

40 DAYS OF FATHERHOOD, FAITH  
& FLAT-OUT FUN: A DEVOTIONAL

BY DUANE STARK

# *Fostering Fatherhood*



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## Dedication

To the dads who rise early, stay late, and show up  
tired—

To the men who choose presence over perfection and  
faithfulness over applause—

To the fathers who lead with humility, patience, and a  
steady hand even when the world feels unsteady—

And especially to those who step into the gap—  
who foster, mentor, coach, teach, guide, and father  
children they didn't biologically bring into the world but  
wholeheartedly choose to love as their own—  
this is for you.

Your sacrifice echoes heaven.

Your investment ripples into generations.

And your legacy—though quiet and unseen at times—is  
holy ground.

Thank you for fathering with intentionality, integrity,  
and fierce grace.

This journey is richer because you're on it.

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## Intro: Intentional in the Mud Room

Let me tell you about the exact moment I knew this devotional had to happen.

It was the same day I wrote *When Plans Meet Play-Doh*. Fitting, right?

The oven beeper was going off—salmon on the line. My youngest daughter knocked an entire glass of chocolate milk off the table. Another daughter—sensing the sacred chaos—pulled a tooth right there in the kitchen. Blood. Everywhere. At that exact moment, a thunderstorm hit. Another daughter panicked and opened the back door to “check on the dogs,” which released our four large dogs into the house—immediately turning our tile floor into a muddy slip-and-slide.

Imagine it with me: thunder, blood, beeping, shattered glass, wet dogs, and confused children—all within ten square feet. All in under two minutes.

That moment could’ve gone either way. And honestly, **too often, Angry Dad would’ve taken the stage.** But by God’s grace (and probably because I was still mid-thought on intentional parenting), we laughed. We cleaned. We pulled the tooth. We wiped chocolate milk off the dog. And it became a memory.

It also became a turning point.

Because here's the reality: **parenting doesn't get easier. But it can become more intentional.**

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## **This Devotional? It's For Me.**

I didn't write these 40 days because I've got it figured out. I wrote them because I **needed to remember.**

I needed reminders that my tone matters more than my timing.

That discipline isn't just correction—it's formation.

That my kids are not obstacles to my spiritual life... they are my spiritual life.

That being a husband is about pursuit, not performance.

And that God isn't asking me to be perfect. He's asking me to be present.

This devotional is me **setting the rudder** on the boat before the next wave of activity, emotion, or bedtime drama hits. Because life is full of rapids. And if I'm not steering, I'll drift downstream toward survival mode. Or worse—passivity.

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## **You're Invited**

If you're reading this, chances are you've tried hard and felt like you're still blowing it.

You've prayed for patience... and regretted it.



You've tripped over toys, tripped over your tongue, and tripped over your own pride more times than you can count.

**Same.**

This 40-day journey is an invitation to reset—not just your parenting style, but your whole posture. To realign your heart with God's, so you can lead your family like He leads you—with grace, grit, and unshakable love.

Each day is short (because I know you're tired). It's got Scripture (because you need truth not just tips). It's got some laughs (because joy disarms shame). And it's got a challenge (because we're not here to coast).

But most of all, it's got **permission**—permission to show up as you are and let God do what only He can.

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## **Here's the Hope**

If you're anything like me, you want to leave a legacy. Not of success, but of **faithfulness**. Not of control, but of compassion. Not of flawless parenting—but of being a dad who said yes to the call... and kept showing up.

You want your wife to know she's fought for, not just tolerated.

You want your kids to remember your **presence** more than your pressure.

And you want to look back, years from now, and know

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you built something real—brick by brick, moment by messy moment.

You're not raising children.

**You're raising adults.**

You're shaping future spouses, citizens, believers, creators, warriors, and worshipers. And the way you show up today sets the tone for all their tomorrows.

So let's do this.

Let's raise them intentionally.

Let's love our wives fiercely.

Let's be men after God's own heart—and let it show in the way we do bedtime, dishes, discipline, and dance parties in the kitchen.

You ready?

Then buckle up, Dad.

Let's set the course and paddle hard.

Because this boat isn't drifting anymore.

## Day 1: The Crayon Wall Gospel

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** *Galatians 6:9*

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

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### Devotional Reflection

Strength doesn't grow in silence—it grows in the middle of cereal explosions and last-minute madness.

Is there ever a time more chaotic than the three hours before people show up for an event at your house—home group, barbecue, homeschool hangout? It's like your living room becomes a war zone, the kitchen turns into a grease-slicked demolition derby, and suddenly your children decide now is the moment to paint with yogurt.

In the middle of your frenzied attempt to make your house look like Martha Stewart's been on staff for a month, you spot it: spaghetti art smeared on the walls.

A banana peel tucked behind the couch “for later,”  
...perfectly seasoning the layer of crushed Goldfish

crackers embedded in the couch like snack-time glitter.  
It's ambiance, kid-style.

This may be the moment you realize you accidentally prayed,  
“Lord, teach me patience.” And He said, “Let’s go.”

It's in this kind of chaos that Paul's words to the Galatians  
land with unexpected power: *“Do not grow weary in doing good.”*  
Because the mess isn't just in your house—it's in your heart,  
and God's not afraid of either one. This isn't just babysitting  
in Jesus' name. It's soul work—for you and for them.

Isaiah 40:31 reminds us:

*“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.”*

You may not feel like you're soaring. You might feel like  
you're crawling through a war zone of Goldfish and tears.  
But the God who sustains galaxies is also sustaining you—  
right now, in this moment, in this mess. **But that strength  
He offers? He doesn't force it—He invites us to call on  
Him. To lean in when we want to give up.**

When your kids draw spaghetti on the walls, God's still  
working on your heart—and theirs.

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## Prayer

God, give me grace in the mess. When my house looks like a  
food fight broke out and my soul feels just as cluttered,  
remind me that You're still working. Help me love well when

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I feel tired, speak gently when I feel frustrated, and remember that this chaos is a canvas for Your glory. Amen.

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## Challenge

Clean up one mess today—**without grumbling**.

Do it as worship, not war.

Speak gratitude out loud as you work—even if it's through clenched teeth.

## Day 2: Don't Sleep, Just Dream

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** *Philippians 2:14*

Do everything without grumbling or arguing,

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### Devotional Reflection

Sleep is a memory. But loving your bride through exhaustion? That's legacy-building.

Every household develops its own sleep patterns—some burn the midnight oil, others rise before the roosters even consider crowing. And more often than not, husbands and wives land on opposite ends of the spectrum. One's crashing at 9:30 p.m., the other's just catching their second wind. Add in babies, toddlers, sugar-fueled teens, and whatever mystery noises the house decides to make at 3:00 a.m., and now you've got chaos on a sleep-deprived timeline.

Sleep matters. As Professor Bloom used to say, "*Sleep doesn't lead to righteousness, but a lack of sleep sure can lead to a lack of righteousness.*" Ain't that the truth. When you're running on fumes, irritability comes easy. Sarcasm shows up uninvited. And helping out? That gets replaced with hiding out.

Too often, we men throw around the "I sleep like a rock" line like it's a badge of honor—or worse, an excuse not to

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respond to the 2 a.m. cry from down the hall. But love doesn't clock out. Being a husband means being willing to wake up. To stay in it. To trade convenience for compassion.

This is where *Philippians 2:14* hits hard: "*Do everything without grumbling or arguing.*" Helping your wife rest well isn't just a chore—it's a calling. Your attitude matters just as much as your actions. Don't just grunt your way through night duty—own it.

We're called to lead, and that includes leading in rest strategy. Not just our own, but hers. *Ephesians 5:25* declares:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."  
That kind of love doesn't just make sacrifices—it plans them.

Being a night shift hero doesn't mean doing it all yourself. It means being the one who initiates the conversation, sets the tone, and helps create a rhythm where both of you survive—and even thrive.

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## Prayer

Lord, I'm tired—physically and sometimes emotionally. But help me love well even when I feel worn out. Give me eyes to see what my wife needs, and strength to step in with grace. Don't let my fatigue become an excuse. Let it become fuel for sacrificial love. Help me reflect Your patience in my posture, and Your love in my late-night responses. Amen.

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## Challenge

Ask your wife this question today:

**“What do you need from me this week to get better rest?”**

Then make a plan—and follow through like it’s mission critical. Because it is.



## Day 3: No Room? Make Some.

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** *James 1:5*

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

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### Devotional Reflection

Your schedule says a lot about your soul.

Jesus says ask, seek, knock—but most of us don't even have time to breathe, let alone ask. We fill our calendars with practices, errands, deadlines, and enough screen time to shame a Best Buy display wall. But what if our spiritual growth and ability to serve others isn't being choked out by sin... but by busy?

If you've got no room, maybe it's time to ask God what needs to go.

What needs to be first.

What needs to be forgotten.

Time with Jesus.

Time in prayer.

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Time with your wife.  
Time with your kids.  
Time with your family—together.  
Time serving others side-by-side.

