



MONTHLY
DEVOTIONAL



DAY ONE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Watch and pray. Then you won't fall into sin when you are tempted."*
Matthew 26:41 NIRV

The target was right there in front of them, so very tempting! The rebels were flying in fast, ready to destroy the Death Star. Yet Admiral Ackbar couldn't see that invisible force field they were about to fly right into. Fortunately, he realized what was happening. They were falling into a trap!

In our lives, there is an invisible line the enemy wants us to cross over. Temptation is there, beckoning us to come closer, inviting us in. When that happens, we've just got to recognize temptation for what it is. It's a trap!

If you want to have victory, clear your mind must be! Your insight serves you well, but there is another force at work, leading and guiding you. The Holy Spirit is within us, helping us recognize those things that lead to the dark side.

The phrase "I have a bad feeling about this" is said in every Star Wars movie by characters such as Han Solo, Princess Leia, Luke Skywalker, Obi Wan Kenobi and more. Somehow they know they're walking into trouble, and like these heroes, we too have a friend that lets us know danger is near. The Holy Spirit is a friend that – if we'll listen – can warn us, guide us, and help us out of tricky situations.

It's an inner voice that tells us something is clearly wrong, even though everyone else you know may be doing it. In "The Force Awakens," a stormtrooper with the code name FN-2187 sees the horrible things being done by those he is with. He has an inner voice screaming out to him, telling him that what he is trained to do... is so very wrong.

God knows the good within us all, and the conflict. And He wants to see us do good, and win the battle. But what is the best way to do that? Take evasive action!

Stormtrooper FN-2187 changed his name to Finn, and ran away from doing those things that were so wrong to him. And as for Admiral Ackbar's attack against the Death Star, the best strategy was a simple one: avoid the trap, and fight against it. The rebellion was able to not only survive the battle, but also win it!

Do you want victory in your life? Don't be unwise, and lower your defenses! Instead, fight against sin in your life, and avoid those places and people that tempt you to do the wrong thing.

Don't just fly headlong into trouble. Instead, do as Admiral Ackbar ordered: "Take evasive action!" You can and will win the battle against temptation - all too easy.



DAY TWO

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength."*
Philippians 4:13 NIRV

If the force was strong with one person in the Bible, that would have to be Othniel. Literally, his name means "Force of God."

He was facing some giants in his life, but that wasn't a problem. The Jedi master Yoda once said, "Size matters not," and he couldn't be more correct. In "The Empire Strikes Back," Yoda was attempting to explain to Luke Skywalker that it doesn't all come down to physical strength and appearances.

Othniel knew this very well as he went out to battle giants. He was the size of Yoda compared to them! Yet judge him by his size do you? He certainly had courage. This was because the Spirit of the Lord was on Othniel.

Before the battle, it must have seemed strange. In fact, the odds of him winning probably were something like 3,720 to 1. But never tell God the odds!

Do you have giant problems you're facing? If you want the impossible, look no farther than the Master Himself. You'll find He's full of surprises! Draw close to Him, and the force of God will help take down those giant situations we all face.

But don't have too much pride in your own abilities. It's reckless – double the pride, twice the fall! If you are to have any victory at all, it must be from Christ, who strengthens us – and not at all by our own power.

So remember where the source of your power is, and get going. There is no try. Do... or do not. Don't sit there like you're frozen in carbonite. We must conquer the giants, and the dark side in our lives. Know this: we are never going to take the promises of God if we don't move forward with courage and faith.

When compared with those giants, Othniel might have seemed as small as Yoda. But there's no denying the results in the end. And there'll be no denying the results in your life when you too walk in faith and become the "Force of God."



DAY THREE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *“God has saved us. He has chosen us to live a holy life. It wasn’t because of anything we have done. It was because of His own purpose and grace.”*

2 Timothy 2:9 NIRV

Princess Leia was right: Han Solo was a scoundrel. He may have had a good heart, but he also had a suspicious past filled with shady deals, and more than a hint of trouble. If that sounds familiar, it should – no matter how good we feel about ourselves, we all have made bad decisions, and done things that don’t please God.

Well that’s the trick, isn’t it? And it’s gonna cost you extra. Because of his transgressions, there was a price on Han Solo’s head that was so large, every bounty hunter in the galaxy was looking for him. And the Empire was after him too! The reality is that sin has a price, and the cost for us is something far worse than facing Darth Vader. Our sin was causing us eternal separation from God.

But that’s when something wonderful happened. Han Solo found out he was worth saving! In “Return of the Jedi,” his friends freed him from captivity. He once was blind, but now he saw a new life before him.

And much like this famous scoundrel, we needed rescuing too. We were bound up and destined for a terrible fall that would consume us for all eternity.

That’s when the real hero of our story stepped up, someone who thought we were worth saving. A long time ago, in a country far, far away, Jesus stepped up and took our place, saving us from certain doom. It wasn’t a mighty sarlacc threatening to gobble us up, but Jesus certainly rescued us from the jaws of death!

This is our new hope. Though we are all scoundrels, Jesus is someone who loves you. A death mark is not an easy thing to live with, but he thought you were worth it. The bounty ...is paid.



DAY FOUR

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *“I give you a new command. Love one another. You must love one another, just as I have loved you.” John 13:34 NIRV*

Jar Jar Binks is a Gungan, and he has an amazing ability: for some reason, he really annoys people. In “The Phantom Menace,” he and his fellow Gungans lived with humans on the beautiful planet of Naboo. Yet they did not get along at all.

We all know a Jar Jar, someone we think is clumsy or goofy or prone to make mistakes. But the truth is, we ourselves can be all those things too. But even more, we’re all made in God’s image. He created each of us, and it is not our job to look down on anyone. In fact, the only place where you can look down on everyone is God’s throne. And you’re not sitting on it. How wude!

So if someone rubs you the wrong way, watch your thoughts. And do what the Jedi Qui-Gon Jinn did: hold your tongue! Early in the movie, he tells Jar Jar, “The ability to speak does not make you intelligent.”

He might as well have been sharing that with all of us. If you’re talking about someone else, yousa better think before you spake. Or speak.

In the end, humans and Gungans learned one valuable lesson. In order to save the planet, they had to get along and work together. That’s how it works! The Bible reminds us that we are all made differently for a reason, so that we can work together as one body. If you think you can do it all solo, you will find that it is you who are mistaken ...about a great many things! No, we must work together as one body, to save our world.

Instead of seeing what they didn’t like in each other, everyone on Naboo did the right thing. They began to see what life could be like if they worked together. And that’s when Boss Nass, the leader of the Gungans, had the best idea: “Maybe weesa bein’ friends!”



DAY FIVE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"The word of God is alive and active. It is sharper than any sword that has two edges." Hebrews 4:12 NIRV*

The preferred weapon of the Jedi is the lightsaber, which is in fact the coolest weapon in the galaxy. Search your feelings – you know it's true! Obi-Wan Kenobi described it nicely, telling Luke Skywalker, "This is the weapon of a Jedi Knight. Not as clumsy or random as a blaster; an elegant weapon for a more civilized age."

In the movies, lightsabers have been used to cut through blast doors, battle droids and tauntauns. It's a sword that is active and can slice through solid metal objects extremely easily. And although it is pretty sharp, you'll discover that you yourself have something active and sharper than any sword with two edges: it's your Bible. The Bible is called the Word of God, and those words are the kind that can slice away at disbelief, and fight off sickness, unforgiveness, temptation and more.

