic leadership principals and valuable qualities, but it also reenergizes the participants and inspires them in more ways than one. Leadercast is more than just a conference to improve things in the work place or to make short-term changes. It was created initially to continually inspire and to spark a chain of growth in more ways than one.

In 2000, John C. Maxwell wanted to bring leaders from all different backgrounds and groups together in an affordable and accessible way. Later that same year, Maxwell created Maximum Impact Simulcast. GiANT Impact began producing the widespread event and has recently teamed up with Chick-Fil-A to expand their efforts. After celebrating their ten year anniversary in 2010, the internationally-acclaimed leadership convention began to soar even higher as crowds began to grow at nearly every location.

This year's theme is: Simply Lead. The plan is to bring out traits in each and every leader to reach potential and build leadership skills to learn how to Simply Lead. Life is full of ups and downs along with many other things, but our world is complex enough as it is, which is why simplicity is one of the best tools to use. Leadercast will show different areas and offer advice, inspiration, and ideas in simple yet realistic ways that all leaders will understand and thrive for.

This humongous nationwide event takes place on Friday, May 10th, 2013. This one-of-a-kind-event will broadcast live from Atlanta, Georgia and will simulcast to communities, churches, and other places all across the globe. More than 125,000 leaders from all different backgrounds will be encouraged, empowered, and inspired to Simply Lead. There are many local places to attend this convention such as: the Poplar Bluff Chamber, St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Cape Girardeau, Paducah, and the Jonesboro Chamber.

This year's Leadercast Convention will be hosted by Michael Hyatt in Atlanta. Joining him on the stage includes many famous and well-known athletes, authors, politicians, and CEOs.

The Secretary of State from 2005 to 2009, Condoleezza Rice, will be one of the inspirational and moving speakers who will speak about being the first African American woman to hold both the positions of Secretary of State and National Security Advisor.

Mike Krzyzewski, better known as "Coach K", is a Basketball Hall of Famer and has been the head coach of the Duke Blue Devils for more than thirty years and has motivated people while he has been on the sidelines and while he is on stage.

Olympic gold medalist Sanya Richards-Ross will be joining these powerful people on stage to give an inspirational speech and outlook of the obstacles she has overcome not only on the track or field, but also in life.

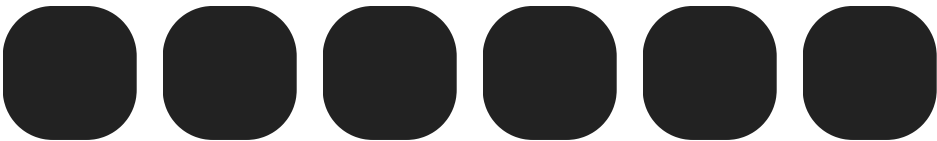
LCDR Rorke T. Denver, a former Navy SEAL and star of the recent movie Act of Valor, has been through basic training, has led special operations in the Middle East, Latin America, and in Africa. He has is also received his Master’s Degree from the University of San Diego in Global Business Leadership.

If you would like more information on this event you can visit chick-fil-a-leadercast.com to order tickets, find an event, and see the full list of speakers.

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A Devotional Story

MARCH 20TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

Dexter, Missouri - It is always fun to watch God in action. Julie Holden and I really love the clothes ministry that started from our prayer group at the First Baptist Church.

Our prayer group that has been meeting since 2006 and this idea was only started last year; however it is pretty neat when you can visibly feel that God is blessing your life.

Julie, several others and myself had spent most of the day Sunday preparing for the clothes give away. In deep fervent prayer, we were seeking God to reveal Himself through this ministry idea. That's when God confirmed His presence 2x over.

FIRST: Giving God His time on Monday morning, Julie's March 18 daily devotion subtly confirmed the work of the previous days work. The daily scripture for the day was:

Luke 3:10-11. And the crowds asked Him, "What then shall we do?" And He answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise."

Can you imagine how we felt that the Lord, our Savior spoke to us in such a way. Not just a coincidence, but a true message from Him.