These are the rocks that should displace the pebbles in our schedules:  
the fantasy football lineups, the endless group texts, the second (or third) episode, the thing-you-said-yes-to-out-of-guilt.

We can't let good things fill the calendar so full that foundational things never have space. Jesus said, "*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21). Your time follows your treasure—and your heart follows your time. So what's your schedule preaching about your priorities?

The good news? God doesn't shame you for being overwhelmed. He invites you to ask for help. James 1:5 promises that when we ask for wisdom—especially when we don't know what to cut or how to say no—He gives it generously.

It's not just about decluttering your calendar.  
It's about aligning your heart.

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## Prayer

God, I've packed my life so full that I've left no room for You—or for what really matters. Give me wisdom to know what to say no to, and courage to say yes to the

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things that build faith, family, and eternal impact. Help me trust that Your pace is better than my hustle. Amen.

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## **Challenge**

Clear space today—on your calendar or in your heart. Cancel something that doesn't matter, so you can step in for someone who does.

Then invite God to fill that space with purpose.

## Day 4: Milk Cartons & Ministry

**Theme:** Fun

**Scripture:** *Proverbs 17:22*

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

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### Devotional Reflection

Joy lives in the little moments—like cereal dance parties and spilled milk theology.

Spilled milk, cereal stuck to the church dress, and only two left shoes with no rights in sight—these are today's setbacks but tomorrow's comic memories. But what if we didn't wait until tomorrow to laugh? What if we laughed now—before the milk even finishes dripping off the counter?

Laughter is not just a stress response—it's a spiritual weapon. It disarms tension. It invites connection. It turns the mundane into ministry. That messy, chaotic breakfast? It might just be your pulpit.

When we think about our childhoods, most of us don't remember exact dates—we remember the atmosphere.

The tone. The laughter (or the lack of it). You don't need a two-hour prayer meeting to disciple your family. Sometimes, it's a goofy sideways hug that defuses a ticking teen. Sometimes, it's a ridiculous breakfast story that becomes a family legend.

Nehemiah told the people of Israel, "*Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength*" (Nehemiah 8:10). Strength isn't always found in grit—it's sometimes found in giggles.

Your home may be noisy. Sticky. Wild. But that doesn't disqualify it from being holy. God shows up in joy just as surely as He does in stillness. You just have to decide ahead of time—when the cereal hits the fan—that you're going to overflow with joy rather than boil over with anger.

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## Prayer

Lord, thank You for laughter—the kind that shakes off the stress and invites Your presence into the mess. Help me not take myself so seriously. Let joy rise up in me when the chaos closes in, and give me the courage to lead my home with a smile instead of a sigh. Amen.

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## Challenge

Start something silly tonight.  
Pajamas at dinner. Speak in pirate voices. Have a family

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dance-off.

Let your home echo with joy—and let your people  
remember that it started with you.

## Day 5: When Plans Meet Play-Doh

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** *Proverbs 16:9*

In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps.

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### Devotional Reflection

Game plans are great—until a 3-year-old eats the dice.

The day was set. Meals prepped, bags packed, and just enough margin for a quiet cup of coffee. Departure time: locked in. Sure, you built in a 30-minute buffer, but that's just good parenting strategy. Then the toddler braids Play-Doh into their hair and you're Googling how to get it out without shaving their head. Literally.

Welcome to discipleship through disruption.

Why is it that when God chuckles at our carefully laid plans, it gets under our skin? Maybe because we thought control was holy. But what if the interruption *is* the ministry? What if the thing that derails your plan is actually the very place God wants to meet you?

Planning isn't the problem—Joseph saved an entire nation through good planning. Thoughtful structure is biblical. But so is flexibility. *Ecclesiastes 3:1* reveals, “*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.*” Wisdom isn't merely knowing how to plan—it's knowing when to pivot.

Flexibility is a spiritual discipline. It's being willing to hear the Spirit whisper mid-moment and follow His lead, even if it reroutes your schedule or interrupts your Sunday football lineup. Sometimes obedience looks like stopping for the stranded driver. Other times it's taxiing four kids in five directions while praying the wheels don't fall off your van—or your sanity.

If we pad our faith with flexibility, life's uppercuts won't knock us out. They'll just redirect us—into joy, into growth, and into greater dependence on the God who knows the way.

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## Prayer

God, help me hold my plans with open hands. When the day derails and things don't go the way I pictured, give me ears to hear Your voice and a heart that responds with joy. Teach me to see disruption as an invitation instead of an inconvenience. Amen.

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## **Challenge**

Name one area in your life where you've been clinging too tightly to your own plan.

Now, surrender it.

Say it out loud. Hand it to God—and ask Him to replace it with something better.

## Day 6: She's Not Your Roommate

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** *Ephesians 5:25*

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

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### Devotional Reflection

Marriage goes beyond survival. It's sacrificial strategy.

“Co-worker for Christ” might sound great in your men's group, but it's not enough for your home. Your wife is not only your partner in parenting logistics—she's a sacred vessel entrusted to you by God. When Scripture refers to her as the “weaker vessel,” it's not about strength—it's about value. Think fine china versus your everyday mug. You don't toss it in the sink. You set it apart.

*1 Peter 3:7* puts it this way:

“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life...”

This isn't a downgrade—it's a call-up. Cherish her.  
Protect her. See her.

But let's be honest: in the chaos of school drop-offs, ministry meetings, bedtime routines, and that one kid who can never find both shoes, it's easy to become two trains passing in the night. The check-ins become transactional. Conversations become briefings. Romance becomes optional.

Without intentionality, marriage starts to feel like Survivor Island: who gets kicked off first?

That's why sacrificial love must become strategic love. It's not just doing the big things—it's doing the little things *first*. Plant a kiss before she walks out the door. Stand up and greet her when she gets home like she's worth your energy (because she is). Make her coffee, then guard five sacred, child-free minutes to ask her: "How are you? No really. What's on your heart? What are you dreaming about?"

She's not your roommate. She's your bride.  
And the way you cherish her now will echo for generations.

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## Prayer

Lord, help me love her like You love the Church—with sacrifice, consistency, and intentionality. Give me eyes to see her the way You do, even in the busy blur. Teach me to pursue her heart—not just her help. Show me

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how to cherish, protect, and uplift her in every season.  
Amen.

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## **Challenge**

Plan a surprise date—or better yet, give her time to go solo and breathe.

Babysit. Clean something. Create space for her soul to recharge.

And make sure she knows you see her—not just the work she does.

## Day 7: Angry Dad Needs a Protein Bar

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** *Romans 12:1*

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

What and when you eat impact your worship more than you think.

“Hangry Dad”—it’s a name that might get laughs from your kids, but it’s also a red flag. You skipped breakfast, pushed through lunch, and now your body’s sending warning signals through your mood. One minute you’re fine, the next you’re snapping at a toddler because they dropped a crayon. Again.

That headache creeping in? That short temper? They might not be spiritual attacks—they might just be your blood sugar tanking.

In the rush of daily life, it's easy to skip meals or eat whatever's fast and convenient. But the truth is, fueling your body with junk—whether it's processed food or a daily coffee/sugar/butter-in-a-mug combo—won't set you up for peaceful, God-honoring parenting. We can't fuel our bodies with **drive-thru regret and vending machine theology** and expect to operate like a fine-tuned Ferrari. You'll run more like a 1970 Ford Pinto—still moving, but always one bump away from a full emotional explosion.

Paul challenges us in Romans 12:1 to present our bodies as living sacrifices—holy and pleasing to God. That's not just about sexual integrity or showing up to church on Sunday. It's about how we care for the physical vessel God gave us—day in and day out. How we fuel it. How we rest it. How we steward the engine.

*1 Corinthians 10:31* echoes the same heartbeat:

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

Yes, even what's in your lunchbox can be worship.

This isn't about dieting or muscle gain. This is about becoming more emotionally steady, spiritually responsive, and physically able to serve the people God's entrusted to you. So today, grab that protein bar

early. Drink the water. Make the better choice. Do it not just for your body—but for your worship.

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## **Prayer**

God, give me wisdom and discipline to care for the body You've entrusted to me. Help me recognize when neglecting my physical needs is hurting my relationships and my worship. Let my energy reflect Your purpose—not my cravings. Amen.

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## **Challenge**

Choose one healthy habit today—and do it as an act of worship.  
Not for abs. Not for your New Year's resolution.  
Do it for the glory of God and the good of your people.

## Day 8: Just One More

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** *Isaiah 1:17*

Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.  
Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the  
widow.

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### Devotional Reflection

Justice begins in your living room.

We talk big about “seeking justice,” but often miss it  
when it’s sitting at our own dinner table. It’s in serving  
the one child who’s spiraling. It’s in giving time to the  
kid who struggles to speak but still needs to be heard.  
It’s in asking your wife how she’s *really* doing—and not  
just when it’s convenient.