Lightsabers are a variety of different colors: green, red, purple, blue, and more. There are some even in the shape of a cross. It's a sword of brilliant color, illuminating, and fighting against the darkness. Yet even brighter is the Word of God, which is like a lamp that shows us the way, and a light that guides us.

So pick up your elegant weapon, and begin to practice with it. No matter where you are in the galaxy, the more time you spend with something, the better you get with it. Jedi padawans get better with their lightsabers as they train. And your knowledge of the Bible will increase the more time you spend with it. This, my young padawan, will no doubt help you through all of life's adventures.



DAY SIX

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"But God chose you to be His people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are God's special treasure. You are all these things so that you can give Him praise. God brought you out of darkness into His wonderful light."*

1 Peter 2:9 NIRV

The most important characters in the Star Wars universe would have to be the Jedi knights. They are guardians of peace and justice throughout the galaxy, given amazing power to serve something greater than themselves.

It's not far off from what we as Christians are called to be. Consider this: the Jedi knights have a code, and know they simply cannot do certain things that can lead to the dark side. Yoda told us a Jedi craves not these things!

But as Christians, neither should we. We are in this world but not of it, a royal priesthood. We must be mindful of our thoughts, and stay away from sin, the dark side.

A long time ago in a land far, far away, there was a servant named Elisha who learned these things and more. He was like a padawan, serving and gaining wisdom from his master Elijah. Always two there are – a master and an apprentice.

As you grow in your faith, God will put in your life people that you can learn from. There are mentors, pastors, teachers and parents, all with something you can be taught. As you listen to and learn from them, your faith will grow, and the Lord will continue to prepare you to become a master yourself!

So, are you ready to step out, and become a force of light? There are many crying out for someone to save them, and you are the chosen one. That's right, God wants to use you to bring others out of the darkness, and into His marvelous light. Don't worry: if you have a heart for Jesus, you can do all things. Just follow the Master, and He will lead you on.

Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn once wisely said, "Your focus determines your reality." What that means is simply this: if you want your reality to be a Christian life that God is pleased with, then you must put your focus on what matters most. Focus on learning, serving others, and staying away from sin. But above all, focus on following the Master.



DAY SEVEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *“He doesn’t want anyone to be destroyed. Instead, He wants all people to turn away from their sins.” 2 Peter 3:9 NIRV*

Turmoil had engulfed the Republic, and there was unrest in the Senate. To prevent the Republic from crumbling, the Emperor wanted to destroy any rebellion. His first order: Wipe them out, all of them. His army was vast, armored soldiers with a first order to keep the Empire in power.

One man helping out the Empire was particularly villainous – you may have heard of him before. His dark heart helped him hunt down those who stood up for the light, and his position and power left many around filled with fear. It was a dark time, one that spelled certain doom for the overwhelmed heroes who wanted to restore freedom to the world.

And yet through it all, there was someone who still saw some good in him. Before this opening crawl continues, let’s be clear: we’re not talking about Darth Vader here. We’re actually talking about a man named Saul. He was the ultimate weapon against Christians, a sinister agent of darkness.

Who could sense good in him? What kind of redemption was there for a man so dark and guilty of so much? The answer is Jesus, who brings salvation to all. It is not God’s will that anyone perish, even the Darth Vaders. It may be difficult for us to understand, but clear our minds must be: our fight is not against human beings. It is against the dark side, the spiritual forces of evil.

Darth Vader may have threatened, “Don’t make me destroy you!” But God is serious about it – He doesn’t want anyone destroyed. It doesn’t matter how evil we think a person may be – only Jesus gets to decide who is worth saving. Until that time, our job is to forgive, to love, and to pray.

In the Star Wars series, characters like Luke Skywalker and Obi Wan Kenobi knew this well. They each lived a life of sacrifice, choosing to do the right thing, and putting others before themselves. Saul changed his name to Paul, and did this for the rest of his life, and with great power. He would be a powerful ally. Our planet’s history is filled with real life heroes who rebelled against the dark side, from the first disciples to those in the church all around you today. It’s a force for good, a team of rebels willing to give their lives for a purpose much higher than themselves.

Don’t give in to your hate, because that’s a journey to the dark side. Remember that God’s message of love is for everyone. Even the Darth Vaders.



DAY EIGHT

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"The Spirit of the God who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you. So the God who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your bodies. He will do this because of His Spirit who lives in you." Romans 8:11 NIRV*

In between the first three Star Wars movies and the next three, there is a big space of time. For the most part, the audience has no idea what happens over a period of something like nineteen years. There are a few stories of Rebels here and there, but it's quite a lengthy stretch where not much is recorded, and the bad guys rule the galaxy.

In our Bibles, there's an even longer space of time of silence and gloom. In between the New Testament and the Old Testament there is actually a period of 400 years. It's 400 years of silence, 400 years of waiting, and 400 years of wondering if all of God's promises would come to pass. The trouble for the whole world was simply this: there was no savior to rescue us from sin and death, and no hope for the world whatsoever.

But with the shining of a star over the town of Bethlehem, something amazing happened: For unto us a Savior was born, along with a plan to save the world.

For the shepherds, for the disciples, and for everyone who experienced the miraculous power of Jesus, there was a new hope: their spirits awakened.

In the first Star Wars movie, "A New Hope," there is a droid named R2-D2 who carries the most important message in the galaxy. But the message within you is even greater. What you have inside you is a new hope, the message of the gospel, and God's plans to save many lives. People are depending on you, so don't hold back. You are their only hope!



DAY NINE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"But put God's kingdom first. Do what He wants you to do. Then all those things will also be given to you." Matthew 6:33 NIRV*

In the movie "The Empire Strikes Back," the hero Lando Calrissian makes an announcement to all the people of Cloud City: The evil Empire is here, and it is time to evacuate.

In the next few moments, people are running around in a panic, carrying with them their most prized possessions as they look to escape. As our heroes race to their ship, one of those Cloud City citizens comes barreling around the corner, and he's carrying... an ice cream maker?

The people making this movie must have thought the ice cream maker looked interesting enough. And the random person running by was moving fast enough that surely nobody would stop to see exactly what it was he was holding. But in the following years, there were Star Wars fans who spotted this man so obsessed with ice cream, and a legend was born.

His name is Willow Hood. Writers have since suggested that the ice cream maker was really something else: some sort of main computer memory core. But we know the truth: Willow Hood had to escape, and the most important thing he wanted to take with him was an ice cream maker.

This poses an interesting question. If you had to make a last-minute escape, what would you take with you? We know Willow Hood's answer. But yours may be different. It could be jewelry, money, family pictures or a really prized possession.

But when you escape from this earth, there really is only one thing you can take with you: those others you tell Jesus about. Our mission here is simple: Put God's kingdom first. Do what He wants you to do. Then all those things - including ice cream makers - will also be given to you.



DAY TEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it."*
1 Corinthians 12:27 NIRV

After a hard day fighting against the Empire, it's good to know that medical droids 2-1B and FX-7 are nearby to help fix you up. It's these two that brought Luke Skywalker himself back to full health after the savage Wampa attack on the planet Hoth. And it was 2-1B that gave Luke an entirely new hand after he lost his original fighting Darth Vader.

It may seem like such a minor job - after all, these droids weren't the ones flying X-Wing fighters and bombing the Death Star. But at the same time, consider this: if it weren't for these two robots, Luke wouldn't have been around to lead the fight against the Empire. So yes, 2-1B and FX-7 were a very important part in saving the galaxy!

