



The Mary Challenge
Daily

THE MARY CHALLENGE DAILY #1: MAKING JESUS THE ROCK I BUILD ON

Hey Mary!!! The next 10 days are going to be so significant. We are going to lock arms and fight back against the trap of busyness that keeps us standing when we should be seeking the good portion seated at the feet of Jesus. We are going to walk through some busy areas of our life with a fine tooth comb so that we may put Jesus right at the head of those areas. So make sure you have all your tools (Bible, journal, pens, tissue, listening ears, and full armor of God) ready for this battle. It's not going to be easy, but it will be worth more than we can ever conceive. Here we go!!!!

Our busyness is generally based on a thought that we are building or achieving something. When the actuality is that we may actually be tearing down something instead. "The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down." Proverbs 14:1 ESV. Busyness wraps itself in false obligation. We buy the lie that we are obligated to do certain things, or that if we don't do them that they will never get done. The truth is, we create expectations that aren't necessary. Soon, the expectations we have of ourselves or believe others have of us, outweigh the expectation and desire of the Father, making us busy bodies building on sand. If we are building a life with false obligation or unnecessary expectation as the starting foundation, when the strong winds blow what we have built will surely crumble to the ground.

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." Matthew 7:24-25 ESV

Our challenge for today is Making Jesus The Rock I Build On. For this challenge we are going to stop at the beginning of every task to just breath and communicate with Jesus. Asking Him "Is this building or tearing down?" , "Is this busyness or necessary contribution?", "Jesus, what would you have me to do?", "Will this bring glory to You or to me?", "Am I missing an opportunity to be Christ?". Think about these questions. Bring them before the Lord as we seek His foundation today. This is going to be a tough one for us, creating uncomfortable halts to our normal day. However, this practice will allow God to weed out the unnecessary, while we build intimacy with Jesus and be filled with His wisdom in the process. The foundation of Jesus will keep us firmly placed where we need to be rather than where busyness drifts us.

Let today be the start of a constant seat at Jesus' feet!

Prayer #1:

Lord Jesus, You are so holy! Thank you for willingness to teach me and walk with me. Help me to see where I have picked up what you have not given to me. Give me the wisdom to know the difference. Lord woo me to you throughout the day and help me to hear Your voice. Show me your ways and help me to build upon You only. I surrender every obligation and every expectation to you God. Bring me to your feet! In Jesus name AMEN!

Memory Verse: "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Philipians 4:6

Walking the Journey:

- Pray Often
- Memorize Scripture (write them down and put them places you will see them)
- Journal your experience (thoughts, Scripture, prayers, etc.)
- Share with someone (invite a friend to join, share your journey)

-J.E. Berry

THE MARY CHALLENGE DAILY #2, 3, 4: THE 3-3-3 CHALLENGE

"Squirrel!" is what I might as well be saying every time I am distracted by one thing or another while I am already supposed to be engaged in something else. I might as well have ADD with this short attention span of mine. Before I finish one task I can already be half done with the next task mentally. Learning to be a Mary is proving to be very eye opening for me. I am quite distracted. Being a mother can have a tendency to condition you to be "multi-tasker". I put that in quotations because there is no such thing as a multi-tasker. The truth of the matter is that either you are doing one thing well or two to three things not so well.

Our short attention spans can really cause detriment to our intimacy with Christ. If we are already mentally on to the next activity while we are supposed to be engaged with Jesus, we aren't really engaged at all. In the story of Mary and Martha, Martha was too distracted by her own self placed obligations to enjoy the time she had with Jesus. She was consumed with duty. "But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things," Luke 10:40-41. I'm sure she was like most of us. She probably figured she could hear whatever Jesus was saying from the kitchen, and that way she could be a good hostess and still hear what He had to say. But what Martha didn't see was that she was choosing the self-gratifying portion rather than the good portion (Luke 10:42).

This is how we treat our time with Christ sometimes. Totally distracted by life. Do any of these things sound familiar to you? "I can just listen to the Bible in the car on my way to _____ instead..." (Really. Bible study in the car?), "I can pray for them later, after....." (Why not now?), or how about "I know I should but..." (But what?). We have so many other things that we seem to rather be doing. We take the time that should be set aside for intimate time with Christ and put more tasks that will continue to demand our attention and shift our focus. Distraction is a thief of intimacy, honor, humility, focus, and excellence. We can allow our distracted minds to steal away precious moments with the Father, and our loved ones. However, we are called to be still. "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him." Psalm 37:7.

So in our continued battle against busyness, today we take a stand against distraction. For this challenge we are going to use some new strategies and practices to regain our focus so that distraction can take a back seat. Our Mary Challenge Daily #2, 3, 4: The 3-3-3 Challenge. Three days, Three times, three minutes. For the next three days we will pick three times of the day to sit completely still in the presence of the LORD for three minutes. During these times we will set aside

anything that can be a distraction (phones, TVs, lights, kids, any distraction), invite Jesus on a date and enjoy quiet heart to heart intimacy with Him.

Our goals with this 3-3-3 challenge :

1. to nurture our intimacy with Jesus by spending time just being with Him, rather than bombarding Him with requests and concerns.
2. to train our mind, body and spirit to be still before the Lord.
3. to refocus
4. to cultivate peace

Prayer #2:

Lord Jesus, You are so merciful and mighty! Thank you for wanting to be near me. Thank you God for the refuge you have given me in you. Lord teach me to be still in Your presence. Create in me a clean heart, mind and spirit that longs to near You. Join hearts with me Lord as I sit with you. Help me to recognize the distractions so that I may refocus on You. I surrender my agenda to You God. Lord, Meet me where I seek you. I love you Father and want to sit at your feet all the days of my life. so please teach me how. In Jesus name AMEN!