Mercy doesn’t always make the headlines. Sometimes,  
it’s in the middle of laundry piles and lunchboxes.  
Sometimes, justice is spelled L-E-G-O-S and scattered  
across the living room floor.



There will always be more need than you can meet. More beds to fill. More brokenness than your heart can carry. But Isaiah 1:17 doesn't tell us to fix it all—it tells us to *seek justice* and *defend the vulnerable*. That starts with the one right in front of you.

Micah 6:8 echoes the same call:

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.”

This is where discipleship gets real.  
Not in sweeping solutions, but in quiet faithfulness.  
Not in fixing everything, but in showing up for one.

Your kids are watching. They're learning what justice looks like—*not from your speeches, but from your Tuesday afternoons*. When they see you choose inconvenience over comfort for the sake of someone else, they're not just observing kindness. They're witnessing Christ.

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## Prayer

God, open my eyes to the one right in front of me—the child, the spouse, the neighbor I've been too distracted to notice. Give me a heart that leans into love, even when it's inconvenient. Teach me to walk in step with You—not just in big ideas, but in small acts of mercy. Amen.

## **Challenge**

Say yes to something inconvenient—but loving—today.

Maybe it's listening longer than you feel like.

Maybe it's stopping what you're doing to serve someone without being asked.

Pick one act of justice, and live it loud.

## Day 9: Operation: Dead Fish Nap

**Theme:** Fun

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 3:13

That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Sometimes the best play is pretending to be dead while the kids climb on you.

Sure, epic imaginary battles and spontaneous dance-offs deserve a place in the parenting hall of fame. But a half-napping beauty makeover or a dad laying still while a toddler declares “He’s a dead fish!” can be just as precious. These low-energy wins carry more weight than you realize.

Intentional fathering doesn’t require a full tank every day. It just requires presence. If you wait until you’re rested, caffeinated, and creatively inspired, you’ll miss half the moments that shape your child’s world.

Sometimes high standards—like “playtime needs to be epic” or “I need to come up with something brilliant”—can paralyze you from engaging at all. But your kids don’t need production. They need proximity.

Ecclesiastes reminds us that joy is a *gift of God*, even in ordinary things like food and rest. And Psalm 127:3–5 elaborates on why it matters:

“Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.

Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth.

Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.”

These “quiver moments” may not be perfect. You may not feel strong or playful. But getting down on the floor—even if your version of “play” today is laying there like a pancake while your kids stack toys on your back—is still ministry.

They’re not asking for magic.

They’re asking for *you*.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

Lord, thank You for joy in the ordinary. Help me show up for my kids even when I feel drained. Teach me to loosen up, lay down my pride, and laugh more. Let my rest become connection—and let my presence be a gift they remember. Amen.

## **Challenge**

Get on the floor today—literally.  
Play dead, get tickled, wear the tiara.  
Let your guard down and make it count.

## Day 10: Guilt Trip Cancelled

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** Romans 8:1 (NIV)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

— \*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Shame isn't your spiritual director. Grace is.

You lost your temper again.

You muttered something under your breath you didn't mean but kind of did.

You laid in bed at the end of the day and thought, *"They deserved better than the version of me I gave them."*

Welcome to the guilt spiral.

Shame has a way of whispering lies that sound like truth: *You're failing. You'll never get this right. You're a fraud. Everyone else handles it better.* But those whispers aren't from God. They're from an enemy who knows that if he can't steal your salvation, he'll settle for your peace.

The weight of fatherhood, marriage, ministry, and work doesn't just exhaust your body—it can wear out your soul. Especially when the pressure builds, and you explode, check out, or shut down. Then guilt kicks in. And not the helpful, convicting kind—the *I'm not enough and never will be* kind.

But Romans 8:1 doesn't leave any room for shame-based theology:

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

None.

Not for your past.

Not for your most exhausted moment.

Not even for last night's meltdown.

And Psalm 34:5 backs it up:

“Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.”

The Gospel doesn't minimize sin—it cancels its power. So stop letting guilt run your calendar, your tone, your prayers. You're not a slave to shame. You're a son walking in grace.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

God, I mess up—often. But remind me that Your grace is bigger than my guilt. When I feel unworthy, help me

look to You and not my performance. Teach me to live like someone who's been forgiven, not someone still trying to earn it. Amen.

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## Challenge

Write down one thing you're ashamed of.

Say it out loud—and then speak this over it:

**“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”**

Tear it up. Throw it out. Walk lighter.



## Day 11: Diapers, Duct Tape & Discipleship

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** Luke 9:23

Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Dying to self often looks like changing diapers at 3 A.M.

Discipleship isn’t always a mission trip or a Bible study. Sometimes it looks like unclogging a toilet with a Hot Wheels car in it. Or walking into the nursery to discover a diaper expertly re-secured with duct tape—thanks to a “helpful” teen who couldn’t find the tabs but figured, *Hey, stickiness is stickiness.*

Welcome to fatherhood—the gritty, glorious training ground for spiritual formation.

Luke 9:23 sounds bold when read in church. But in real life? Taking up your cross daily might mean sacrificing sleep, surrendering plans, or laying down your comfort for the 900th time that week. And no one claps when you do it. There are no medals for cleaning up back-blowout explosions. But there is growth. There is formation. And there is a kind of joy that only comes from invisible obedience.

*Philippians 2:3–4* grounds us:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

That includes the interests of little humans who think dry cereal is a food group and that pants are optional.

Discipleship is rarely flashy. It’s slow, costly, and mostly unseen. But it’s holy. Every bottle, every diaper, every sacrificial choice—it’s all sacred when done with love and humility.

And yes, duct tape diapers may not be medically recommended—but when you’re laying down your life in those moments? You’re living like Jesus.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

Father, give me joy in the hidden work. Help me to love without needing to be noticed and to serve without

keeping score. Remind me that every unseen act of sacrifice is seen by You—and that following You means laying myself down daily, diaper duty included. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## Challenge

Do something sacrificial today—and don't post it, mention it, or expect praise for it.

Bonus points if it involves poop, duct tape, or a well-meaning teenager.

## Day 12: Froot Loops and Forgiveness

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

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### Devotional Reflection

You both blew it. Now what? Grace beats grudges.

Marriage would be easier if we weren't married to another sinner. Or if we weren't sinners ourselves. But since that's not the case, conflict is part of the package—like Froot Loops crushed into the carpet or the third load of laundry you forgot in the washer.

Sometimes it's big stuff. But more often, it's the daily dings: the sarcastic tone, the forgotten errand, the emotional withdrawal that started two days ago and turned into a full-blown cold war over breakfast.

So what do you do when you both blow it?

You forgive.

Not when they earn it. Not when they say the exact right thing. You forgive *as the Lord forgave you*—freely, fully, and before they deserved it.

Easier said than done? Always.

That's why Proverbs 19:11 reminds us:

“A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.”

And Emerson Eggerichs<sup>1</sup> adds this gem:

**“Assume good will.”**

In other words, believe that your spouse didn't wake up looking for ways to make you miserable. They're human. You're human. And you both need grace like you need air.

Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending something didn't hurt. It means choosing love over the silent scorecard. And more often than not, healing starts when someone swallows their pride and says, “I'm sorry” first.

Even if you're only 40% wrong.  
Maybe especially then.

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## Prayer

Lord, teach me to lead with humility—even when I feel justified. Help me to forgive like You forgive me, and to assume good will instead of assuming the worst. I want my marriage to be a place of grace, not grudges. Show me where I need to go first. Amen.

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## Challenge

Apologize first—even if you're only 40% wrong.  
Say it clearly. Say it sincerely.  
Then let the healing begin.

## Day 13: Motion is Lotion

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 6:19–20

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Exercise isn't vanity—It's stewardship.

You don't have to be a CrossFit evangelist or a protein shake disciple to understand this: **your body was built to move**. And when it doesn't—it lets you know. Squeaky joints, tight backs, sluggish minds. They're all reminders that motion isn't optional. It's maintenance.

“Motion is lotion” might sound like something your chiropractor says while twisting your spine into a pretzel, but there's truth in it. Moving your body helps everything function better—including your mind, mood, and ministry.

The Bible doesn't glamorize muscles. But it does call us to **steward** our bodies. Not idolize them. Not ignore them. *Steward* them.

That's what Paul is getting at in 1 Corinthians 6: your body isn't your own. It belongs to God, and He expects you to care for it like something sacred. That means treating it like an instrument of service, not a garbage disposal for stress-snacking and soda binges.

And *Hebrews 12:11* adds this bonus dose of wisdom:

“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

You don't have to run a marathon. You just need to move. Walk the block. Stretch on the floor. Knock out a few pushups between diaper changes. Your body is a tool for love and leadership—keep it working. Not for a mirror. For a mission.

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## Prayer

Lord, thank You for this body—even when it's sore, tired, or slower than I want it to be. Help me steward it well—not for attention or vanity, but for Your glory and my ability to love others well. Teach me discipline that's healthy and holy. Amen.

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## Challenge

Move today. Walk. Lift. Stretch. Chase your kid around the yard.

