

| ACTION STEPS FOR THE WEEK | |
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| Monday Action Step 1 | Perhaps your life has been side-tracked by poor personal decisions, the decisions of others, an unforeseen event, etc. Don't let that keep you from all that God has for you. Spend time in prayer. Purpose to start fresh |
| Tuesday Action Step 2 | Do you have an accountability partner or are you part of a small group? Both are vital to your spiritual growth. Ask God to provide both of those crucial pieces to your life. |
| Wednesday Action Step 3 | Think about anything you need to get rid of in your life that is keeping you from living a renewed life in Christ. Give those things over to God. |
| Thursday Action Step 4 | |
| Friday Action Step 5 | Being renewed means living different. Have you been making excuses for a certain habit or pattern of behavior? Time to confess those things and seek God's strength to live like His Son, Jesus. |
| Saturday Action Step 6 | |
| My biggest area for prayer and work this week | |

DAILY DEVOTIONS

RENEWED



....strip off your old evil nature and all its wicked deeds. In its place you have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you.
~ Colossians 3:9b,10

MONDAY

READ: Colossians 1

When God created the world, He had a definite plan in mind. He wanted a place of beauty and order for His creation. When God created Adam and Eve, He likewise had a definite plan. He wanted them to enjoy this place of beauty and order as well as enjoy a precious, fulfilling relationship with Himself.

A terrible thing happened however. Adam and Even sinned and that sin not only separated them from a vibrant relationship with God, it also affected all of creation. (SEE ALSO: Romans 8:19-22) So now instead of enjoying the beauty and order of creation, while simultaneously enjoying a relationship with our Creator, we are in the midst of a groaning creation and separated from God.

It was into this that Jesus came. The Creator stepped into His creation and gave up His life to bring us back into a relationship with Himself (while also bringing the first sigh to creation's groaning).

1. Sin corrupted not only people but also creation. How have you seen evidence of this corruption in both people and creation?
2. Look again at verses 19-22, what was done to bring healing to this corruption?
3. How does it affect you to know that the Creator would step down into His creation and die to bring this healing?
4. Is there any distance between you and your Creator? What can you do to draw near to Him?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank Christ for stepping into His creation to bring healing
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, any sin that is causing distance between you and Him
- ◆ Ask God to bring healing and forgiveness into your life
- ◆ Ask God to use you to bring healing and forgiveness to those who desperately need it

SATURDAY

READ: Colossians 4

One of the life-lessons that I am actively trying to impart to my son is: "Finish what you start. Make sure you see a task, a chore, an assignment through to the end." It is a daily thing that I have to work at with him, and it is a daily thing that I have to work at with myself. There are so many things that can cause us to leave our work unfinished.

We can get distracted or sidetracked; we can become exhausted and stop; we can get mad or frustrated and quit, or we can let it slide and hope that someone else will come along and finish what we've started. With all these things that can keep us from "finishing strong," it is vital that we keep our focus.

This is also true with the plan God has for our lives. God has a perfect plan for each and every one us, and He has gifted us in such a way as to best suit us for that plan. However, we can easily lose our focus and never carry out this great plan of God.

1. What did Paul tell Archippus in verse 17?
2. How is what Paul told Archippus true for you as well?
3. Do you know the plan God has for you? If yes, are you making sure to carry it through to completion?
4. If you are not carrying it out, what are some things that are keeping you from fulfilling God's plan for your life?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God that He has perfectly gifted you for the great plan He has for your life
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not working to carry His plan out to completion
- ◆ If you know God's plan for you right now, ask God to supply you with all you need to see this plan through to completion
- ◆ If you do not know God's plan for you right now, ask God to make plain His perfect plan for you

FRIDAY

READ: Colossians 4

In the book, *UnChristian*, David Kinnaman, President of Barna Research, writes, “In a study released in 2007, we found that the lifestyle activities of born-again Christians were statistically equivalent to those of non-born agains. When asked to identify their activities over the last 30 days, born again believers were just as likely to gamble, visit a pornographic website, take something that didn’t belong to them, consult a psychic, fight or abuse someone, to consume enough alcohol to be legally drunk, to use illegal, nonprescription drugs, to lie, to get back at someone, and to have said mean things behind someone else’s back.”

Is it any wonder that 85% of non-Christians label Christians as “hypocrites.” In our Christian life, our walk and talk must match up.