Memory Verse: "For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress, I shall not be shaken." Psalm 62:1-2

Walking the Journey:

- Pray Often
- Memorize Scripture (write them down and put them places you will see them)
- Journal your experience (thoughts, Scripture, prayers, etc.)
- Share with someone (invite a friend to join, share your journey)

-J.E. Berry

THE MARY CHALLENGE DAILY #5: JOURNAL OBSERVATIONS

Through this challenge, I have really been convicted about the time that I spend doing unnecessary things when I could be doing things that matter, as well as about how distracted I am by things that have no value. Thinking of these things really led me to cry out to the Father to help me reevaluate and be mindful. We loose so much precious time in the busy of the unnecessary and in the clouded distracted mind.

The Mary Challenge has really taking a veil off of my eyes about the reality of how I spend my time and the quality of the time I am spending. Along the way, I have used journaling to keep track of the things that the Lord shows me and the things that I have learned from the process. So today, our challenge is going to call for us to get real with ourselves and our intentions so that God can get us re-aligned.

The Mary Challenge Daily #5: Journal Observations. Today we are going to sit down at two different times to write out some key thoughts about our busy behavior. The first time to write down the areas that we think need to be eliminated or adjusted to allow us time to sit with Jesus and take part in the good portion. The second time, at the end of the day, to reflect on the distractions we noticed throughout the day that keep us from engaging with the Lord. These distractions can be our phones, social media, television, laziness, and many other things. The most important thing to remember is to be honest with yourself about what you do and why?

Here are some questions to consider:

- What am I doing today that can really wait until tomorrow?
- Why am I doing what I am doing?
- What tasks are unnecessary?
- What spaces am I wasting time that I could use to sit at the feet of Jesus?
- What areas during my day can I use to extend love to the people around me?

This challenge is meant to create a mental pattern that will be lasting in our daily considerations. If it's challenging and uncomfortable. That's because it's supposed to be. When we get uncomfortable, God can do His best work. At the end of the day, our lives have a much bigger purpose than our to-do list. Our consistent walk with the Savior will align our hearts with His and weed out the unnecessary, unproductive and unhealthy habits we tend to grow attached to.

1 Chronicles 16:11 "Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His presence continually!"

Let's be refreshed and redirected as we seek His presence in our place of honor at Jesus' feet.

-J.E. Berry

THE MARY CHALLENGE DAILY #6: PRAY, PRAY, AND PRAY SOME MORE

OK.....I know I know, I'm a day late and a dollar short. But that's OK because this challenge is only a small part of a larger life mission. I don't know about you, but this challenge has really made me realize how agenda focused we can be. We all have our agendas and schedules in place whether it be written or not, that we are set on. These agendas, if not started with Christ in mind can eliminate the space where we connect with Him.

I'll be the first to admit that it can really be a struggle to let go of my own agenda to see the bigger picture. That at the end of the day, all of my busyness means nothing if I have not connected with the Father to pick up His agenda. And what's the point of it all, really, if we are detached from the Vine and none of it brings Him glory? And why can't we think of this when we are running around like we're being chased by criminals to get things done all day? Many of these things having zero spiritual value.

So this is my conclusion in this area:

- we may be lacking in wisdom
- we may be lacking in discernment
- we may be lacking Humility
- we may be lacking true relationship or **quality** time with the Father

In light of this, we're going to keep it simple for this challenge. The Mary Challenge Daily #6: Pray Pray and Pray Some More! The only way we are going to make headway in breezing past busyness, is to be intention in our time with the Father and PRAY, A LOT! I know we have spent time sitting quietly with Jesus in this challenge and we should definitely continue that practice. However, Prayer (coupled with bible study) is the only thing that will keep our hearts connected to the Christ agenda. God is so very faithful to give us what we need in all these areas of lack.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" James 1:5

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." James 5:16 NIV.

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:11-12 NIV

Let's get honest, specific, humble and receptive in our prayer time this week. Let your request be made know and your faith be multiplied. And don't forget to journal, journal, journal! Chart your observations, struggles, breakthrough, convictions, revelations, and growth. BE INTENTIONAL!!!!

-J.E. Berry

THE MARY CHALLENGE DAILY #7: REFLECTIONS

Well friends..... I fell into the Martha trap this past couple of days. Sad but true. I got the case of the busy bodies and lost my path to Mary-ness a little. But you know what the good news is? God's grace is so much bigger than our distractions and our busyness. Even when we get hooked back in to the ocean of obligation, the Father is still reaching to pull us out. Thank you Jesus!

Today I felt a little guilty about getting wrapped up in doing. Sometimes we can be our worst judge, making it even harder to escape the swirling waters of busyness. So today I'm throwing you a lifeline! I give you full permission to forgive yourself and try again. You know why? Because we are going to mess up, we are going to forget and we are going to do things that cause us to feel remorse. Even so, we do not have to live where we fell. We can get up and try again. That's the beauty of GRACE!

Together we are going dust our knees off and move along. But first, we are going to do something that will us to the feet of Jesus where we can pick up the endless grace that will take us forward. The Mary Challenge Daily#7: Reflections. For the rest of our 10 day journey, take some time to sit and write some things that you have a hard time forgiving yourself for, things

that cause you to feel guilty, obligations that overwhelm you, places in life that you have felt spiritually that you are having a hard time getting up from and things that you have a hard time giving grace for. Pray before you begin writing the list and be honest. Once you have compiled your list, get alone with the Lord and give Him the things on the list. Surrender the list to Him, ask Him to help you give grace lavishly and allow Him to free you from the things that are holding you. We can not give grace if we have not received the grace that has been lavished upon us. This challenge should take you straight to the feet of Jesus! He is the only way to work past the things that hold us spiritually hostage.

“Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

John 1:16-17 NIV

Praying for you friends

J.E. Berry