Whatever it takes—**just move.**

Your body was made for this.

## Day 14: Goodbyes That Gut Us

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** John 11:35

Jesus wept.

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### Devotional Reflection

Jesus didn't dodge grief. Neither should you.

Grief doesn't always come wrapped in black clothes and casseroles. Sometimes it shows up as a goodbye at the door. A lost friendship. A missed milestone. A kid who left your home before you were ready. Or maybe you were never ready.

Even Jesus wasn't immune. *John 11:35*—the shortest verse in the Bible—is a deep well: “Jesus wept.” He didn't sugarcoat loss. He didn't roll His eyes and quote Romans 8:28. He stood outside the tomb of His friend, and He wept.

If the Son of God can cry, so can you.

But in a culture of hustle, distraction, and spiritual tough-guy masks, grief often gets shoved to the side like yesterday's mail. And yet Scripture says something better:

*Psalm 34:18* states,

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

That means grief isn't a detour. It's a place God draws close.

Whether you've lost a foster child, a parent, a friend, or even just the dream you thought you were building—don't push past the pain too quickly. Don't numb it. Don't pretend. Let it hurt. Let God in.

And know this: your kids are watching how you handle goodbyes. Not just the spoken ones, but the quiet ones. Show them that faith doesn't mean faking it. It means trusting a God who sits with us in the ache.

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## Prayer

Jesus, You know grief. You've cried. You've stood at gravesides. You've felt the ache I sometimes try to ignore. Help me not run from grief—but bring it to You. Heal what still hurts. Sit with me in the sorrow, and help me trust You even when it still stings. Amen.

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## **Challenge**

Write a note—or a prayer—to someone you’ve had to say goodbye to.

Honor what they meant. Grieve what was lost.

Then ask God to keep healing the places they left behind.

## Day 15: The “Precious” Ice Cream Temptation

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** 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.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Obedience sometimes looks like walking past the freezer.

You know the scene: It's 9:47 p.m. The house is finally quiet. You open the freezer. There it is—your secret pint of ice cream, wedged behind the frozen peas like a culinary ring of power. Cue Gollum voice: “*My precious...*”

Sometimes temptation looks like a moral crisis.  
Sometimes it looks like Rocky Road.

But this isn't just about food. It's about the way we run to **quick comforts** instead of lasting peace. The temptation to indulge instead of surrender. To say "yes" when you know God's saying "not today."

1 Corinthians 10:13 reminds us that God **always** provides a way out. The question is: are we willing to take the exit ramp, or do we pretend we didn't see it?

James 4:7 takes it even further:

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Resisting isn't passive. It's action. It's not just hoping the craving passes—it's choosing to submit your appetite, your impulses, your moment of "I deserve this" to the God who offers something better.

Whether it's ice cream, a screen, a snappy comeback, or any number of other temptations—sometimes obedience is as simple as walking away.

It's not about legalism. It's about **training your heart to love God more than your next hit of comfort.**

Even if that comfort is frozen, creamy, and cookie-dough filled.

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## Prayer

God, help me recognize temptation when it's dressed in something familiar and harmless. Teach me to say no—not out of guilt, but out of love for You. Strengthen my “no” when everything in me wants to say “just this once.” And help me walk in freedom, one step at a time. Amen.

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## Challenge

Say no to something that tugs at your comfort today—whether it's a habit, a shortcut, or a reflex. When you do, don't just grit your teeth—**offer that moment as worship.**

## Day 16: Saint? Nah, Just Show Up

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray continually.

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### Devotional Reflection

You don't need to be super holy—just super available.

If you've ever been told, "You're such a saint," chances are it made your skin crawl. Not because you're offended—but because you know the truth. You're not a saint. You're tired. You're stretched thin. And half the time, you're not even sure if you're doing it right.

But God isn't asking for spiritual superheroes.  
He's asking for availability.

Faithfulness doesn't always come with fanfare. It looks like showing up to mow a widow's lawn. It looks like holding space for a hurting teen. It looks like listening when your instinct is to fix, fix, fix. And sometimes? It looks like praying in the car while covered in Goldfish



crumbs, asking God to help you not lose it before bedtime.

*1 Thessalonians 5:17* keeps it simple: “Pray continually.” Not just at meals. Not just in quiet time. Continually. On the go. In the grit. While you serve. While you fold towels. While you pick up someone else’s pieces.

And *Matthew 25:40* explains why it matters:

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

The kingdom isn’t built on polished performances. It’s built on faithful presence. The kind that shows up with a plunger, or a pot of soup, or just a quiet shoulder.

You don’t need to feel saintly.  
You just need to say, “I’m here.”

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

God, I don’t always feel like I have much to give. But what I have—my presence, my hands, my prayers—I give to You. Use me in the unnoticed moments. Help me to show up for the people You’ve placed in front of me. Not to be impressive—just to be faithful. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## Challenge

Pray three times today—even if it's only 10 seconds each.

In the car. While folding laundry. Between texts.

Just talk to God.

**Then show up for someone.**

## Day 17: The Bed Isn't Empty

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** Hosea 14:3

In you the fatherless find compassion.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Every kid deserves to be someone's answered prayer.

You don't need a sign in the sky to know there's a kid out there who needs a place to land. A safe place. A steady voice. A calm presence. Someone who looks them in the eye and says, *"I see you—and you matter."*

But what if your home is already full?  
What if the extra bed is taken, the car seats are maxed out, and the calendar resembles a losing game of Tetris?

That's okay.

**The bed may not be empty. But someone's table is.**  
And the Father might be asking you to pull up a chair.

That means: even if you can't take someone *in*, you can still show up.

You can mentor. Babysit. Take someone to lunch.

Cheer from the stands.

You can sit across from someone who feels forgotten and offer the gift of your presence—without needing a referral, a license, or a title.

*Hosea 14:3* reminds us: “In you the fatherless find compassion.” Not in government systems or perfect homes—but in *you*. That kind of compassion isn't always dramatic. It's rarely comfortable. But it's always powerful.

*James 1:27* backs it up:

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress...”

It's not about your capacity. It's about your **availability**.

So if God brings someone to mind—a kid, a neighbor, a struggling parent—don't wait for a bed to open up. Sometimes all He's asking is that you *pull up a chair*.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

Father, give me eyes to see who needs my presence—not just my stuff or my advice, but *me*. Help me say yes when You nudge me toward someone in need. Give me

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a heart that values compassion over convenience and a spirit that moves, even when it's inconvenient. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## Challenge

Ask God to bring someone to mind—a child, teen, or adult—who might need your presence this week. Then act. Text. Call. Invite. Show up. Whether or not the bed is empty, make space at your table.

## Day 18: Your Wife's Not a Mind Reader

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** Proverbs 20:5

The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Honor starts with listening—not fixing.

You love your wife. But let's be honest—sometimes loving her well means *not talking*. Or fixing. Or jumping in with a “Have you tried...” before she's even finished her sentence.

Proverbs 20:5 gives us the blueprint: her heart isn't a headline—it's deep water. It takes patience and wisdom to draw out what's really going on. She may not say everything right away, and you won't figure it out by assumption. You figure it out by *listening*.

And if you jump in too fast? Proverbs 18:13 throws a flag:

“To answer before listening—that is folly and shame.”

Yep. That explains a few arguments, doesn't it?

The temptation is to troubleshoot her feelings like a broken appliance: unplug, reset, done. But your wife isn't asking you to fix her—she's asking you to *know* her. And you can't know someone if you don't ask questions and make space for real answers.

You don't need a Ph.D. in communication. You just need to care more about her heart than your response time.

Want to be a better husband?

Practice drawing her out—and then stop talking long enough to actually hear her.

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## Prayer

Lord, help me become a man who listens with wisdom. Not to fix. Not to defend. Just to understand and honor the woman You've entrusted to me. Give me insight, patience, and the humility to ask rather than I assume. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## Challenge

Ask your wife today:

**“What do you wish I noticed more?”**

Then be quiet. Don’t correct. Don’t explain.

Just let her answer—and take it to heart.



## Day 19: When the Cat Gets a Haircut

**Theme:** Fun

**Scripture:** Psalm 126:2

Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

### Devotional Reflection

Sometimes God winks through the weird.

There’s a good chance that heaven is echoing with laughter more often than we think.

We tend to picture God as holy and serious—and He is—but He’s also the same Creator who made llamas, toddlers, and people who talk to their plants. He built joy right into the wiring of creation.

So maybe we shouldn’t be surprised when that joy leaks into the ordinary, like when your child attempts a “makeover” on the family cat and it emerges with a bald patch and the thousand-yard stare of a combat vet. You want to be mad, but even heaven might be chuckling.

*Psalm 126:2* captures the heart of a people overwhelmed with joy, so much so that outsiders noticed. Real joy isn't always quiet. Sometimes it's loud, messy, and sprinkled with pet hair.