When you think of Luke's hand, you know that 2-1B is an expert on parts of the body. But in our Bibles, there is another who knows the parts of the body. His name was Paul. He wrote in 1 Corinthians, "You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it."

What he was writing was simple: if we're helping the church in any way, no part is too small. From pastors to greeters, and from singers to children's ministry, all the parts work together to save the galaxy! Or... at least the world.



DAY ELEVEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"All of you must obey those who rule over you. There are no authorities except the ones God has chosen. Those who now rule have been chosen by God."*
Romans 13:1 NIRV

Yoda said no. It was a pretty shocking moment, actually. Qui-Gon Jinn had his heart set upon training a young boy named Anakin, who showed amazing promise. Surely the Jedi Council would see for themselves that Anakin was the promised one, with talent beyond anything anyone had ever seen before.

But Yoda said no, and said specifically not to train him. Yet Qui-Gon Jinn was so convinced in his heart that he was right that he decided the boy must be trained anyway.

Anyone who knows anything about Star Wars knows how that worked out. Anakin was heroic for a few seasons, but it wasn't long before he turned to the dark side. Yes, Anakin became Darth Vader, and soon after brought the downfall of the Jedi Knights.

If only Qui-Gon had listened. And yet, if only we ourselves would listen too. God has placed teachers, parents, and leaders in our life - and we're supposed to respect and listen to them. The Bible is clear: when we obey those God puts over us, we're obeying Him.

You may feel strongly about something as Qui-Gon did. That's never enough. Yoda was so much older, with so much more experience. When we throw all that away to do our own thing, we run a terrible risk of learning things the hard way. It may not determine the fate of the galaxy, of course. But it will save a lot of trouble. Listen to your teachers, your elders, your parents, and your leaders. Obey them, we must!



DAY TWELVE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' "* John 14:6 NIRV

Of all the people in the Star Wars universe to model yourself after, Darth Vader is clearly the worst. And yet Kylo Ren somehow looks up to his grandfather. In "The Force Awakens," he picks up Darth Vader's old helmet, and makes this vow: "Show me again... The power of the darkness... And I'll let nothing stand in our way... Show me... Grandfather... and I will finish... what you started."

Except for Kylo Ren and the First Order, everyone knows this isn't going to go well. But that's just what happens when we start idolizing the wrong people. In this planet, we tend to look up to movie stars, musicians, politicians, and even pastors. The problem with this is that they all have something in common: they're human. They may not be as dark as Darth Vader or Kylo Ren, but anyone in any part of the galaxy is going to mess up from time to time. Just to prove this, in the book of Romans, Paul told us that, "everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory." Paul wrote a good part of the New Testament, and yet he called himself "chief among sinners."

There's only one who is perfect. His name is Jesus, and if you're looking to model your life after someone, He's your guy. He lived a life of sacrifice, a life of service, and a life of love. Look to Jesus, and see a new hope. See the way, the truth, and the life – and the only way to the Father. He's our only hope.



DAY THIRTEEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Can you add even one hour to your life by worrying?" Matthew 6:27 NIRV*

"We're doomed." These are some of the first words uttered in the Star Wars series, spoken by a beloved droid named C-3PO, and indeed he was in a tough situation. But throughout the entire adventure of Star Wars, you could always count on C-3PO to tell you the odds weren't in anyone's favor. "We seem to be made to suffer," he explains. "It's our lot in life."

Nine movies later, he's still around, and despite a new red arm, C-3PO made it just fine. He may have had a few limbs replaced or reattached along the way, but he wasn't melted down or anything. And sure, the odds may have been 3,720 to 1, but he's still there in Episode IX with us, the shiny golden droid we all know and love.

Not pointing fingers here, but do you know anyone like C-3PO? Certain people just love to complain and worry throughout life.

But that's not the way Jesus wants us to live. Jesus told us this: "I tell you, do not worry. Don't worry about your life and what you will eat or drink. And don't worry about your body and what you will wear. Isn't there more to life than eating? Aren't there more important things for the body than clothes? Look at the birds of the air. They don't plant or gather crops. They don't put away crops in storerooms. But your Father who is in heaven feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are? Can you add even one hour to your life by worrying?"

He's brought you this far, and He'll keep doing it. So no matter what you're facing, don't worry. Even if the odds are 725 to 1, God is greater.



DAY FOURTEEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life. That's because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done." Romans 6:23 NIRV*

"You just watch yourself. We're wanted men. I have the death sentence on twelve systems."

In "A New Hope," Dr. Cornelius Evazan was doing a bit of bragging at the Mos Eisley cantina. But it didn't take long for him to discover that he was bragging to the wrong people!

He wanted everyone to know how dangerous a person he was, and how much of a bad guy he really was. Of course it wasn't something to be proud of at all.

We should know. We had the death sentence on just one system! That's right, each and every one of us has a death sentence here, and it is all because of sin. Our Bible tells us, "When you sin, the pay you get is death."

And while that sounds pretty harsh, the very next sentence brings us the good news: "But God gives you the gift of eternal life. That's because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done."

Jesus endured a death sentence for more than one or even twelve. He took the punishment that all of us deserved, every single person that ever lived and breathed on this planet. Of course, the good news is that he rose again, because something small like a death sentence couldn't keep him down. And the good news for us is that we can now live with him forever in heaven.

So rejoice! A death mark's not an easy thing to live with, but because of what Jesus did for us, we don't have to!



DAY FIFTEEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"People look at the outside of a person. But the Lord looks at what is in the heart."* 1 Samuel 16:7 NIRV

To say that Han Solo and Chewbacca can fly the Millennium Falcon pretty well is an understatement. This is the ship that escaped the first Death Star, and then returned to help destroy it – and then the next one! Remember the thrilling escape through the asteroid field? Or what about the Dragon Void, the legendary space race? And don't forget that amazing landing on the Starkiller Base. Fast ship? It's the ship that made the Kessel Run in less than twelve parsecs!

But a first look at the Millennium Falcon would lead you to think otherwise. Listen to Han's friends as they see his space freighter for the first time:

"What a piece of junk!" – Luke Skywalker

"You came in that thing? You're braver than I thought." – Princess Leia

"That ship is garbage!" – Rey

"Blast that piece of junk out of the sky!" – Kylo Ren

"Would it help if I got out and pushed?" – Princess Leia

"She's the fastest hunk of junk in the galaxy." – Lando Calrissian

The thing is, Lando was right. As Han himself said, "She may not look like much, but she's got it where it counts." And he was right, of course. The Millennium Falcon is a major part of the Star Wars story rescuing Finn and Rey in "The Force Awakens," while leading the rebels against the Empire in "A New Hope," "The Empire Strikes Back," and "Return of the Jedi." It's the ship that saved the Rebels in "The Last Jedi," and the ship that led the final attack in "The Rise of Skywalker." This hunk of junk is the most famous spacecraft in movie history!

The easy lesson to draw here is that we should never judge a book by its cover. That's how God works as well. He doesn't look at the exterior, but judges us first by what is in our hearts. Listen to what God told the prophet Samuel: "People look at the outside of a person. But the Lord looks at what is in the heart."

So don't let anything stop you from what God has planned for you. You may have some doubters, and you might even be questioning yourself. Just know that like the Millennium Falcon, you've got it where it counts. And the Lord looks at what is in the heart.



