Challenge 40 of 40

Reflection by Tim Gillespie - Riverside, USA

The number 40 is found in scripture a few times. The stories of Noah and the ark (Genesis 7:12), as well as Jesus fasting for 40 days and 40 nights (Matthew 4:2), both use this term. It is possible that this length of time is less exact than what we first came to know through Sabbath School. It is also very plausible that this time frame really just meant a "very long time." Regardless, the truth is that 40 days and 40 nights is a long time.

It is time enough to:

1. Break a bad habit.
2. Grow a decent beard.
3. Get over your soreness from your first crossfit workout and try it again, albeit in a much wiser way.
4. Learn how to finish a new Wii U game, although your kids finished it in about 3 days.
5. Learn the rudiments of a new instrument.
6. Read significant portions of Scripture.
7. Recommit your life to Jesus.
8. Find a new love and get married (although not always recommended in 40 days).
9. Find clarity on where Jesus should be in your life.
In fact, it is more than enough time for all of this.

What did you do in the last 40 days? Have you grown more in tune with the Jesus that is revealed in scripture? Are you more connected to your faith community as you have sought out Jesus in your own personal life? Are you a quicker forgiver? Are you a better parent, a better spouse? Have you changed your career course?

We have challenged you with a devotional each day for 40 days, and my email box is full of them as well. I didn’t read every one, but the ones I did read gave me pause, even if just for 40 seconds, to prioritize my day around the Jesus that has been so deeply spoken of.

So I will give you this “what if.”

What if we lived the next 40 days as a result of the previous 40 days of devotion? And to be clear, I don’t mean 40 literal days, just the next “very long time.” What if the last 40 days became the anchor point for the next 40?

The way I figure, I need an infusion of the clarity of Jesus in my life just about every 40 days or so. Forty days from this day, we will be together in San Diego for another anchoring moment in our collective faith journey. We will be praising God, hearing fresh words, dialoguing in deep and meaningful ways, and above all, refocusing on the Jesus who occupies our hearts. It will come at just the right time for all of us!

As we seek anchor points in which to ground our faith, let it be Jesus this year, and every year. Dale Brunner speaks of the most spirit-filled place as being the place where Jesus is the most central. So perhaps 2015 can be the year we recognize the Spirit’s leading us to Jesus, and in Jesus we recognize, with clarity, the character of God the Father (Hebrews 1:2).

Blessings in this new 40. May it be a Jesus-soaked time for you and your families. Looking forward to seeing you in the next 40.

Recalibrate

1) What are three things you've realized about your relationship with Jesus in the last 40 days?

2) What is something that you did well throughout 2014, that you'd like to continue in 2015?
On the Edge of New Beginnings

In this New Year:

- May Jesus bless you with gentleness and a heart that is tender.
- May Jesus bless you with strength against all principalities.
- May Jesus bless you with compassion and care.
- May Jesus bless you with courage, daring to be who you are.
- May Jesus bless you with openness, understanding, and respect.
- May Jesus bless you with power to make Jesus. All.