And *Ecclesiastes 3:4* says there's a time to laugh, just like there's a time to cry. Parenting—and life in general—gives you both. But those unexpected laugh-out-loud moments? They might just be divine gifts wrapped in absurd packaging.

What if part of God's goodness is tucked inside the giggles you didn't plan for? What if humor isn't a distraction from holiness—but a glimpse of it?

So the next time things go sideways in the most unexpected way, don't just clean up—**laugh first**. You might be participating in something holier than you think.

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## Prayer

God, thank You for the gift of laughter. Help me not take myself too seriously or rush past the silly moments You've woven into daily life. Let joy bubble up in the ridiculous, the noisy, the weird—and let it remind me that You're here for all of it. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## **Challenge**

Think of one moment this week where God might've been laughing with you—then share it with someone. Even better? Write it down. Laughter is legacy too.

## Day 20: God Gave Me More Than I Could Handle

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** Matthew 14:16–18

Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

“Bring them here to me,” he said.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

You weren’t supposed to handle it. You were supposed to hand it to Him.

The phrase “God won’t give you more than you can handle” sounds comforting until life absolutely steamrolls you. Then it just sounds fake.

Because let’s be honest—there are days when you’re not just in over your head... you’ve sunk to the bottom, wondering if your to-do list can be used as a flotation device.

Jesus' disciples were in the same boat—literally and figuratively. Thousands of hungry people, no catering budget, and exactly five loaves and two fish. Jesus didn't say, "You've got this." He said, "*Bring it to me.*"

The point wasn't for them to be enough.  
It was to realize **He already was.**

That's what *2 Corinthians 12:9* echoes:

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Weakness isn't failure. It's your signal flare. It's the place where God steps in and says, "Finally—I can work with this."

So if you're carrying more than you can handle?  
You're not broken.  
You're not faithless.  
You're in the exact place where **grace can multiply what little you've got.**

You're not supposed to be the hero.  
You're the one with crumbs in your hands and a Savior saying, "*Bring it to Me.*"

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

God, I'm tired of pretending I've got this. I don't. But You do. Help me stop faking strength and start handing over what I can't carry. Use what little I have, multiply it

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with Your grace, and remind me that weakness isn't failure—it's the doorway to Your power. Amen.

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## Challenge

Name one area where you're faking it.

Then stop.

Tell God. Be honest.

Say, "This is all I've got... but I'm bringing it to You."

## Day 21: The Toddler Baptized Me in Spit

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:  
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Love shows up even when it's rejected—especially then.

You haven't truly been humbled until a toddler locks eyes with you, screams “NO!” like you've offended the nation, and launches a high-velocity spit glob right between your eyes. You're sticky, stunned, and baptized in sheer defiance.

But toddlers aren't the only ones who hand out holy humiliation.

Teenagers bring their own version:  
Eye rolls. Shoulder shrugs. One-word answers. A carefully curated silence that could freeze lava. You

pour yourself out—driving, listening, feeding, sacrificing—and it feels like it all lands in a black hole of earbuds and hoodie hoods.

But that's love. Real love. The kind that shows up whether it's appreciated or not.

Romans 5:8 tells us Jesus didn't wait for us to clean up our mess or even say thank you. He laid it all down *while we were still sinners*. Not when we finally got our act together. Not after we apologized.

And Luke 6:35 throws in a gut check:

“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back...”

That goes for moody toddlers.

That goes for emotionally distant teens.

That goes for anyone who makes you want to throw a shoe and then repent.

You're not just parenting behavior. You're loving souls. And love like that doesn't give up when it gets spit on—or shrugged off.

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## Prayer

Jesus, thank You for loving me at my most stubborn. Give me the strength to love my kids when they push back, shut down, or act like they don't care. Help me



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show them the kind of love that stays—spit, sass,  
silence and all. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## **Challenge**

Love a child or teen today—without needing a thank  
you, a smile, or any proof it's working.  
Love like Jesus. Lean in anyway.

## Day 22: The Double-Trouble Special

**Theme:** Fun

**Scripture:** Proverbs 17:6

Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.

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### Devotional Reflection

Sometimes the blessing comes in pairs (or packs).

The socks don't match.

The fridge is always empty.

And you haven't had an uninterrupted sentence since Tuesday.

But then, two giggles sync in stereo. Or one teen slaps the other's shoulder and says, "You're not *that* annoying." And suddenly, you remember—this isn't just work. It's blessing, doubled.

Maybe it's twins. Maybe it's a biological-kid-and-bonus-kid mash-up. Or maybe it's just parenting in surround sound—full of personalities, preferences, and prayer requests. Whatever the combo, *God's been generous.*

Proverbs 17:6 isn't talking about trophies—it's talking about *legacy*. Your family may be chaotic, but it's a crown-in-the-making. You're raising people who might one day sit across from you at Thanksgiving and say, "Thanks for not quitting when I was twelve and impossible."

And if you need more reassurance, let *Isaiah 40:11* carry the weight:

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young."

God doesn't just give you a loud house—He walks with you through every hallway of it. With toddlers and teens. With noise and blessing.

So the next time your kids come at you two at a time—needing help, needing rides, needing food—pause and thank God that you don't walk this parenting path alone.

It may be double trouble.  
But it's also double joy.

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## Prayer

God, thank You for the full house and full heart You've given me. Help me see each kid—not as a task, but as a treasure. Give me strength for the noise, wisdom for the teen years, and joy that rises higher than the chaos. Amen.

## **Challenge**

Take a picture of your most joy-filled mess today—a living room of laughter, a dinnertime free-for-all, or a teen in mid-eye-roll.

Smile.

This is blessing on the move.

## Day 23: Goodbye, Guilt Beard

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** Hebrews 10:22

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

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### Devotional Reflection

You can shave off what shame built.

There are certain things we grow out of.  
And then there are things we grow into... like that *guilt beard*.

You know the one. It's not about facial hair—it's about **letting guilt shape the way you move through life**. You overcommit, overperform, and over-apologize, thinking that maybe—just maybe—you'll earn your worth.

But God never asked you to perform. He invited you to draw near.

*Hebrews 10:22* reveals we've already been cleansed. That guilt you carry? It's not a badge of spiritual maturity—it's a leftover lie from a broken system that says you've got to be enough on your own.

Sometimes the guilt beard looks holy. Responsible. Even humble. But underneath, it's often fear: fear of failing, of being exposed, of not measuring up. And when guilt grows roots, it distorts our sense of who we are.

That's why *Galatians 5:1* comes in swinging:

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

You weren't made to carry shame like a security blanket or perform like your worth depends on it.

You're free.

So grab the razor.

Say goodbye to the guilt beard.

And step into the grace that's already yours.

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## Prayer

Jesus, thank You for cleansing not just my sins but my conscience. Help me release the guilt I've been dragging around like it's part of my calling. Teach me to walk in freedom—confident in what You've already done, not ashamed of what I haven't. Amen.

## **Challenge**

What are you doing right now just to feel “good enough”?

Name it.

Offer it up to God.

Then ask Him to replace that guilt with grace—and keep walking.

## Day 24: Do the Dishes Like Jesus Would

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** John 13:14

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

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### Devotional Reflection

The unseen things are the eternal things.

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is scrub a pan. Or pick up a sock. Or tackle that mystery substance stuck to the bottom of the fridge.

These tasks won't trend. They don't get Instagrammed. But they're the kind of love Jesus modeled when He knelt and washed feet—**ordinary, gritty, easily missed acts that say, "You matter."**

You don't have to be loud to be a leader.  
You just have to be low.



*John 13:14* isn't a symbolic gesture—it's a command to serve like Jesus served: not for show, not for credit, but because that's how the Kingdom works.

*Colossians 3:23* reinforces it:

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”

Translation? God sees what your wife doesn't. And He values it.

The dishes matter.

The attitude behind them matters more.

We don't measure our worth by how many chores we check off.

**We measure it by the value Christ already placed on us at the cross.**

When you stop striving to *earn* significance and start living *from* it, the smallest task becomes sacred ground.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

Lord, thank You for valuing me before I lift a finger. Help me serve in response to Your love—not to prove mine. Teach me to find joy in the quiet tasks and remind me that when I serve my wife, I'm honoring You. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## **Challenge**

Do something intentionally unseen today—a task your wife usually handles or no one would thank you for. Then offer it silently to God. Let it be worship—not a resume builder.

## Day 25: Schedule the Snuggle

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** Mark 10:14

When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Jesus didn’t say, “Let the children wait.”

You're halfway through a chore.

Buried in a work email.

Or finally—finally—sitting down with coffee that’s still hot, when a little voice pipes up:

“Daddy, can you hold me?”

You glance at the clock. Think about the list. And you’re tempted to say, “In a minute.”

But Jesus never said that.

In *Mark 10:14*, He wasn't politely accommodating kids—He got **indignant** when people tried to keep them at arm's length. He didn't treat them like distractions. He treated them like VIPs in the Kingdom.

And if the Son of God had time to scoop up kids while the world burned around Him, we can pause too.

*Psalms 103:13* backs it up:

“As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.”