DAY SIXTEEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"If you are proud, you will be destroyed. If you are proud, you will fall."*
Proverbs 16:18 NIRV

Darth Vader had one thing right. He told Admiral Motti, "Don't be too proud of this technological terror you've constructed."

He was talking about the Death Star. It took the Empire years to build. Long ago, it was designed by the Geonosians, whose leader called it the "ultimate weapon." The reason? It could destroy fleets of ships, and even planets!

Rebel General Dodonna was one of the good guys. He and his team had to figure a way to stop this technological terror. They knew the Death Star was built to stop a large fleet from attacking. But they also knew the Empire wasn't thinking a one-man fighter would be much of a threat. And that's where a weakness was discovered!

On the surface of the Death Star, the Rebels were shown a small thermal exhaust port, only two meters wide. It would be very difficult to do, but a bomb dropped down that shaft by a one-man fighter would start a chain reaction. And that chain reaction would blow up the Death Star!

Admiral Motti wasn't frightened at all. He boasted, "Any attack made by the Rebels against this station would be a useless gesture, no matter what technical data they have obtained. This station is now the ultimate power in the universe! I suggest we use it!"

If only he had read the Bible. You may have heard that pride goes before a fall. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 16:18, "If you are proud, you will be destroyed." Maybe not like the Death Star, but trust us on this: it won't be pretty.

You can have pride in the things you do. But it can certainly get out of hand. Of course, you're not building a Death Star. But the plain truth of life is that we are absolutely nothing without God, and the abilities He has given us.

Without Him, your life can – and will – completely fall apart.



DAY SEVENTEEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *“Get up, Ezra. This matter is in your hands. Do what you need to. We will be behind you all the way. Be brave and do it.” Ezra 10:4 NIRV*

Ezra Bridger was born on the planet Lothal some time after the Clone Wars, and from the start, he was a rebel against the evil Empire. His parents were against the Empire too, so much that they set up a broadcast station that would speak out against all the wrong that was being done in the land. Their messages of hope beamed out to all: do what is right, and stand up to the evil that is going on.

For years Ezra lived alone on the outskirts of Capital City, all the way on top of a communications tower he called Ezra’s Tower. It was a small, quiet life. It was a quiet life, that is, until he met a team of heroes with ideas of taking down the Empire. Ezra fit quite well with this group of rebels. He was bold, even using the Empire’s own communication tower to spread a message of hope to all of the galaxy.

In our Bibles, there was another person named Ezra, and he too had a message to broadcast. You see, at that time, there was sin in the land. It wasn’t the galactic empire, but Ezra’s job was to make it clear: if you want to have victory, you’ll have to rid the land of things that do not please God.

In the end, Ezra was able to help do that. God’s temple was rebuilt, and the people rose up to meet the challenge. They stood up to the evil that was going on.

In our lives today, Ezra’s lesson still applies. We must not allow sin into our lives. We must share the message of God’s love, rebel against doing what is wrong, and stand up for what is right.



DAY EIGHTEEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love. Let us help one another to do good works." Hebrews 10:24 NIRV*

One random act can change quite a bit. For example, in the Star Wars universe, have you ever considered how the character Lobot single-handedly saved the galaxy? In the movie "The Empire Strikes Back," Lobot was the silent guy in Cloud City who was always by Lando Calrissian's side.

Late in the story, the good guys were captured and about to be taken to Darth Vader's ship. Yet at just the right moment Lobot came to the rescue, saving Lando, Princess Leia, Chewbacca, C-3PO and R2-D2.

These heroes would in turn save Han Solo, who would then go on to lead the battle to defeat the Empire itself.

See how much depends on one little act of kindness? Some would say it wasn't much. But if it weren't for Lobot, the galaxy wouldn't have been saved!

And that's an important lesson we should take with us. A simple act of kindness may not take that much effort, but it can really change someone's world. It might even save it!

So think of what you can do for someone today. It can be a kind word, a little help with a challenging situation, or perhaps something greater. No matter what, a random act of kindness is so easy to do. You can come to the rescue today!



DAY NINETEEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Don't take the path of evil people. Don't live the way sinners do. Stay away from their path and don't travel on it. Turn away from it and go on your way."*
Proverbs 4:14-15 NIRV

Have you ever wondered why so many characters listened to Jabba the Hutt? He was an oversized gangster, basically a giant slug with a whole lot of money, and a whole lot of people that worked for him. He was villainous, self-centered and actually pretty gross. Yet the illustrious Jabba the Hutt was still a crime lord who had a whole lot of power.

But again, how does he have so much power? The reason has got to be the money. He paid bounty hunters and servants enormous sums of money as he sat in his palace, slurping down Klatooine paddy frogs. When you heard his deep, menacing laugh, you listened.

There are people in our lives we should listen to, and others we shouldn't. Let's just go ahead and say that Jabba the Hutt is someone we shouldn't listen to. Yet in school, in work, and in life, there are some pretty powerful voices out there. And sometimes these voices are urging us to do things we know we shouldn't.

Han Solo had a pretty bold answer to Jabba. He said, "You tell that slimy piece of worm-ridden filth he'll get no such pleasure from us!" And while that answer might be a little strong, at least he has the right idea. We can't make ourselves slaves, doing things we know God isn't pleased with.

Peer pressure can be a strong and powerful voice that wants you in its vile clutches. If it starts throwing its weight at you, don't panic. Pray, trust in God, and He will make a way for you to escape. In fact, you can be a hero and show others the way as well.



DAY TWENTY

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"So God created human beings in His own likeness. He created them to be like Himself. He created them as male and female." Genesis 1:27 NIRV*

"Begun the Clone Wars has," Yoda said. With a civil war spanning the galaxy, the arrival of the clone troopers was a much-needed boost for the Galactic Republic. Bounty hunter Jango Fett was confident about these guys. He said, "They'll do their job well. I'll guarantee that."

And they certainly did. Clone Troopers were smarter than battle droids. On top of that, they were completely loyal, selfless, and very brave. And, as their name suggests, they were all exactly alike.

Well, almost exactly alike. They were each given identification numbers, but they preferred to have their own names like Boomer, Fives, Crosshair, Echo, Cody and Rex. Though they were all made in one image, each one had a different personality. And each one had a different purpose for a mission to complete.

While we ourselves are stationed on this planet, we've got a mission to complete as well. We're not clones, but each of us was created in God's image. And we're effective soldiers in His army, designed with purpose. That's right, you have an assignment from Him that only you can accomplish. But don't worry! You're smarter than the enemy, and if you keep praying and going to church, you'll be really well trained.

Just put on that helmet of salvation and that full armor of God, and get ready to fight the good fight. Remember the battle is not yours, but His. And greater is He that is in you than anything else. It's time to go on the attack!



DAY TWENTY ONE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"I know the plans I have for you," announces the Lord. "I want you to enjoy success. I do not plan to harm you. I will give you hope for the years to come."*
Jeremiah 29:11 NIRV

An exasperated Finn asks, "Why does everyone want to go back to Jakku?"

It's a good question indeed. The place is a desert wasteland filled with sand and ruins of crashed spaceships.

Yet Rey really wanted to go back there. She needed to go back there. The reason? Her past was back there. Rey was left there at a very young age, and thought that the same people would come back to get her some day. So she stayed there, a scavenger who managed to survive on the harsh desert planet on her own.

