

THE PATH DAY ONE

READ Psalm 119:30-32, Psalm 119:58-60 and Proverbs 4:18
DREAM! What would your life look like if you could experience real, positive sustainable life change? TH INK about the "path" or area in your life that you want to be different. Do you have a clear image of the change you want to make? Can you imagine what life would be like if you made that change? DREAM! TH INK about the day ahead - what specifically would be different? A month from now? Two years from now? (If you want to stop smoking, you'd save \$\$ for cigarettes today - in a month food would taste better, you'd feel better, be healthier, etc.) "RUN in such a way to get the prize." 1 Corinthians 9:24b DEFINE what getting the prize would "look" like. In other words, what would success actually look like? GET a notebook/journal and WRITE your thoughts. For example: Tackle Debt - I would no longer need to juggle every payment with payday. I'd have my debt paid off or at least steadily moving in that direction. I won't be adding to my debt. I'd have financial "edges" in my life. I'd move from being overloaded by debt to being generous to others. The saying "those who fail to plan, plan to fail" is true. MAKE a plan. If you've failed in the past, don't assume you didn't try hard enough; maybe you didn't have the best plan. BEGIN gathering info. FIND books written about it. SEARCH online. TALK to people who have overcome similar issues. LOOK at scripture that addresses the topic. Health, integrity, anger, lust, relationships, money... what does scripture say about how to deal with it? Pray for wisdom as you make your plan. Begin to let yourself dream of the changed person you're created to become. READ 1 Corinthians 5:17, write in your journal and dream.

DAY TWO: PLAN

In the book *The Lazarus Life: Spiritual Transformation for Ordinary People*, Stephen Smith writes "learning to control anger requires more than counting to ten and trying not to think about whatever makes you angry." Working out a plan, thinking the process through, and realistically assessing the steps needed is essential to finding success. LOOK at the example of one person's process from living with anger and bitterness to experiencing freedom and living with grace and peace.

- I imagined myself as a forgiving person who gives grace and is at peace
- I committed the path to God - I read books that dealt with forgiveness, anger, and hurt - I interviewed people who had found a way to forgive
- I wrote down my process and steps in a journal - I daily met God; wrote prayers
- I joined a small group on forgiveness - I memorized scripture
- I planned a weekend personal retreat - I wrote a letter that I never sent
- I forgave - I now know how to recognize it - where to go - the steps I need to take
- I saw a person who had hurt me and didn't feel anything - I experienced freedom
- I now meet with others and lead a group on breaking free

READ Psalm 119:45. Can you imagine walking in freedom? WRITE out your plan. Have you committed your plan to God? CONSIDER reading *The Lazarus Life* book. ENTER the gate that leads to life; TAKE the first steps on a new, life-giving path today.

DAY THREE: REVIEW

READ 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

REVIEW your plan by asking yourself the following questions and making adjustments as necessary.

- Do I have a clear image of the change I want to make?
- Have I committed the change to God?
- Is the plan based on God's principles?
- Have I gathered all the information, wisdom and insight?
- What are the behaviors that I need to start?
- What are the behaviors I need to stop?
- Will this plan work? Is it realistic?
- Am I underestimating the effort or time this change will take?
- When will I start?
- Have I prepared and scheduled?
- Have I secured the support of family, friends and God?

WRITE 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 on a card.

READ these verses several times a day for the rest of the week.

DAY FOUR: WISDOM

READ Proverbs 1:5, 11:14, 15:22, 18:15, 19:20, and 20:18

According to scripture, what do the wise do when making plans? What's the result of the plan of those who don't seek counsel? Those from whom we seek counsel and advice is as important as seeking it. Have you seen the bumper sticker that says "Don't follow me, I'm lost, too!"? It's unfortunate we don't have bumper stickers on our foreheads declaring important information like that! Friends are great to do life with, but often they're not much further on their life path than we are. For certain changes, we need to seek advice and counsel from those who aren't simply heading in the direction we want to go, but have actually experienced success. For wisdom, advice and sound counsel, SEEK someone whom you trust and will listen to who has the character and values you admire, is where you want to be, and/or has made the changes you want to make. CONTACT that person. ASK if he'd/she'd be willing to meet and give you some advice and/or share what he/she learned on his/her own journey. Does he/she know someone else you'd benefit from talking to? Books to read? Resources that would be helpful? ASK God to direct you and guide you. PRAY for courage and strength. ASK God to speak wisdom into your life through His word and through the counsel of others.

DAY FIVE: EVALUATE AND COMMIT

LOOK over your plan. Is it based on God's principles? Do you believe it'll work? Is it realistic? Is there someone you need to inform of your plan (spouse, friend, and co-worker)? Have you underestimated the effort and time it will take? Have you launched your plan? If not, what's keeping you from starting?

"Our journey may be one of small stumbles more than dramatic leaps... the most important thing is that we are moving forward, step-by-step. "The Lazarus Life" Are you moving forward? Transformation happens one step at a time, dealing with one thing at a time. LOOK at 1 Corinthians 9:24b again. What's the verb in the sentence? It's time to get moving. What's the first or next step you're going to take?