SECOND: Evaluating the amount of clothes that had been prepared for the Monday only event. We were disappointed to find we were low on kids clothing. Taking our desires of more kids clothes to God ... We agreed to pray for kids clothing.

God again revealed Himself through one of His Angels by providing through an unknown person at an unknown time during the night. This unknown Angel dropped off a multitude of multiple bags of incredible quality kids clothes. So many clothes in fact that the one-day event was extended to another full day on Tuesday.

How wonderful a feeling this was to know He heard our prayers and answered them so we may help others.

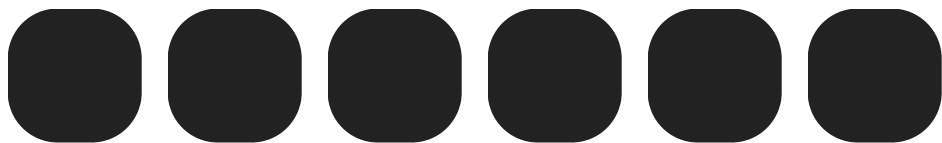
Why are we surprised when God shows us His true power over all circumstances? We serve a mighty incredible God that we should always trust and have faith He will provide and take care of those that love Him.

We pray for His strength to guide us and hope we can do this again in the fall for a back to school giving. I know in He will hear our prayers and give us direction to go forward with our ministries.

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Youth Groups Travel to Nashville for Acquire the Fire

FEBRUARY 25TH 2013 BY BETH FARRAH

Youth Groups Travel to Nashville for Acquire the Fire

Nashville, Tennessee - A few local youth groups from the Stoddard County area traveled to Nashville for a nationwide youth conference called Acquire the Fire. The weekend was filled with praise and worship music, theatrical skits and plays, contemporary Christian bands, well-known speakers and preachers, and thousands of other kids and youth pastors from all over the country.

Acquire the Fire has been around for nearly twenty years and has developed into a total of twenty-seven hours of time with God over the span of one weekend. There are several locations across the United States but the one held in the Municipal Auditorium in Nashville is one of the larger sessions.

The main idea of Acquire the Fire is to get the younger generation on fire for God. This year's theme was "The Relentless Pursuit: Captured by the Fierce Love of God", so all of the sermons and lessons were easily related to God's relentless chase after us and his amazing grace that so gently covers all of us.

The youth conference offers more than great music, amazing speakers, and life changing sermons. It also provides education on different options that the teens are able to choose after they graduate high school. Many representatives from Regent University, The Christian Honors Academy, and Teen Mania Ministries all set of booths and talk one on one with students or teens that are interested in pursuing God after high school.

"Acquire the Fire is a decision making, pattern breaking, future shaping, life transforming experience that effects over 200,000 kids in a 2-day event." This is just one quote from Ron Luce, the opening speaker for the 2013 conference. He delivered several messages throughout the weekend but his most memorable was "The Gold Rush History Lesson", where Luce rode through the stadium on a horse while speaking about our desire for worldly possessions just like the miners' desires to strike gold.

Mike Guzzardo was another preacher that joined the Acquire the Fire team and he prepped the teens with his sermon called "Level Up". Guzzardo was an energetic speaker that taught the crowd about growing spiritually and not just staying in one place.

The music was a key part of the fantastic weekend. Multiple bands either opened or closed the daily sessions, but the School of Worship Band (Acquire the Fire Live) played worship music throughout the session during alter calls. The contemporary bands include: Disciple, Lecrae, Rapture Ruckus, and the Desperation Band.

Keeping thousands of teenagers interested and awake after long night sessions is quite a challenge. So, the Acquire the Fire team put together a skit that was written in three different parts and was performed at three out of the four sessions. There were also many videos and slideshows involved with the sermons and lessons so that the crowd always had a visual picture.

Teen Mania's Global Expeditions Team also attended the conference and spoke about the need of missionaries and support for the many unreached places in the world that contain people who have never heard the name of Jesus. Many youth groups and teens attended the seminar about fundraising and attending mission trips all over the globe.

