



Week 0: Man in the Arena

Simple Tuesday Devotional:

Greetings in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ- Amen

I am so excited to have you along with me on this journey over this **40-Day Lenten Challenge**. I am reminded as we begin our journey of a quote from Theodore Roosevelt called "The Man in the Arena,"

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

I bring this quote up at the start for our **40-Day Lenten Challenge**, because there will be days of success, there will be other days of struggle and possible failure. As the Apostle Paul reminds us in **Romans 7:19-20** "**For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.**" This is why we follow Habit 1 to **fast**. It is good outwardly bodily training because of the sin that dwells in us. This is why next week, we begin our Week 1 of **S.A.I.N.T.S.** in understanding that sin has caused all sorts of evil within us. Even Jesus pre-incarnate warned Cain that "**if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it**" (**Gen 4:7b**). This is why we look to Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith

who is the Atonement of our sins, and who intercedes for us before the Father. It's all about Jesus. These 40 days are all about Jesus.

But the “arena” is the world we live in. Our faces are marred by dust and sweat and blood because we are in a war over sin, death, and the devil. We battle the temptations of our flesh, and what the world has to offer. There will be days of error and shortcoming. There will be days of success and triumph of high achievement. But know, as you are in this arena, Jesus himself is beside you. He has given you the success to overcome. He has granted you His Holy Spirit to endure. The Holy Spirit has called you to this challenge. Enjoy it for you are not alone.

As a reminder: Please live by Rule 1, and don't forget it “Let the Grace of God rule in your hearts.” If you get behind, please don't feel like you need to catch up. Get back on the horse as they say, press on, and strive valiantly.

Habit 5: Check in

The goal is to check in with an accountability partner who is in the challenge with you by Thursday to help you stay on track. You will either meet in person or by phone call once a week.

Habit 6: Work

Find your baseline of exercise. These numbers will be used throughout the rest of the six remaining weeks for Habit 6: Work.

- How many pushups can you do in one minute (on knees, on feet, or against the wall if necessary)?
- How long can you plank?
- How far can you walk/run in 15 minutes? If you have a spin bike, ride for 15 minutes.

Disclaimer:

Under no circumstances do we want anyone hurt. If you are physically unable to do anything, please keep things simple and just move through your house, walk to the end of the yard, do some chair sit and stands... anything you struggle to do and yet push through is a success. Celebrate small victories.

Student Athletes:

If you are currently involved in a sport, your practice time counts for Habit 6: Work.

Why are we adding Habit 6 this year? You have one life to live, and people are counting on you. If you struggle to find time, give up doom scrolling and fight your flesh as you fight for your families. If it's worth it, you will make time. ***“And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes”*** (Nehemiah 4:14).

Week 0 Schedule

Habit 5: Check In: (By Thursday midnight)

- **Fasting / Self-discipline:** *Where did you practice self-control this week, and where did you struggle?*
- **Scripture:** *Have you been faithful in reading and hearing God's Word? What stood out to you?*
- **Prayer:** *Have you been consistent in prayer, and what has been weighing most heavily on your heart?*
- **Work / Physical discipline:** *How did you care for your body through work or exercise this week?*
- **Community / Support & Accountability:** *Where do you need encouragement or help to remain faithful in the coming week?*
- **Intercession:** *How may I pray for you specifically this week?*

Habit 6: Work [Week 0] (*find your baseline*)

- *Baseline of one minute pushups: How many? _____*
- *Baseline of core: How long? _____*
- *How far did you walk/run in 15 min? _____*

Student Athletes: If you are currently involved in a sport, your practice time counts for Habit 6: Work.

Day 1: Wednesday (2/18/26)

Reading: [John 14](#) (click to go straight to the passage)

Reflection question:

- **How does Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit in John 14:16-17 provide comfort and assurance in times of uncertainty?**

Prayer: Holy Spirit, draw me closer to my Savior, and focus me on His Word- Amen

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven.

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation.

But deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.

Amen

Day 2: Thursday (2/19/26)

Reading: [Colossians 3](#) (click to go straight to the passage)

Reflection question:

- **In Colossians 3:1-2, Paul encourages believers to set their minds on things above. How can this mindset influence our daily decisions and actions?**

Prayer: Lord, lead us to spend our lives in loving service for You and others, for you have so dearly loved us. Amen

Lord's Prayer:

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Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

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And lead us not into temptation.

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Amen

Day 3: Friday (2/20/26)

Reading: [Romans 8](#) (click to go straight to the passage)

Reflection question:

- **Romans 8:28 states that "*in all things God works for the good of those who love him.*" How can this verse be applied when facing challenges and hardships?**

Prayer: Lord Jesus, though you are exalted at the Father's right hand, You still hold us. Keep us in Your love to the end. Amen.

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven.
Hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation.
But deliver us from evil.
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Amen

Day 4: Saturday (2/21/26)

Reading: [2 Corinthians 5](#) (click to go straight to the passage)

Reflection Question:

- **What does it mean to be a "new creation" in Christ according to 2 Corinthians 5:17, and how should this transformation impact our relationships with God and others?**

Prayer: Dear Lord, impress upon my heart the greatness of Your grace to me, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, so that I can walk confidently by faith until I see You graciously face to face. Amen

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father who art in heaven.

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

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Amen