But Rey meets a character named Maz Kanata, who tells her, "Dear child. I see your eyes. You already know the truth. Whomever you're waiting for on Jakku... they're never coming back."

It was heartbreaking for Rey to realize this. But Maz Kanata was not done talking. She told Rey, "The belonging you seek is not behind you... it is ahead."

The simple fact was this: Rey wasn't going anywhere in life if she was staying on Jakku. It was time to move on, ahead. But still, it was hard for her to let go of her past. For whatever reason, she was determined to stay right where she was, a scavenger in a desert wasteland.

Fortunately, she found a droid named BB-8 that changed everything. And very quickly, Rey found herself stepping out, and seeing things she'd only imagined. Seeing the planet Takodana for the first time, she said in wonder, "I didn't know there was this much green in the whole galaxy."

Like Rey, you have a great future filled with untold wonder in front of you. But you can't get there unless you step out in faith. If you want something you've never had, you simply must be willing to do something you've never done before. It can seem scary stepping out into something new, when you're comfortable living the same life you've always led. But at the same time, you could be missing out on something amazing, a wonderful plan that God has had set up for you since before you were born.



DAY TWENTY TWO

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Give thanks no matter what happens. God wants you to thank Him because you believe in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIRV*

Ewoks are cute. But to many – inside the movies and out – they are annoying. These furry creatures look like teddy bears and really know their way around the planet they call home, the forest moon of Endor.

The Empire didn't think much of them, apparently. They certainly weren't much of a threat. And to begin with, the Rebels on Endor didn't think much of them either. They met the Ewoks at their treetop village, where C-3PO was proud to announce, "We are now a part of the tribe!"

One might be tempted to complain a bit, and wonder why can't we have something bigger and better instead. But Han Solo had the right attitude. He told Chewbacca, "Well, short help is better than no help at all."

The lesson here is simple: we all need to be grateful for the little things. No, we're not talking about Ewoks. We're talking about your life, and an attitude of gratitude. You see, many go through life not realizing just how amazingly blessed they really are. We need to take time to be thankful for God's amazing grace working in our lives on a daily basis.

And can you believe it? It turned out the Ewoks, those little insignificant teddy bears, were the ones that helped bring down the Empire. Wow! If both sides of the conflict only knew that, these same Ewoks would have been treated a whole lot differently.

The bottom line is simple. Be grateful for the little things. Throughout each day, you can find at least a million things to be thankful for. And they all add up in ways we might not understand yet. So stop a moment, even now, think on these things, and celebrate God's goodness to us all. Yub Nub!



DAY TWENTY THREE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him." Isaiah 59:19 NKJV*

You've read the stories from the Bible, of miracles and amazing acts of faith. Over the many years since then, there have been many times where God supernaturally stepped in with His power. They're amazing stories, and to quote Han Solo, "It's true. All of it."

But there's another quote from Luke Skywalker that you need to hear: "You have that power too." The truth is simply this: God does not slumber or sleep. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead ... is living inside of you. Our Heavenly Father is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. And His word tells us that His great power is available to those who believe.

In the movie "Return of the Jedi," heroes Lando Calrissian and Leia Organa realize they've fallen into a trap. Flying the Millennium Falcon, they turn away from the deadly shields of the Death Star and fly straight into a swarm of enemy TIE fighters.

Fellow pilot Lieutenant Telsij was right there with them, crying out, "There's... too many of them!"

The enemy came in like a flood, intent on destroying them all. And if you spend any time reading the Bible, you'll discover that theme is all too common. Time and again throughout history, God's people have found themselves in tricky situations, surrounded by a whole lot of trouble. Remember Gideon and his small army of 300 men? Then there was tiny David, up against Goliath and his Philistine army. And what about Haman's plan to wipe out all the Hebrews? Even further along we see brave Peter, trapped in prison, threatened with execution.

The enemy came in like a flood against them all. But here's the good news. God's power is real. It might not be a swarm of TIE fighters you're facing – in fact, it could be something worse. Whatever it is, know this: when dangers do come, our Father is a real and a very present help in time of trouble. And His power is the same today, as it was yesterday.



DAY TWENTY FOUR

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end."*

Matthew 28:20 NIRV

Yoda told us fear leads to the dark side, but as Christians, we know one very good reason why we don't have to be afraid: God's spirit will be with us... always. It may seem like you're on your own and in the dark. But your eyes can deceive you, don't trust them! You're never alone in any battle.

At the end of the first Star Wars movie, "A New Hope," Luke Skywalker didn't put his faith in what he saw through his targeting computer. While everyone was scratching their heads, he shut it all off, and instead took a shot with faith. And that's how we go through life as Christians: We move by faith, and not by sight.

A young David knew this very well when he was facing off against the giant Goliath. This was no womp rat. Goliath was a fully operational battle station with pants! Nevertheless, little David stepped up to face the giant with a slingshot and some smooth stones. He let one fly, and sure enough, down came that giant. Great shot kid, that was one in a million!

David may have seemed small to Goliath, but unbeknownst to the giant, David had a much bigger force behind him. It was God Himself, our Heavenly Father. And as you face challenges in life, keep in mind that you've got that same power behind you as well. God has promised to never leave you or forsake you, so step forward in faith, and take your best shot! God's force will be with you... always.



DAY TWENTY FIVE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Forgive other people when they sin against you. If you do, your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you." Matthew 6:14 NIRV*

Darth Maul was certainly passionate about one thing. Early in "The Phantom Menace," he turned to Emperor Palpatine and told him, "At last we will have our revenge." He was on a path of vengeance, off to Naboo to battle against the Jedi there.

Looking closely at this character, it seems as if his whole life is built around getting people back. He certainly had a grudge against Obi Wan Kenobi. And - from a certain point a view - you could understand Darth Maul's anger there. But he hated all the Jedi, and wanted them all destroyed.

Let's cut to the point: Darth Maul discovered the hard way that revenge will make you half the person you want to be. Things did not go Darth Maul's way at all. "I was apprentice to the most powerful being in the galaxy once," he said. "I was destined to become... so much more. But I was robbed of that destiny by the Jedi, by Obi Wan Kenobi."

Let's get one thing straight: it wasn't the Jedi or Obi Wan Kenobi that robbed Darth Maul of his destiny. It was Darth Maul's own hatred and desire for revenge.

This is why as Christians, we're not in the revenge business. The Bible tells us to forgive, just as we forgive others. It's a simple concept, and yes, sometimes it can seem hard to do. It can be difficult letting go when someone has done something to hurt you. But when you refuse to forgive, just like with Darth Maul, the one you're hurting most is yourself!

Picture Darth Maul seething with anger, intensely hating the Jedi. You don't want to be like that, do you? Remember that Jesus promised to forgive us in the same exact way that we forgive others. That should be motivation enough to forgive and forget.

Today is a good day as any to do something big: let it go. Search your heart and your feelings, and ask God to reveal to you if there's someone you're feeling a grudge against. Forgive, and you will be forgiven in just the same way. Forgiveness is unlocking the door to set someone free... and realizing you were the prisoner.



DAY TWENTY SIX

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Say no to every kind of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:22 NIRV*

Imagine Anakin Skywalker's surprise when he meets Ahsoka Tano for the first time. She was his padawan, a student that he was told to teach. He wasn't thrilled about this at all. He didn't ask to be a teacher, and certainly didn't want a student. But like it or not, he would show her how to become a proper Jedi - and she would be learning from every move he made.