1. Why is it that Paul says, in verse 5, that we must “live wisely” among those who are not Christians?
2. In what areas does your walk strongly match your talk?
3. In what areas do you need some help matching up your walk with your talk?
4. Ask yourself: If people patterned their lives after mine, would they be moving closer to Christlikeness or further away?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for His ability to strengthen your weak areas and help you live a life that honors Him
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, the areas where your walk doesn’t match your talk (and be specific)
- ◆ Ask God to strengthen your weak areas
- ◆ Spend some time in prayer examining your actions and attitudes over the last 10 days. How Christ-like are they?

TUESDAY

READ: Colossians 2

While in my late teens and early twenties, my friends and I would workout together on a regular basis. We would often push each other to succeed (or try to outdo each other). This meant we lifted more than we would have alone. This meant that we worked out even when we didn’t want to, and this meant that when we were going for the “heavy stuff” we had people there to spot and to encourage. However, when my friends and I all started to go our separate ways because of college and work, I still lifted weights. Yet, it wasn’t as frequently, and it wasn’t nearly as intense.

My weightlifting experience is a good analogy for our walk with Christ. When we are surrounded by others who can help us, encourages us, and push us beyond where we would go alone, our faith flourishes and grows exponentially. However, trying to work out our faith by ourselves can leave us quite spiritually flabby. (Which is where I am now physically...sad to say.)

1. Keeping in mind my weightlifting analogy, why does Paul say (in verse 2) that we should be knit together with ties of love?
2. Who have you surrounded yourself with that is pushing you to go deeper and further in your faith?
3. Who are you encouraging to go deeper in the faith?
4. If you answered “no one” or just “my spouse” to the above, what can you do to be “knit together” with more Christ-followers?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for those He has placed around you who are pushing you to grow more deeply in Christ
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not working to be “knit together” with other believers
- ◆ Ask God to surround you with people who will push you deeper in your walk with Christ
- ◆ Ask God to use you to help push people deeper

WEDNESDAY

READ: Colossians 3

When a bride and groom come together on their wedding day, they are, before God and people, shedding the old and putting on the new. They are shedding the old single life and clothing themselves in marriage. They are publicly vowing to no longer date others, live for self, or put other relationships before their relationship with each other. It certainly would not be a successful marriage if the bride and the groom decided to date others, make decisions without consulting each other, or put their friendships with others ahead of their own marriage.

This is equally true in your relationship with Christ. When you accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, you entered into a relationship with Him. For this relationship to be a growing, successful union, you must shed the old so that you can fully grab hold of the new. You can no longer “date” or “flirt” with the world, nor put worldly attachments/attitudes ahead of this new relationship.

1. Looking again at verses 5-9, what are you to “shed”?
2. Looking again at verses 10-14, what are you to “clothe yourself” with?
3. Are you guilty of still “dating the world”? What might you still need to shed so that you can more fully relate with Christ?
4. Seeking to get rid of the old and grab hold of the new is no easy process, who can help you on this journey?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank Christ that His death and resurrection made it possible for you to be forgiven and to live a new life in Him
- ◆ Thank Christ that His death and resurrection made it possible for you to have a relationship with your Creator
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, dating the world
- ◆ Ask God to help you become “unfriendly” with the world
- ◆ Ask God to help you choose Him above all else

THURSDAY

READ: Colossians 3

Sociologist and historian Carle Zimmerman, in his 1947 book, *Family and Civilization*, compared the disintegration of various cultures with the parallel decline of family life in those cultures. Eight specific patterns of domestic behavior typified the downward spiral of each culture Zimmerman studied. 1. Marriage loses its sacredness. 2. Traditional meaning of the marriage ceremony is lost. 3. Feminist movements abound. 4. Increased public disrespect for parents and authority in general. 5. Acceleration of juvenile delinquency, promiscuity, and rebellion. 6. Refusal of people with traditional marriages to accept family responsibilities. 7. Growing desire for and acceptance of adultery. 8. Increasing interest in, and spread of, sexual perversions and sex-related crimes.

This book was written 60 years ago about cultures not our own. Yet, today, our culture fits those “8 marks of disintegration” quite well.

1. Look again at verses 18-21, which of the “8 marks” would be different if families followed Paul’s instructions?
2. Do you think our culture encourages Paul’s instructions or discourages Paul’s instructions? Explain your choice.
3. As you look at Paul’s instructions, (which, of course, are God’s instructions) how well is your family following them?
4. What can you do to be an encourager of these things?

PRAYER

- ◆ Thank God for His wise instructions on marriage and family
- ◆ Confess to God, if necessary, not fulfilling your biblical role in the family
- ◆ Ask God to help you fulfill your biblical role in the family
- ◆ Ask God to help you be an encourager of the biblical pattern for a family