That compassion isn't theoretical. It's hands-on. Arms-open. Minutes-given.

The child who crawls into your lap now will someday grow into a teen who won't make eye contact until there's food involved. You don't have to catch every moment. Just *notice* more of them.

Today's embrace may smell like syrup and morning breath.

But it just might be holy ground.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

Jesus, thank You for being the kind of Savior who stopped for children. Give me an interruptible heart and eyes to see the sacred in small requests. Help me pause long enough to hold my kids like You hold me—with joy, not obligation. Amen.

## Challenge

Stop what you're doing—yes, *right then*—and hold your child.

Whether they're 2 or 16, give them your full, unhurried attention.

Let them know, with your arms, they aren't second to your to-do list.

## Day 26: Huddle Up, Husbands

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 4:9–10

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

A strong man has backup.

We love the idea of being the lone wolf. The guy who handles everything solo, grits his teeth, and powers through. It makes for a great movie plot. It also makes for a spiritually burned-out, emotionally isolated husband.

You weren't made to do this alone.

**Marriage is heavy.**

**Fatherhood is harder.**

And when you don't have another man asking the hard questions, praying with you, or calling you out when you're off track—you start drifting.

*Ecclesiastes 4* isn't just for weddings—it's for warriors. Men on mission. And it says if you fall (not *if*, but *when*), you'd better have someone who knows how to pull you up, not just pat you on the back.

That's where *Proverbs 27:17* comes in:

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

If no one in your life knows the real you—not the “I’m fine” version, but the *actual* you—then who’s sharpening what? Who’s making sure you’re not drifting into bitterness, burnout, or hidden sin?

A good huddle goes beyond avoiding failure. It’s about building strength.

Shared wisdom.

Prayer that isn't polished but powerful.

A few guys who will call you higher—when you want to settle for average.

So yeah, it might be awkward to text another man and say,

“Hey, want to meet up and talk real life?”

Do it anyway.

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## Prayer

Father, thank You for not calling me to walk this out alone. Help me build strong connections with other

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godly men—guys who speak truth, offer support, and walk alongside me when I'm struggling. Give me the courage to reach out first. Amen.

— \*\* —

## Challenge

Text one guy today.

Set up a call, coffee, or quick check-in.

You don't need to spill your soul—just start the huddle.



## Day 27: The Gospel According to the Minivan

**Theme:** Fathering / Fun

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 6:7

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

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### Devotional Reflection

Some of the best discipleship happens at red lights and drive-thrus.

You don't need a Bible degree, a whiteboard, or matching family devotionals with color-coded tabs.

You just need a seatbelt and a willingness to talk while someone's throwing fruit snacks.

Discipleship isn't always a deep spiritual talk—it's what happens when your kid blurts out, "Why did God make mosquitoes?" or "Do dinosaurs go to heaven?" It's the side-eye you give the teen when their playlist lyrics need

a prayer intervention. It's how you respond when the guy cuts you off in traffic and everyone's watching to see if *Dad's fruit of the Spirit has road rage exceptions*.

*Deuteronomy 6:7* doesn't say, "Have one big weekly Bible talk." It says to teach your kids God's Word **when you walk, sit, lie down, and get up**—aka, **while you live**.

That means the **minivan** counts.

The kitchen table counts.

The school pickup line counts.

So do the Walmart aisles and bedtime stalls and every "Dad, I gotta tell you something weird" moment at 9:37 p.m.

*Proverbs 22:6* declares:

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

But here's the catch: starting them off doesn't always look like a sermon.

Sometimes it's a joke, a story, a pause to pray out loud about the sick dog, or a question that leads to a bigger truth.

Sometimes it's just **you showing up**—present, honest, engaged.

That's how they learn what grace looks like in traffic.  
What patience sounds like in a late carpool.  
And what Jesus looks like behind the wheel.

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## Prayer

Lord, thank You for the everyday moments that shape eternal things. Help me recognize opportunities to speak life into my kids—not just during big talks, but in seatbelt sermons and snack-time theology. Make me alert, present, and faithful—even in the drive-thru. Amen.

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## Challenge

The next time you're driving your kid somewhere, ask them a question that starts with, "What do you think God thinks about..."

Let the conversation roll—awkward, silly, deep, or surprising.

Just be in it.

## Day 28: Your Kid Might Be the Mirror

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:3

And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

You thought you were raising them—but God’s using them to raise you.

It starts with a scream.

Then a snack launched like a grenade.

And suddenly, you’re reacting like you’re the one who skipped nap time and dinner.

Parenting doesn’t just expose your child’s behavior—it reveals your *own heart*.

And nothing peels back your spiritual polish quite like a defiant toddler or a moody teen with Wi-Fi problems.

Jesus says in *Matthew 18:3* that we should become like little children—but He didn’t mean we should start throwing fruit snacks. He meant we should return to

humility, trust, and a teachable spirit. But often, it's our *kids* who show us how far we've drifted from that posture.

Because here's the thing: kids will test your boundaries—but they'll also **reveal your triggers**. They reflect back what's really inside: patience or pride, gentleness or control, grace or thinly veiled frustration.

*Luke 6:45* lays it bare:

“For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.”

So when your kid presses every emotional button like they're playing a video game... what spills out? That's where the real discipleship begins.

God's not just shaping them through you.  
He's shaping *you* through them.  
Parenting isn't just a job.  
It's a mirror—and sometimes what you see is more about you than them.

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## Prayer

Father, when my kids rattle me, remind me to look inward before I lash outward. Use these moments to shape me into someone more patient, gentle, and rooted in grace. Help me grow up while I raise them. Amen.

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## Challenge

Next time your child triggers frustration, ask yourself:  
“What is this revealing about *me*?”

Then pray before you parent.

Let the moment grow you, not just correct them.

## **Day 29: You're Not the Savior. But You're on the Team**

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

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### **Devotional Reflection**

God doesn't need you. But He invites you.

Somewhere along the way, you may have started to believe the lie:

“If I don't do it, no one will.”

But here's the truth—God doesn't need you to save the day. He already has a Savior, and His name isn't you.

Still, **He invites you to suit up.**

Not because He's desperate, but because He's gracious.

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*James 1:27* explains that caring for the vulnerable is part of what it means to follow Jesus. But it's not about checking a box or earning divine brownie points. It's about showing up in the places where **Jesus already is**.

You're not carrying the mission. You're joining the mission.

You're not the source. You're the extension cord.

Paul lays it out in *1 Corinthians 3:6*:

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."

You might be the seed-dropper.

The water-fetcher.

The one holding the umbrella while someone else prays.

It all counts.

Even the parts you didn't sign up for.

So today, when a small request comes your way—something inconvenient, unnoticed, or totally outside "your role"—pause.

You're not the Savior.

But you're definitely on His team.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

Father, thank You for letting me be part of what You're doing. Keep my heart soft, my pride low, and my willingness high. Remind me that obedience matters



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above recognition—and You're the only one who saves.  
Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## **Challenge**

Say yes to one request today that doesn't fall in your  
"job description."  
Don't overthink it.

## Day 30: The Curse of Competence

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** Galatians 1:10

Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Just because you *can* doesn't mean you *should*.

You're the guy people rely on.

You fix the broken things.

You take care of business.

You make it look easy—so naturally, everyone keeps handing you more.

But competence can become a curse when it turns into **people-pleasing dressed as productivity.**

You tell yourself you're just helping.

But under the surface?

You're afraid of letting people down.

You're addicted to approval.  
You've mistaken being needed for being valuable.

Paul throws a wrench in that thinking in *Galatians 1:10*—if your end goal is pleasing people, you're not serving Christ. And if that feels harsh, just remember: even **Jesus** said no sometimes.

You're not doing anyone a favor by doing everything.

*Moses* had the same problem in *Exodus 18*. He was competent, but also completely fried. Jethro stepped in with the spiritual version of, “Bro, this is unsustainable”:

“What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out.”  
(*Exodus 18:17–18*)

Here's the truth: doing too much isn't heroic.  
It's a fast track to resentment, burnout, and accidentally discipling your kids into believing that busyness equals worth.

You don't have to do it all.  
You just have to do what God actually called you to do.

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## Prayer

God, help me let go of the pressure to please everyone.  
Give me clarity to know what's mine to carry—and

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courage to say no when it's not. Teach me to serve from  
calling, not compulsion. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## **Challenge**

Say no to something today—big or small—that's  
outside your lane.  
Then say yes to something that actually restores your  
soul.

## Day 31: Love With No Receipt

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 13:5

Love... is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

\*\*\*

### Devotional Reflection

Keep no record of wrongs—even when she's wrong.

There's a subtle ledger we all carry.

A list in the back of our minds:

- The things we said and the things we didn't say.
- The wrongs absorbed. The jabs remembered.
- The conversations where we felt misunderstood... or misrepresented.

In marriage, keeping that mental scorecard can feel like self-protection. But it slowly becomes self-destruction.