Obviously, it was a very unusual relationship. Anakin wasn't your average Jedi, so he wasn't exactly the greatest role model at times. Through it all though, Ahsoka learned quite a bit. And yes, sometimes she wondered about his way of doing things. During one adventure on the planet Mortis, she had a vision of herself in the future. That future version of herself warns Ahsoka about Anakin: "There is a wildness to you, young one. Seeds of the dark side planted by your master. Do you feel it?"

For a few years, and more than a few battles, she watched Anakin. And in many ways, she began to act just like him. In some ways this was great. And in some ways, not so great.

For a moment, put yourself in Anakin's position. Just imagine if it was you that had a padawan following you around. You didn't ask for one, and you may not have a desire to be a teacher either. And yet, there's someone there, learning from you, and yes, beginning to act just like you.

How do you think that would turn out? As unusual as it may be to picture, there are people watching you each day, learning from you and how you act. You may not be training anyone, but many people know you are a Christian, and they are looking to you. So, the question is this: how is your walk? Do you live in a way that pleases God?

No one is perfect of course. But with His help, you can be a light, and show the way. You can be a master!

Anakin Skywalker: "Besides, the role of master comes easily to me."

Ahsoka Tano: "Really? Well this time try to be convincing at it."



DAY TWENTY SEVEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Be careful not to do good deeds in front of other people. Don't do those deeds to be seen by others." Matthew 6:1 NIRV*

At the end of the Star Wars movie "A New Hope," the triumphant heroes march into the throne room, with all the rebel soldiers watching. Han Solo, Chewbacca, and Luke Skywalker have each played a big part in destroying the Death Star. Now it's time to be honored for their accomplishment. As each marches towards Princess Leia and the other leaders of the Rebellion, Chewbacca calls out his typical roar, and everyone present turns to face the platform. Here is where the ceremony is, where the heroes will get a medal for their bravery.

Han Solo winks as Princess Leia gives him a medal, and then Luke Skywalker smiles as he receives his. But wait a minute! Where's the medal for Chewbacca?

Seriously, Chewbacca was a major part of all this. Chewbacca helped rescue the princess from the Death Star, and Chewbacca helped fly the Millennium Falcon back to the Death Star to help blow the thing up. So how come he doesn't get a medal too?

Notice how Chewbacca acts in this scene though. He doesn't complain, and he doesn't start throwing a tantrum. And do you know something? That's how we should be too.

While on this planet, we'll have plenty of opportunities to do good deeds. And we might even do some things that save the world. But our motivation should never be to get an award. Whatever we do, our Heavenly Father is watching. And He's promised all kinds of rewards in heaven.

So keep on doing good deeds, no matter what. Even if nobody sees you, don't stop being a hero. You may not get a medal here, but there's something even greater awaiting you in heaven.



DAY TWENTY EIGHT

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"I have come so they may have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way." John 10:10 NIRV*

Rey: "Is that even possible?"

Han Solo: "I never ask that question until after we've done it!"

Han Solo said some great things over the course of the Star Wars movies, but this one response had a lot of wisdom to it. How many of us are like Rey, stuck going nowhere because we think something is impossible. It's at these times that we need to be like Han Solo, and forget what is possible and what is impossible. After all, we serve a God that makes all things possible, right?

List below some dreams you have, dreams of things you want to do or places you want to go. Our Heavenly Father has a wonderful plan for us, and Jesus wants us to have life, and life more abundantly. So pray, and dream big. Don't worry about if it is possible or not. Leave those details until after you've done it!



DAY TWENTY NINE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Stop judging only by what you see. Judge in the right way." John 7:24 NIRV*

On the planet Utapau lives a Pau'an named Tion Medon. As he approaches, you can't help but feel a bit unnerved. You see, everyone who lives on this unusual planet looks just as he does, a tall, gray-skinned alien with sunken eyes and jagged teeth. If you were to see these aliens, you'd immediately think they were villainous creatures. Just look at them!

But they aren't the bad guys at all. In fact, in "Revenge of the Sith," they were very useful in helping the Jedi Obi-Wan Kenobi in his search for the real villains. Tion Medon hoped his planet could remain peaceful too. He told the Jedi, "There's no war here, unless you brought it with you."

His message is simple. It should be obvious that we not judge a person by the way they look. Yet nevertheless, somehow it happens all the time.

No matter what planet we're on, we should never judge a person's heart simply by the way they look. We should love, and help one another, just as Tion Medon was trying to do a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.



DAY THIRTY

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"We think even foolish people are wise if they keep silent. We think they understand what is right if they control their tongues." Proverbs 17:28 NIRV*

Jedi Knight Qui-Gon Jinn was on a desperate mission to warn Queen Amidala about some big, big trouble. That's when he quite literally ran into Jar Jar Binks. He saved Jar Jar's life, but he was in a hurry, and needed to get moving. Yet Jar Jar wouldn't stop talking.

Jar Jar Binks: "Ooh mooey mooey I love you!"

Qui-Gon Jinn: "You almost got us killed! Are you brainless?"

Jar Jar Binks: "I spake!"

Qui-Gon Jinn: "The ability to speak does not make you intelligent. Now get out of here."

Qui-Gon Jinn had a very good point hidden in there, something we all need to think about before we start talking. He said, "The ability to speak does not make you intelligent." In our Bibles, a man named James would agree with this completely. In James, chapter three, he warns us all about the way we spake. Or speak. James wrote, "The tongue is a small part of a person's body. But it talks big. Think about how a small spark can set a big forest on fire. The tongue is also a fire."

His advice? Think before you spake. Or speak. He said, "Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak."

Words have power. They're just like seeds that can quickly grow into something greater. The question is, what kind of seed are you planting?

So don't be brainless. The bottom line is simple: use your words wisely, and think before you spake. Or speak.

Now get out of here.



DAY THIRTY ONE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"If I don't have love, I am only a loud gong or a noisy cymbal."*

1 Corinthians 13:1 NIRV

"This is the way."

Anyone who has seen "The Mandalorian" knows this phrase really well, because it's a motto of all the Mandalorians. It means simply that all who truly call themselves Mandalorians must obey the laws and rules set in place a long time ago, and followed ever since.

Din Djarin knows this very well, as he has been taught and trained "the way" ever since his childhood. Part of that training involves an intense respect for each warrior's Beskar armor, and never, ever taking off that helmet.

But something else suddenly steps in, and it is a power so strong that it overrides this law entirely. Simply put, it is love.

Din Djarin finds himself in a position where in order to save a life, he has to do something he's never done in front of anyone else. He has to take off that helmet. There's a choice he faces: follow the law he's always known, or save another's life.

Because he is a hero, you know the choice he makes. And his decision is based on a law that is bigger than any other. It's the law of love.

Some time ago, Jesus told us all these simple words, "I am the way." His way was love, and it was a way that is so strong that the curse of sin and death were broken forever. Everything he ever did was based in love. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son that whosoever will believe in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Not long after this, a man named Paul wrote about the importance of love. In fact, he said we could have the greatest gifts in the world, but if we don't have love, we have nothing. Put in the way of a Mandalorian, we could have the best armor, a jetpack, and the most incredible skills in the galaxy, but if we don't have love, we're not a real hero.

If you want to know how to be the best hero in the universe, and to know what real love is, look to Jesus, and don't forget: "He is the way."



