



DAY 1 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-12

1

Have you seen the picture, on social media, of the broken Japanese pottery? It is called kintsugi, and it is the ancient Japanese art form of repairing broken pottery using gold, silver, or platinum. When you drop a ceramic bowl, what do you do with it? Usually we throw it in the trash. Or perhaps we use the shards on some sort of upcycling project. The Japanese treat the broken pottery as a philosophy, seeing the break as part of the art, the design, rather than a flaw. Isn't that what God does with us? We are weak vessels, easily broken. But 2 Corinthians tells us we are afflicted, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not abandoned. God takes the broken and turns it into a gold-crafted masterpiece. No matter how weak you feel or how life has overwhelmed you, you are a masterpiece!

DAY 2 ISAIAH 40:28-31

2

I have never run a marathon, and I don't expect I ever will. I imagine, however, that anyone who does will end the race tired and weary, no matter how strong they are. It's 26 miles, after all! Sometimes walking through life feels like a marathon, doesn't it? Just when you seem to get going, the road curves and you start going uphill. Or it's a mud run, and you feeling like you're slogging through it. No matter what life is throwing at you – financial hardship, physical pain, emotional struggle, or broken relationships – you may feel weary. But do you not know? Have you not heard? God doesn't get tired or weary, and He renews our strength. How? Through Bible reading, prayer, getting connected with other Christ-followers, and serving others. If you're feeling weary today, let God revitalize you!

DAY 3 PSALM 40:1-3

3

The school year is just starting, but it won't be long until the kids start counting the days until Christmas. And before the last snow melts, they'll be counting down the days until the end of school. Ironically, the closer vacation gets, the more impatient everyone is! Waiting is hard, no doubt about it. David's life was filled with waiting. God promised he would be king, but it was decades before it happened. I wouldn't be surprised if David sometimes felt insecure and anxious. Sometimes when we have to wait, we think what we're waiting for will never come. But David shares with us the truth, in Psalm 40. God sets our feet on solid rock. We can be secure and serene. When we wait for God, the wait will be worth it, and in the meantime, He will give us a song to sing!

DAY 2 CHRONICLES 16:9A

4

Your boss demands your time. Your family demands your love. God demands your heart. What does that mean, exactly? God has a plan and a purpose for each of us, but when that plan doesn't match what we have imagined for ourselves, it is our tendency to struggle and resist. But God wants us to trust: trust that His plan is perfect, and trust that He loves us more than we can comprehend. If we surrender our plans and accept what God has for us, He will support us. He has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. He hasn't made a plan and left us to our own devices to make it happen. He gives us His power to get it done! You'll be surprised – when God shows up, He shows up in a big way!

DAY HEBREWS 4:15

5

Unless you have lost everything in a flood or fire, you probably can't fully understand what the people of Houston, Florida, and the Caribbean are feeling right now. We can sympathize, but we really can't understand. When we struggle through the day to day, God isn't just sympathetic. Sympathy is caring and understanding. Empathy is compassion based on a similar experience. God not only feels compassion for us, because Jesus was tempted to sin and suffered trials, He has empathy toward us. He knows. He cries with us when we cry from the pain. His heart breaks when our relationships fall apart. But because He was tempted without sinning, His strength can become our strength. His victory becomes our victory.

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