**Love doesn't carry receipts.**

That's what Paul tells us in *1 Corinthians 13:5*—not just in theory, but in the trenches of relationship.

Forgiveness isn't pretending something didn't hurt.  
It's choosing to release the right to bring it up again.  
It's letting go of the "gotcha" moment and refusing to  
weaponize past wounds.

*Colossians 3:13* puts it bluntly:

"Bear with each other and forgive one another...  
Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

That's not passive.

That's an act of spiritual strength.

Forgiveness is one of the most courageous, Christlike  
things you can do in your marriage. Not because she  
earned it—but because *He gave it*.

And when you choose to forgive without fanfare,  
without follow-up reminders, without needing her to  
say it first, you reflect the very heart of Jesus.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

Father, help me love like You love—with grace that  
forgets the list. Give me a heart that releases offense  
and chooses peace, even when I feel justified in holding  
on. Teach me to forgive as You've forgiven me. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## **Challenge**

Let something go today.

Don't rehearse it. Don't rehash it.

Forgive it—and don't bring it up again.

Not because she earned it, but because you've been forgiven more.

## Day 32: Big Faith in Little Prayers

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 19:12

After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

— \*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Sometimes God speaks through a whisper—or a 6-year-old's bedtime prayer.

You expect wisdom to arrive with a spotlight.  
A thundering moment. A goosebump-filled worship song. A sermon that cracks you wide open.

But then your kid mumbles, “God, thank You for my toes,” and suddenly you're wondering when you last thanked Him for anything that basic, that sincere.

We often look for the divine in the dramatic. But *1 Kings 19:12* reminds us that God speaks in whispers—not just to Elijah on a mountain, but to you on a Tuesday night while a sleepy child offers up snack-sized prayers with eternal depth.



Those bedtime blessings, drive-thru questions, and whispered “God help me” moments? They matter.

And that’s where *Matthew 17:20* speaks loudest:

“If you have faith as small as a mustard seed... nothing will be impossible for you.”

God isn’t looking for polished speeches. He’s tuning in to faith—however clumsy, quiet, or crumb-covered it may be.

Faith doesn’t have to sound grown-up to be powerful. Some of the deepest prayers are whispered through yawns.

Some of the strongest faith walks into the room dragging a stuffed animal.

And sometimes the moment you’re tempted to brush off as “cute” might just be **kingdom-sized in God's eyes.**

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## Prayer

Lord, give me ears that listen for Your voice—especially in the quiet. Teach me to treasure the small prayers, the humble faith, and the holy interruptions. Help me respond quickly when You speak, no matter how softly. Amen.

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## **Challenge**

Pause today when something small stirs your spirit—whether it's a child's comment, a thought mid-task, or a subtle nudge.

Instead of brushing it off, treat it like a whisper from God.

And respond.

## **Day 33: Who Gave the Dog a Bath in the Kitchen Sink?**

**Theme:** Fun / Endurance in Family Life

**Scripture:** Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders... and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

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### **Devotional Reflection**

You're not crazy—it's just sanctification in a swimsuit.

You walk into the kitchen.

There's soap on the counter, a puddle on the floor, and your youngest beaming like they just won a medal.

The dog is wet.

The sink is full.

And your dinner plans are circling the drain—literally.

Who gave the dog a bath in the kitchen sink?

Apparently, the same person who decided now was a great time to sanctify your patience.

Family life is full of these moments.  
Not catastrophic. Just relentless.  
A hundred little things that wear you down by 10 a.m.

*Hebrews 12:1* tells us this is a race that requires perseverance. Not speed. Not style. **Perseverance.** The finish line isn't for those who crushed it with perfect schedules and spotless kitchens. It's for the ones who kept going—soggy socks, deep sighs, and all.

And when you're tempted to ask, "Does any of this even matter?"

*1 Corinthians 15:58* says:

"Stand firm... always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Even when that labor involves mopping up mystery water while the dog shakes off round two.

You don't need to feel victorious to be obedient.  
You don't need to look strong to endure.  
You just need to keep showing up—and staying in it.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

Lord, when family life feels ridiculous and exhausting, help me endure with grace and grit. Teach me to run the long race—not with perfection, but with steady trust in You. And when the puddles come, remind me it still counts. Amen.

## Challenge

When something ridiculous happens today—like bath time gone rogue—whisper this to yourself:

**“This is the race. And I’m still running.”**

Then keep going.

## Day 34: The Ministry of Macaroni and Cheese

**Theme:** Fun

**Scripture:** John 21:12

Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.

— \*\*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

Jesus cooked breakfast. You can sit down with a bowl of easy mac.

It wasn’t fancy. It wasn’t catered.

Jesus, fresh from conquering death, didn’t hold a seminar or drop deep theology.

He said, “Come and eat.”

*John 21:12* shows us that gathering around a meal matters—even if that meal is off-brand macaroni made in the microwave by a kid who *definitely* didn’t measure the water.

Too often, we skip the table in favor of convenience, chaos, or cleaning up something else. But something happens when you stop, sit, and share. It doesn't have to be gourmet. It just has to be **intentional**.

*Acts 2:46* paints a picture of the early church like this:

“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.”

It doesn't say they nailed meal prep or had themed place settings.

They just ate—together.

That table, no matter how sticky or mismatched, becomes the place where connection grows. Laughter happens. Hearts soften. Even tired parents get a moment to breathe.

So whether it's grilled cheese, cereal, or something from the freezer that may or may not still be edible, **take the seat**.

Look someone in the eye.

Say a prayer.

Be there.

\*\*\*

## Prayer

Jesus, thank You for reminding me that what matters is presence, not presentation. Help me slow down enough to sit, share, and savor these ordinary moments with the people You've placed around my table. Amen.

## **Challenge**

Tonight, sit down for a meal with someone—even if it's leftovers, paper plates, or microwave mac and cheese. No phones. No TV. Just people. And maybe a little laughter.



## Day 35: Your Wife's a Warrior—Treat Her Like One

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** Proverbs 31:10–12

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

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### Devotional Reflection

Praise her strength. Affirm her sacrifice. Notice her.

You see the laundry pile.

The sports schedule.

The grocery runs, the emotional triage, the toddler meltdowns, the teen drama, and the 900 things she held together today that no one will ever know about.

She didn't ask for a trophy. But let's be honest—if trophies were handed out for invisible labor, your wife's shelf would collapse under the weight.

**Proverbs 31 doesn't call her strong because she *feels* strong.**

It calls her strong because she *shows up anyway*.

She's not just surviving. She's building something—  
your home, your family, your future.

So don't treat her like she's just a background character  
in your big adventurous story.

She's a **co-commander**, not your unpaid intern.

*Hebrews 10:24* says:

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on  
toward love and good deeds.”

That's your job, too.

You don't have to write her a sonnet (though bonus  
points if you do).

You just need to **call out the strength you see**.

Celebrate her. Applaud her wins. Acknowledge her  
losses.

Don't wait for a breakdown to start speaking life.

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## Prayer

God, thank You for the warrior I get to call my wife.  
Forgive me when I overlook the weight she carries.  
Help me speak life into her today—not because she  
needs my approval, but because she deserves my  
gratitude. Amen.

— \*\*\* —

## **Challenge**

Brag on your wife today.

Say it to her face.

Say it to someone else when she's not around.

Make her strength known.

Not because it's Mother's Day... because it's Thursday.

And she's crushing it.

## Day 36: The “Yes, Lord—If Only for Awhile” Prayer

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** Matthew 25:40

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

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### Devotional Reflection

Provision isn’t just about paychecks—It’s about presence.

Sometimes you say yes out of calling.  
Other times, you say yes because someone has to—  
And you’re the grown-up in the room.

That might look like taking on a second job.  
Or running the minivan like a cross-country shuttle.  
Or leading prayer when your tank is dry.

Welcome to fatherhood.

It's not about being the hero.  
It's about showing up—over and over—to provide  
what your family actually needs:  
A warm meal.  
A safe hug.  
A word of blessing.  
A ride to practice.  
A calm voice in a wild moment.

**Provision is more than income.**

It's input.  
Spiritual, emotional, physical.  
And *1 Timothy 5:8* doesn't pull punches:

“Anyone who does not provide for their relatives... has  
denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Ouch.  
But also—clarity.

God isn't after perfection.  
He's calling you to **carry the weight you were built to  
carry**, even if just for a season.

You might not be in your dream job.  
You might not even know how long this rhythm lasts.  
But this season? This “yes”? This work?

**It matters.**

Because your family needs you.  
And you've been given the strength to provide—not for  
everything, but for today.

## Prayer

Lord, help me lead with love—through my work, my words, and my willingness to carry what You’ve entrusted to me. Teach me how to provide in ways that build beyond comfort—build faith. Amen.

— \*\* —

## Challenge

Identify one way your family needs you to step it up today: spiritually, emotionally, or physically. Then show up—on purpose. No excuses. Just “yes, Lord—even if only for a while.”

