“Second” – Family Devotional

April 19, 2020

One activity I have been consistent with since before this quarantine began is working out from home. I do short, intense cardio workouts because they don’t require too much space, equipment, or time. But, in order for a thirty-minute workout to produce results, they have to be TOUGH. And indeed, they are tough. The hardest part about them is pressing play because I know that what follows is discomfort and exhaustion.

The trainer in these workout videos leads each exercise with encouragement, energy, and excitement. They understand that the workouts they create are challenging, and they don’t want that to be your reason to give up on the end result. He will consistently say to you through the camera, “just go one second farther than you did the last time,” or, “when you feel like you want to take a break or give up, just go one more second.” When I’m huffing and puffing for air, of course the only thing I want to do is stop to catch my breath. But, I’m reminded that just one more second is something I can achieve. It’s not going to break me to go one more. Even though it’s such a simple, somewhat cliché encouragement, it works.

I know this is not something that will resonate with everyone, but the same principle applies in other challenges, too. When eating vegetables, children are encouraged to take “just one more bite.” When practicing an instrument, maybe your goal is to nail down one more measure of your music. When writing a paper, if you put your focus on just one more sentence, you kind of put some extra effort into completing that sentence.

It’s hard to look at things as a whole and have confidence in being able to make it through it all. If I start my workout by thinking about all the different exercises I have to do throughout, I’m less motivated to begin. If I sit down to dinner and look at all the green foods I have to gag down, it’s daunting to say the least. If I sit down to write a 5-page paper, and before I have one sentence written think about how many words 5 pages is, I tend to get discouraged. But if I look at the next step I need to take instead of looking at it as a whole, it seems more manageable.

When we look at this global pandemic, it’s easy to say, “how long until this ends?” When we do that, we get discouraged by how much is still left to be done until we are relieved from this burden. But God doesn’t necessarily ask us to think about “all there is to do” – He asks us for the next step. He asks us to trust Him with the big picture. He tells us not to worry about tomorrow, just do what you have to do today. Not only that, but He promises to be with us every step of the way.

So, when you are overwhelmed by looking at all that is before you, try to just focus on taking one step further. When you are looking at your full plate, focus on the next bite. God will be with you as you take each step, and He is in control of what happens in the end. He sees the big picture, and He promises good to those who love Him. So, love Him, and trust Him with just one more second of your life.

*Check out discussion questions on the next page!*

Questions for Discussion

*We encourage you to spend some time praying and talking through these questions together as a family!*

1. Where have you seen God’s blessings and power this week?
2. Read Matthew 6:25-34. Why does Jesus tell us not to worry? Why is it hard for us to sometimes trust God with the whole picture?
3. Where have you seen God during each step of your journey? How has He reminded you that He is taking care of you?
4. What’s one step you can take today? How will you see God alongside you as you take that step?
5. What is one area of your life where it’s easy to get discouraged by looking at the big picture instead of taking things step by step?
6. How can you encourage someone else who might be overwhelmed with their current situation right now? How can you motivate them to go one more second?
7. What do you think life would look like if we all worried less about tomorrow’s outcome? How would priorities change?
8. Pray together – ask God to direct your next steps, and thank Him for being with you along the way!