DAY THIRTY TWO

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"The word of God is alive and active. It is sharper than any sword that has two edges." Hebrews 4:12 NIRV*

In "The Rise of Skywalker," all that stands in the way of the evil Emperor Palpatine's plans to take over the galaxy is just one person and her lightsaber. But Rey is flat on the ground, knocked down and seemingly defeated.

But in a moment where everything turns around, she calls out for help, remembering all the Jedi knights who have come before her. And at that time, she hears in her mind their legendary voices. She hears Anakin Skywalker, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Ahsoka Tano, Kanan Jarrus, Mace Windu, Yoda and others. She listens to their words, each encouraging her to rise up and fight on, and she draws inspiration from them.

And yes, she does just that, rising up and holding up her lightsaber tightly. Rey is not only ready to continue the fight, she's ready to win! Emperor Palpatine doesn't know what hit him. He attacks again with power and strength. But he's stunned to see that his power does not match what she has with her now. Rey deflects the strongest attack ever from the Emperor, and what's more, all that power and energy shoots straight back at him, completely ending any threat he poses.

In life, there are times that you may feel knocked down, and completely defeated, just like Rey. You may feel all alone, in the dark, with no one to help. But you're not. First, pick up your sword. No, it's not a lightsaber. But it is something stronger, the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. In your Bible you too can hear legendary voices from the past, the voices of heroes who have words to encourage you. Can you hear them? Listen to Jeremiah tell you about God's plans for you. Hear Moses remind you that you're the head and not the tail, above and not beneath. Listen to David say though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil. And hear Jesus tell you that he will be with you, always.

These voices are telling you to rise up. These voices are telling you that you can win, because they too faced the same evil. It keeps trying to resurrect, and it keeps wanting to knock us all down and destroy us. But you've got your weapon, the Bible. It's sharper than a two-edged sword, and it's more powerful than anything the enemy can throw at you. Read it and study it, holding on to it in your mind and your spirit. You'll be ready for anything. You'll be ready to rise up!



DAY THIRTY THREE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor." 1 Corinthians 12:22-23 NIV*

Rose Tico is creative, brilliant, and super optimistic. She's also easily star struck, which we discover when she meets Finn in "The Last Jedi." She sees him and is immediately tongue-tied, and not quite sure what to say. Embarrassed, she tells Finn, "I'm sorry, I work behind pipes all day. Doing talking with Resistance heroes is not my forte."

She's telling him her job with the Resistance isn't as big of a deal. Her thinking is that she doesn't mean as much, and at the same time she's lifting up Finn's role as something much more important and glorious.

Of course we know she's a hero too, and a major part of that movie. Still she genuinely doesn't think she's as vital a person, at least compared to others.

And that's how a lot of people feel about themselves on this planet too. Some of us really don't understand how important we are to God's plans here on earth. While it's great to admire someone's gifts and talents, don't forget that you've got plenty to offer as well.

Rose Tico is an engineer, and she should know more than many others how things work. Without the smallest gear in place, the entire spaceship won't work well, and you could find yourself floating home. Similarly, every part of our bodies is important, which is probably why Anakin seemed a little upset after that first battle with Count Dooku.

Knowing all this, remember what Paul said: every person in the church is important. We all have gifts, talents and abilities that we can bring to the table. Some may seem smaller, or others seem more hidden. Like Rose's role within the Resistance, in reality, these are not small at all.

It's okay to respect and admire other's gifts, and even get so excited that you get a bit tongue tied. Just remember though that you play a big part too, and you are every bit the hero that God designed you to be.



DAY THIRTY FOUR

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"He comforts us in all our troubles. Now we can comfort others when they are in trouble. We ourselves receive comfort from God." 2 Corinthians 1:4 NIRV*

R2-D2 is a plucky astromech droid that nearly everyone would want to have by their side. But have you seen R2-KT? This pink droid has been seen in "The Rise of Skywalker," "The Clone Wars," and in hospitals all over.

It started with a dad, one who spent years serving in the 501st Legion, a group of guys and gals who dress up as Stormtroopers that go in on big missions to visit sick children at local hospitals.

Yet in 2004, tragedy struck. That year, his own daughter was diagnosed with a terminal brain cancer. Her name was Katie, and she loved Star Wars - and she loved the color pink. Her health deteriorated quickly, so much that she couldn't even get out of bed. She told her father she wished she had a droid like R2-D2 to watch over her as she slept, just like R2 watched over Padmé Amidala in "Attack of the Clones."

Word got around very quickly. Thousands of letters reached Katie. Stormtroopers used their helmets to collect donations on street corners. George Lucas himself recorded a get well message for Katie. But best of all, and without hesitation, a group of R2 Builders heard about Katie, collected the parts, and created a custom Artoo unit painted pink. The droid's name would be R2-KT, named for Katie.

Just like in the movies, it rolled around and beeped, its lights blinking. Katie's wish came true: she had a droid to watch over her as she slept, even through her final days.

To this day, Katie's legacy is immense. R2-KT appeared in "The Clone Wars" series, and even in the movie "The Force Awakens." But more importantly, R2-KT tours hospitals world-wide, joins Disney's Star Wars Weekends, and even has its own action figure that raised \$100,000 alone.

This little pink droid represents so much to so many. It is a new hope, a love and dedication for helping others.

All around you, there are those in need, those in dark places in need of a new hope. It's time to be the hero that God has called you to be. He has promised to be with you always, a light unto this dark world. Let your spirit awaken!



DAY THIRTY FIVE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *“But God is faithful and fair. If we confess our sins, He will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure.”*
1 John 1:9 NIRV

The Star Wars Holiday special came on televisions in 1978, and has been the stuff of legend ever since - but for all the wrong reasons. Simply put, this one should have been tossed into the trash compactor. The story, what little there is, is pretty simple: Chewbacca wants to celebrate Life Day with his family.

George Lucas, the creator of Star Wars, famously said, “If I had the time and a sledgehammer, I would track down every bootlegged copy of that program and smash it.”

Carrie Fisher, who played the part of Princess Leia, said that she shows the television special at parties, “mainly at the end of the night when I want people to leave.”

Of course, Star Wars purists love the program for the few bright spots it has - like Boba Fett’s first appearance. But on the whole, this is one of the mistakes that George Lucas can’t get rid of. Bootleg copies are everywhere!

Have you ever done something that you wish you could go back and erase? Of course you do. But the past is the past. And unlike these classic movies that now have new special editions, there’s nothing you can change about your past. You look back on those mistakes, and you repeat what Darth Vader now says (but didn’t in 1983), “Noooooo!”

Don’t despair. If there’s one thing we learned from the movies, it is that there is redemption. You may have done things God isn’t pleased with, but you don’t have to let them rule your life. When we ask God for forgiveness, it’s done. Grow from your learning, repent, and move on to bigger, better things. Don’t let your past control you. Learn from it, grow from it, and move on. Mistakes are a part of life. Oh, and speaking of which, Happy Life Day!



DAY THIRTY SIX

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"I tell you, do not worry." Matthew 6:25 NIRV*

At the end of "The Empire Strikes Back," we were left with quite a cliffhanger. And for those of us who were around back then, we had to wait three years to see what happened next! Nowadays, people can binge-watch a program, or wait just a little bit to find out what happens to our favorite characters.

But we had to wait three years to find out what happened to Han Solo. Would he survive the carbon freezing process? Would he and Leia get back together again? Just who is this Jabba the Hutt? For three years, we all sat back and wondered. And for those of us who were just kids, we did more than wonder. I'll have to admit there was a little worry in there too.