## Day 37: You're Not Failing—You're Fathering

**Theme:** Personal Development

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40:29

*He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.*

\*\*\*

### Devotional Reflection

Weakness doesn't disqualify you. It reminds you where the power comes from.

You lost your cool.

You forgot the school project.

You burned the grilled cheese and snapped at the wrong kid.

Congratulations. You're doing it right.

Because this thing you're doing? It's not called perfection.

It's called fathering.

And fathering is more about falling forward than nailing it on the first try.

If you were always calm, always wise, always well-rested and freshly shaved... your kids wouldn't know how to live with a human.  
They'd be trying to imitate a lie.

But when you fail honestly and lean into grace instead of shame, you're teaching them what real strength looks like.

Isaiah 40:29 shows us that God gives power to the weak—not the polished. He's after impressive. He's asking you to stay dependent.

And Psalm 73:26 backs that up:  
*"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."*

So the next time your voice cracks or your patience runs out, don't spiral.  
Redirect. Repent. Reset.  
Then keep fathering.

You're not failing—you're growing.  
And so are they.

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## Prayer

God, thank You that my flaws aren't final. Help me embrace my weakness as a reminder of Your strength.



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Teach me how to lead with honesty, repent quickly, and love well—even when I feel like I’m blowing it. Amen.

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## **Challenge**

Tell a trusted friend or mentor about one area where you feel weak as a dad.

Not to vent.

But to invite grace into the gap.

This is where real strength starts.

## Day 38: Make a Fool of Yourself—For Love

**Theme:** Fun

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 6:22

“I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes...”

— \*\* —

### Devotional Reflection

King David danced like a maniac. What’s your excuse?

You’ve held a pretend tea party with a crown made from dryer lint.

You’ve taken a Nerf dart to the eye.

You’ve done interpretive dance to a bedtime remix of “Let It Go.”

And somehow... you're still hesitant to go full goofy?

Let’s fix that.

David danced his heart out before the Lord, and when someone judged him, he basically said, “Buckle up, it’s about to get weirder.”

*2 Samuel 6:22* is less about dancing and more about this:  
**love doesn't care how it looks.**

And *Zephaniah 3:17* declares:

“The Lord your God... will take great delight in you...  
he will rejoice over you with singing.”

If God dances over you, you can dance for your kids.  
Sing with your wife.  
Play freeze tag with full commitment.

Joy is contagious.  
And your kids aren't watching your dance moves—  
they're watching your freedom.  
They don't need a polished performer. They need a dad  
who's not afraid to look a little ridiculous if it means  
loving them well.

So go ahead.  
Shimmy in the kitchen.  
Invent your own bedtime song.  
Jump on the trampoline (just stretch first).

This is the stuff memories are made of.  
This is the stuff *you* were made for.

— \*\*\* —

## Prayer

God, help me care more about connection than cool  
points. Teach me to laugh loud, love big, and dance like  
David—not for attention, but as an act of joy. Let my

kids see freedom in me that points straight back to You.  
Amen.

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## **Challenge**

Do something delightfully ridiculous today:  
Sing, dance, make up a game, or wear something  
absurd—just to make your kids laugh.  
They'll remember the joy long after they forget the  
rules.

## Day 39: The Real MVP of Ministry: Your Spouse

**Theme:** Being a Husband

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:18

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

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### Devotional Reflection

If God gave you a helper, treat her like a gift—not an assistant.

She’s not your secretary.

She’s not your scheduler.

She’s not your co-pilot, your backup vocalist, or your second-string support staff.

She’s your **teammate**.

And when God designed the starting lineup for your life, He gave you her—not just to help you out, but to **build something with you**.

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When Genesis 2:18 calls her a “helper,” it uses the same Hebrew word that often refers to *God Himself*.

Let that sink in.

Helper doesn’t mean lesser.

It means essential.

So stop thinking like a solo act and start functioning like a **two-person mission team**. You’re not the MVP—she is. Or at the very least, you’re co-MVPs and she’s definitely putting up more assists.

And if you need clarity on how to treat a teammate, *Ephesians 5:29* spells it out:

“After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church.”

Cherish her.

Speak life into her.

Point out her strengths like a coach reviewing highlights.

Because when your marriage is aligned, the whole house plays better.

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## Prayer

God, thank You for the gift of my wife. Forgive me for the times I’ve treated her like a tag-along instead of a teammate. Show me how to cherish her the way You cherish the Church—fully, joyfully, and daily. Amen.

## **Challenge**

Write your wife a short note or text today that highlights one strength she brings to your family or ministry life. Be specific. Make her feel seen—not just needed, but treasured.

## Day 40: Your House Is a Mission Field

**Theme:** Fathering

**Scripture:** Joshua 24:15

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

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### Devotional Reflection

You don't need a passport—you need a kitchen table and a willing heart.

You made it.

Day 40.

High five. Side hug. Possibly a fist bump if you're emotional.

But let's be clear:

This isn't the finish line.

It's the launch pad.

You don't have to move to another country, grow a beard, or learn Greek to be a missionary.

Your living room is your mission field.



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Your dinner table is your pulpit.  
Your bedtime routine is your discipleship class.

**You are the culture-setter.**

Not the trends.

Not the TikTok.

Not the chaos of the calendar. **You.**

*Joshua 24:15* isn't a fridge magnet—it's a declaration.

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

That means choosing worship over whining.

Truth over trends.

Presence over performance.

It means leading your kids not just to behave—but to believe.

Not just to follow the rules—but to follow Christ.

And if that feels daunting, good news: you're not alone.

*1 Peter 5:2–3* gives the blueprint:

“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care...  
not because you must, but because you are willing...  
being examples to the flock.”

This mission starts right under your roof.

Not perfectly.

But purposefully.

So here we are.

Day 40.

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You've read the words.  
Now go live them.

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## Prayer

Father, thank You for this journey. For every hard truth, ridiculous moment, and quiet conviction along the way. Give me courage to lead my family with humility, to shape our home with Your truth, and to never forget that my most important ministry begins under my own roof. Amen.

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## Challenge

Gather your family—even if it's chaos—and say out loud:

**“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”**

Then ask one question:

**“What's one way we can do that this week—  
together?”**

Write it down. Do it.

## A Final Word

Well, you did it.

Forty days.

Forty messes.

Forty chances to show up, mess up, and start again.

Whether you read every page with a cup of coffee in hand or crammed half of them between bedtime battles and cereal spills, hear this: **you showed up.**

And in this season of life—**showing up outweighs polished plans or perfect prayers.**

But let's be honest: just because you hit Day 40 doesn't mean you've arrived.

Parenting, marriage, and spiritual growth aren't mountain peaks. They're more like trails through a jungle—overgrown, unpredictable, and often covered in LEGO bricks. You'll still raise your voice some days. You'll still forget a field trip or botch a bedtime talk. You'll still wonder if you're messing the whole thing up.

**You're not.**

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You're just in the middle of the work.  
And the middle is where legacy gets built.

This devotional was never about producing superhero dads. It's about becoming **faithful ones**—men who keep returning to the well of grace and pulling buckets of love for their families, even when they feel empty.

Your job moving forward isn't to try harder—it's to stay tethered.

Tethered to Jesus.  
Tethered to your wife.  
Tethered to your kids in the messy, beautiful, holy chaos of real life.

Keep laying yourself down in small, hidden ways.  
Keep blessing when no one sees.  
Keep laughing when everything spills.  
Keep forgiving when it's hard.  
Keep choosing to love when it would be easier to scroll, escape, or shut down.

And above all, remember this: **your faithfulness today will echo into your family's future.**

That's not hype. That's the gospel playing out through dad jokes and discipline, date nights and dish duty. Because every moment of surrender is a seed. And the God who planted you in this role is faithful to bring fruit—in His time, not yours.

So when the days stretch long and your energy runs short, you've got a choice: drift... or lead.

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Choose to lead.

Choose to lean in.

Choose to love with guts and grit and grace.

And when you mess it up (because you will), get back  
up and go again.

You're not just surviving.

**You're fathering.**

**You're leading.**

**You're loving with intention.**

And that's worth everything.

Stay in the fight,

Keep your eyes on Jesus,

And never underestimate what God can do through one  
dad who says,

**"Yes, Lord—even in this."**

## Endnotes

### **Books & Author Quotes**

1. Eggerichs, Emerson. *The Love & Respect Experience: A Husband-Friendly Devotional That Wives Will Truly Love*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011.

## About The Author



Duane Stark is a foster and adoptive dad, pastor, financial coach, and former Oregon State Representative. For nearly two decades, he and his wife have opened their home to vulnerable children, raising eight kids along the way. Duane has served as a pastor in Grants Pass, Oregon, and holds degrees from the University of Oregon and Multnomah University.

His background includes work in youth outreach, international missions, mental health, and community advocacy. In the legislature, Duane championed foster care reform, anti-trafficking laws, and support for public safety. Whether preaching, parenting, or pushing for change, Duane strives to bring a gritty honesty and deep hope to every role he takes on.

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