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Devotional - Christ Is Our Only Hope
November 20, 2019

SONG:

You Raise Me Up

When I am down, and, oh, my soul, so weary
When troubles come, and my heart burdened be
Then, I am still and wait here in the silence
Until you come and sit awhile with me

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains
You raise me up to walk on stormy seas
I am strong when I am on your shoulders
You raise me up to more than I can be

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Christ Is Our Only Hope

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. **Hebrews 4:13.** {UL 53.1}

The Lord is a God of knowledge. In His Word, He is represented as weighing men, their development of character, and all their motives, whether they be good or evil. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, the child granted her by God in answer to her earnest entreaty, said, "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed" (1 Samuel 2:3). David declared, "Men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity" (Psalm 62:9). Isaiah says, "Thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just" (Isaiah 26:7). Solomon writes, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits" (Proverbs 16:2). It is for the eternal interest of everyone to search his own heart and to improve every God-given faculty. {UL 53.2}

There are many important lessons for each to learn. **Let all remember that there is not a motive in the heart of any man that the Lord does not clearly see.** The motives of each one are weighed as carefully as if the destiny of the human agent depended upon this one result. **We need a connection with divine power, that we may have an increase of clear light and an understanding of how to reason from cause to effect.** We need to have the powers of the understanding cultivated, by our being partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Let us each one consider carefully the solemn truth: **God in heaven is true, and there is not a design however intricate, not a motive however carefully hidden, that He does not clearly understand. He reads the secret devising of every heart. Man may plan out crooked actions for the future, thinking that God does not understand, but in that great day when the books are opened, and every man is judged by the things written in the books, those actions will appear as they are....** {UL 53.3}

There is no one, however earnestly he may be striving to do his best, who can say, "I have no sin." He who would say this would be under a dangerous deception. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). **How then can we escape the charge, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting"? We are to look to Christ. At infinite cost, He has covenanted to be our representative in the heavenly courts, our Advocate before God.—Manuscript 23, February 8, 1906, "A God of Knowledge by Whom Actions Are Weighed."** {UL 53.4}

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HEALTHY FOOD AND LOSING WEIGHT

Avocados

Merely half of one avocado contains 10 grams of healthy mono-saturated fats, which stop the blood sugar spikes that tell your body to store fat around your midsection. Not only do healthy fats in avocado help thwart belly bloat, they also help our bodies better absorb carotenoids, cancer-fighting compounds found in colorful fruits and veggies like tomatoes, carrots, spinach and winter squash. In fact, people who ate salads with avocado had 15 times higher absorption of carotenoids, a study from The Ohio State University at Columbus found.

Bananas

The fruit packs 422 milligrams of potassium, a mineral that can help limit the amount of belly swelling sodium in your body.

Berries

Antioxidants can improve blood flow, delivering more oxygen to muscles -- so ab revealing cardio is easier. Have some yogurt and berries before your workout to get those muscles ready for action.

Green Tea

Three cups daily may rev up your metabolism and burn 30 calories, a study in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* shows. The compound ECGC in the tea makes it easier to burn fat.

Citrus

Supermarket shocker: Vitamin C in colorful produce, like oranges and red peppers can help you zap up to 30 percent more fat during exercise, research from Arizona State University at Mesa suggests.

Whole Grains

Carb lovers, Rejoice! The filling fiber in foods like oatmeal, brown rice, and bulgur aids in keeping your body's insulin levels low. Researchers speculate this may shrink fat cells. Your body absorbs and burns these more slowly for longer-lasting energy than the refined carbs in white bread and rice.

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Stealthy stomach slimmers

While you're working out: On the elliptical or treadmill, keep your back straight, head forward and abs tight. Perfect posture will target your tummy as you sizzle calories.

When you're in the car: Tighten and release abs repeatedly at red lights. It's the ab equivalent of Kegels: a little move that yields results almost without your noticing.

When you're at your desk: Give belly pooch the pink slip with pilates breathing: Gently suck in your gut as if you were buttoning a tight pair of jeans. Then breathe without allowing your abs to relax. Do this for 30 seconds. Repeat five times, advises Michele Olson, Ph.D., professor of exercise science at Auburn University.

When you're walking Judah: Brace against leash tugging and banish your belly: Keeping torso upright with shoulders back, engage abs for five strides; relax them for five strides. Repeat until you're back at your front door, says Torri Shack, a trainer in Los Angeles. Check out your (bow) wow abs!

When you're in bed: Count on compliments, not sheep, with this mattress move: Place palms right below belly button. Exhale and allow stomach to expand. Then inhale, pulling belly button toward spine, drawing abdomen toward the box spring. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat four times

WORKING OUT YOUR STOMACHS:

Don't make nice. These are your ab-versaries!:

Time in front of the TV: We love a DVR-athon, too, but people who tuned in for two or more hours daily had weaker back and ab muscles (by up to 10 percent) than those who viewed less than two hours, regardless of their overall activity level, researchers from the University of Oulu note.

Stressing out: Feeling frazzled and frantic? Increased levels of the hormone cortisol, a result of chronic worry, lead to excess stomach fat, research shows. To de-stress and weigh much less, learn to breathe. Slowly inhale through your nose, counting to four. Then exhale from your mouth for a count of eight. Repeat until refreshed.

CLOSINGS THOUGHTS:

There is no one, however earnestly he may be striving to do his best, who can say, "I have no sin." He who would say this would be under a dangerous deception. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). How then can we escape the charge, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting"? **We are to look to Christ. At infinite cost, He has covenanted to be our representative in the heavenly courts, our Advocate before God.**—Manuscript 23, February 8, 1906, "A God of Knowledge by Whom Actions Are Weighed." {UL 53.4}

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