But on May 25, 1983, we found out that everything would be just fine. And yes, there's a lesson in there. Many of us are spending our time like I did so long ago, worrying about how things will turn out. Perhaps you're concerned about something that will happen in a few months, or maybe a few years.

Whatever it is, don't be consumed with worry. Don't be like C-3PO, who spends much of the movies thinking the worst will happen. We're not doomed, and the odds of us surviving are greater than you think. The truth is, God has promised to be with us at all times, and greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. So lighten up. Life is full of waiting, but in the end, everything will be all right. Trust me.



DAY THIRTY SEVEN

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"The joy of the Lord makes you strong." Nehemiah 8:10 NIRV*

As of this writing, the video of the "Chewbacca Mom" has been seen 160,749,167 times by people all over the world. Why? It's because of the joy, joy, joy this woman has from simply putting on a Chewbacca mask. And it's infectious too! People from all over the world have been sharing the video, and you can't help but smile.

Her name is Candace Payne, and before this video, she lived a quiet life. Now, she's a celebrity meeting with Star Wars cast members, receiving scholarships for her kids and all kinds of really wonderful things to be even more joyful about. The lesson is simple: having a joyful spirit has its rewards. People want to be with someone who has joy. And with her, it's overflowing.

In other videos, Candace points to the Holy Spirit, and even now the whole world is listening to what she has to say. Joy has real power!

"It's the simple joys," she says after taking off that mask in the video. And she's right. Gratitude is the root of joy, so start there, looking for the simple joys in your life. The rewards are great and powerful, and as you saw with Candace, they can lead others to a life of joy as well.



DAY THIRTY EIGHT

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Don't forget to do good. Don't forget to share with others. God is pleased with those kinds of offerings." Hebrews 13:16 NIRV*

Liam Porter was born without a left arm. As you could imagine, this was a challenge unlike any other. Yet this seven-year-old was in for a surprise in a very heartwarming story that happened in Augusta, Georgia.

Using a 3D printer, a kind-hearted man named John Peterson did something extraordinary: he made Liam a new arm. But this arm was a little different: it was a Star Wars-themed arm, looking just like one a Clone Trooper would wear.

Can you imagine this boy's surprise as he was suddenly surrounded by Clone Troopers from the 501st Legion? These are Star Wars fans that show up in costumes at various events, and this was something not to be missed! It was there that Liam was blessed with a new arm, one that grips objects and helps him do things he's never done before. And on top of that... it just looks awesome!

The heroes in the Star Wars movies are great, but even greater are those heroes on this planet earth who put aside their own needs and desires to reach out, and help those desperately in need.



DAY THIRTY NINE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"In the same way, let your light shine so others can see it. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will bring glory to your Father who is in heaven."*
Matthew 5:16 NIRV

When you think of "Star Wars," you can't help but think of Darth Vader. And yet did you know that if you added up all the time he shows up on screen in the first movie, it would only amount to twelve minutes?

Yet those twelve minutes stick with you, don't they? For an entire generation, this is the ultimate movie villain, a character that changes the atmosphere each time he strides into the room.

Consider this a moment: what emotions and feelings do people have as you stride into the room? In some cases, it is just a short time that others are in your presence. Are they filled with joy when seeing you? Or are they filled with fear? Are they filled with respect for your character?

Be a light unto this darkened world. Use the small amount of time you have to make an impact, and make it a good one. Set a positive example, and lead others away from the dark side, and into His marvelous light.



DAY FORTY

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"Don't hold back good from those who are worthy of it. Don't hold it back when you can help." Proverbs 3:27 NIRV*

Each December 4th has become "Wear Star Wars, Share Star Wars Day," where fans all over wear a themed t-shirt (or more!), and donate a themed toy to a child in need.

But where did it all begin? Not long ago, a young girl named Katie was being made fun of for bringing a Star Wars water bottle to school. She came home crying about it, wanting to change her bottle to something pink.

Her mother shared this story online, and that set off an unbelievable chain reaction! Katie received many, many letters and gifts from other people she didn't know. And she even got her own custom-made Stormtrooper armor!

Katie's story inspired the annual charity event that happens on December 4th each year, a day to strike back against bullying. Katie has donated many of her toys to others who were in her shoes. And when she heard about another girl in a similar situation named Layla, she did something wonderful: she gave Layla her own Stormtrooper costume! But Layla's incredible moment didn't stop there. "Weird Al" Yankovic heard about Layla, and stepped in to help, bringing with him a legion of Stormtroopers to help bring cheer and joy - and battle bullying! No one messes with the 501st Legion!

The point is this: We are all created in God's perfect image. When it comes to making fun of others, you can do one of two things. You can just follow the crowd, or you can stand up and be a real hero. You can follow the Master.



DAY FORTY ONE

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"We hope for what we don't have yet. So we are patient as we wait for it."*
Romans 8:25 NIRV

In 1951, a guy named Sheb Wooley recorded a scream for a western called "Distant Drums." It was heard when a cowboy had a mishap with an alligator, and nobody knew how much of a big deal that actor's scream would become. It's called the Wilhelm Scream, named after the character that used it in 1953's western "Charge at Feather River." It became a stock sound effect used for several movies in the 50's and 60's, but it wouldn't become the famous scream it became until much later. No, not until the movie "Star Wars" was made.

Here's where everything changed: "Star Wars" sound designer Ben Burtt decided to use it as an inside joke when a Stormtrooper took a tumble on the Death Star.

And the rest is history. Since that movie, the scream is now everywhere in movies, showing up at least once in every Star Wars flick, and many, many more. Literally hundreds of movies have this one scream sound effect inserted into it, just as a joke. You'll know it when you hear it.

The lesson here is easy: Be patient. Your time will come! It may seem like no one can hear you now, but just be persistent. And don't get so frustrated you want to scream. It just takes one moment for things to change. Before you know it, you'll get to where God meant for you to be.



DAY FORTY TWO

THE SPIRIT AWAKENS

VERSE: *"The word of God is alive and active. It is sharper than any sword that has two edges." Hebrews 4:12 NIRV*

The Jedi, the peacekeepers of the galaxy, all have one thing in common: they each carry a lightsaber. According to the Star Wars Dictionary, a lightsaber is an elegant weapon used to cut through doors, deflect blaster bolts, and battle enemies in close combat.

Just like each Jedi is unique, every lightsaber is different. Each Jedi, while training as a padawan, gets to build their very own lightsaber. It all starts with a Kyber Crystal, which is harvested on the planet Ilum. The crystal is placed inside the hilt, where its energy is then focused through something called a blade emitter.

Each Jedi can choose a different color for the blade. Most choose blue or green, but there are more colors to choose from, such as purple, the color of the lightsaber that Jedi Master Mace Windu carries. Other colors include yellow, white, black, and the choice of most bad guys, red.

We may not have a crystal inside of us, but we have something much more powerful: The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the real source of power in our lives, along with our sword, the Bible. Jesus said the Bible is sharper than any two-edged sword. That includes lightsabers! Jesus gave us His Word so that we can deflect the blaster bolts of our enemy, the devil. But we can also use it to attack sin, sickness, temptation, and any situation that comes against us. It opens doors, deflects sin, and brings peace. So pick up your Bible and activate it today: it truly is an elegant weapon!