For the youth pastors and/or parents that attended the conference, they too had their own session where they were able to break away and be taught different things while their youth groups enjoyed another concert or lesson.

The weekend was filled with renewed hearts and youth groups that were knit together tightly by God's hands. As the teens grew closer to God throughout the weekend, the Acquire the Fire team took it upon themselves to create an app that is available for smart phones that include information, music, lessons, and bible verses to keep the teens' spark alive. The team also sent out "The Relentless Pursuit" books, which contained highlights of the lessons and even more Bible verses.

Acquire the Fire will take place again on February 22-23rd in Nashville in 2014. Each youth group that attends is counting down the days until they get to return. Tickets are on sale now at acquirethefire.com. It's one weekend that you won't want to miss!

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Voice of Praise Evening of Music to Benefit Drew Albritton

FEBRUARY 20TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

Voice of Praise Evening of Music to Benefit Drew Albritton

*Written by
Dee Loflin, SMT Writer*

Dexter, Missouri – The community is invited to attend an evening of music with the 1st United Methodist Church with "A Voice of Praise!" featuring the Chancel Choir under the direction of MaryRuth Boone.

"We learn in the Old Testament that we are to sing praises to God," Boone said. "Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises." This is according to the psalmist who wrote in the 47th chapter in the Book of Psalms. This should be an evening of uplifting music to carry out that purpose.

MaryRuth said, "This is a wonderful, talented, dedicated group of individuals who love the Lord, love music, and love our community. It's for a little boy fighting cancer who has family in the community."

This is a benefit for the family of 3-year-old Drew Albritton. He is the son of Elizabeth (Carroll) and Mike Albritton and they live in O'Fallon, Missouri. Drew also has a sister that is only three months old and is named Reese.

Drew's Mom, Elizabeth, is the daughter of Dean and Carolyn (Hill) Carroll of Dexter. Elizabeth graduated from Dexter High School. She and her brother, Clay, grew up in the church and sang

</images/Albritton 2.jpg>

in the Chancel Choir as teens. She recently retired from teaching at T.S. Hill Middle School and has now taken a leave of absence from her current teaching position.

Drew was diagnosed in July of 2012 with Neuroblastoma, a rare cancer in children. It occurs in less than five out of ever one million children each year. He has had six rounds of chemotherapy, two major surgeries, numerous hospitalizations and will undergo a stem cell transplant on February 28th. He will spend about a month in isolation at the hospital. Then after all that, he will receive six weeks of radiation followed by months of immunotherapy. Too much suffering for a child of his age, but he is a strong little fellow!

He has already fought such a hard battle with this cancer and has a very long road ahead. His parents' Mike and Elizabeth are both teachers. She has taken a leave of absence from her job and Mike has already missed all the work he can

 for now.

“Our community is trying to let them know that we care about them and want to raise money to help them in any way they can.” Boone state. “We want to show our love and support, and to let them know we love them and that we pray for them each and every day.”

The First Methodist Church invites everyone to come hear some great music including performances by vocal soloists and a rousing piano performance.

The event will take place on Sunday, February 24th at 6 p.m. The program is free to the community. The First United Methodist Church Agape Circle will serve refreshments in the Wesley Hall after the benefit.

Drew is a beautiful young boy who is fighting a brave battle against a terrible disease. Please come out and give a “love offering” during the event.

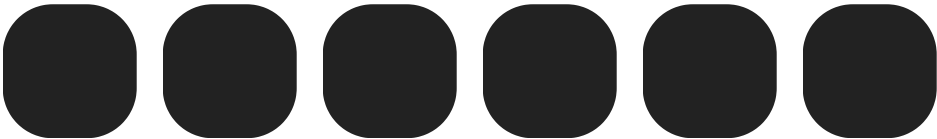
If you want additional information or just want to make a donation, please call 573-624-3344 or 573-820-3516. The Dexter community wishes Drew and his family the best.

If you would like to send a donation or even a get-well card, you can mail them to Drew Albritton, 1044 Golden Orchard Drive, O'Fallon, MO 63368. All your generous donations, gifts, cards and prayers will be greatly appreciated.

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