

Newsletter

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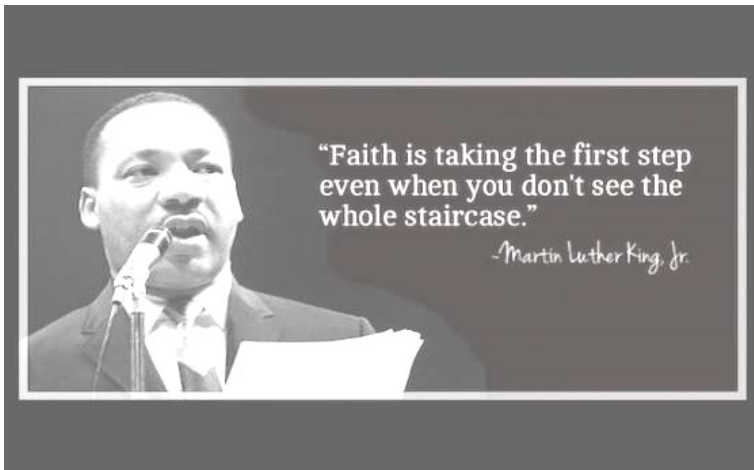
Designing You

WBSLG

Women's Bible Study & Life Group

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"Black History Month meets Ash Wednesday and the Season of Lent"

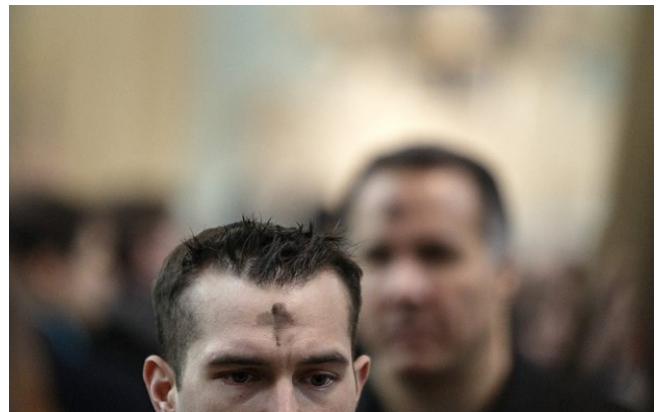


From January 15th through to the end of February, African Americans have a dedicated season for the recognition and dedication of Black Americans past and present. Also during this season, the season of Lent is observed beginning with Ash Wednesday. In this article I would like to invoke a thought : *“Why do people seem to neglect the spirit and purpose of Black History Month and the Lenten Season once the actual season is over?”*—

If believers are called “people of faith”, why then does it seem that faith is lost during the rest of the year until these seasons come around the following year?

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, “Faith is taking the first step when you don’t see the whole staircase.” (*article by Greg Gilman/jan2016*). The scripture tells us in Hebrews 11:1; “Faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen (*KJV*)” meaning that we believe in receiving something that we haven’t gotten yet but we are hoping for. Both of these seasons carry an element of expectation and belief by believing participants who are expecting to receive the hope of what these seasons represent. However, at some point during the year the spirit of these two seasons seems reduced by a lack of enthusiasm from the body of supporting believers and participants. Unless something major or horrible occurs, the spirit of these two seasons seem to be left on the shelf of hopelessness. What happened to hope?

There is another scripture that takes hope a step further. “...But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently—Romans 8:24-25” (*NIV, 2011*). As believers we have to continue to carry the banner of faith and hope for our nation both in social and spiritual arenas. Although it is evident that the struggle for ultimate fairness for all persons regardless of race or ethnicity is still a challenge in America, it is also evident that all believers need to step up to work their faith and have faith in their work so that the world will see us as worshipping the One True God. The progress of African Americans was due to the help from all races joining together.



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"Black History Month meets Ash Wednesday and the Season of Lent"

This year when we receive the ashes and go through the Lenten season, let us use this opportunity to increase our faith. Let us continue to pursue our dreams and encourage others, share the word of Christ to the lost or those who's hope has faded.

So why not use the Black History and Lenten Seasons as a chance to meet the challenges these seasons bring? "How so?", you ask. Well, my thinking is that Black History is a time for all races to recognize that socially, we are all important and that discrimination in any form is unjust and unfair. Slavery brought many Africans to America and the 1863 emancipation of slaves legalized them to be free but they still faced discrimination by some non-African cultures and groups; the spirit of which still appears in various forms today. This includes profiling. So hence, you have to have a Black History season for a particular race and culture of people to say to this nation ***"I'm still here and I am still an American."*** However, this becomes the theme for all minorities and women. God sees us as His individual works of art. Although women are making their mark in business, society and in the spiritual arena, but there are arenas wherein women are still treated unfairly in the workplace when it comes to promotions and pay when compared to men in the same position. Even in the Church there are Christian churches who still believe that women should not be allowed to teach, preach or speak to men in a congregation setting. Black History Month reminds all Americans that inequality for all people still exists and fairness for all still needs to be addressed. Therefore we must build our hopes, strengthen our faith and encourage our souls. In other words we must continue to take those steps of faith until we get to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, or as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. stated, "Faith is taking the first step when you don't see the whole staircase"

When Lenten Season begins, believers are met with the challenges that ***"I must increase my faith by walking closer to God"***. But, instead, we view life's challenges as a time to faint rather than as an opportunity to grow in faith. James 1:2-4, "Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way" (*The Message Bible/ Peterson, 2002*). Galatians 6:9-10, "So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now, therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith." (*The Message Bible, 2002*). The book of James also tells us not to waver in our faith or we are considered as double-minded. So during Lent we fast or sacrifice something for 40 days and after Easter we tend to lose our grip on the faith wagon. We must understand that faith is not a season it is walk, a way of life and perpetual while we remain on this side of eternity. So hence, you have to have a Lenten season to say ***"Lord I know You're still here."*** Although God established this season for a time of remembrance leading to the Passover, we are reminded that God in His due time heals, delivers, and provides for us all as we are covered by the redemptive power of the blood of Jesus Christ.

I don't believe that it was by irony or coincidence that these two seasons run together. Black History and Lenten Seasons go hand in hand as they call us to the carpet of responsibility, accountability, and commitment to God, to our families and loved ones, to our neighbors and to our communities to do the right thing and that by faith each year will find us closer to the dream, closer to the promise, and most importantly closer to God. So let us purpose in our hearts that this year...the year of 2016 will be the year of "sweet 16" as we forget those things that are left behind and press onward and forward together as one body in Christ to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. If you are fasting, fast from the wrong and fast for the right, if you are sacrificing, give up the wrong to get to the right, but whatever we do this season, let us do it as unto the Lord. God bless you! (*S. Pittman/2016*) [end]

TO ALL THE COFFEE DRINKERS...

CHECK THIS OUT!



Did you know that the average cup of coffee contains around 95mg (milligrams) of caffeine (which may not seem like much), but different varieties of coffee drinks can range from almost zero to over 500 mg? Welcome to the club, I didn't know that either. In an article by Adda Bjarnadottir, MS (*published January 2016*) the factors that determine caffeine content are: **type of coffee beans, roasting, type of coffee** and the **serving size**. Adda has a Masters of Science in human nutrition. So according to Adda, “**brewed coffee**” contains about 70-140 mg of caffeine per eight ounce cup. **Espresso** has more caffeine per volume than regular coffee but it is usually consumed in smaller serving sizes. A one to two ounce cup of espresso contains about 63 mg of caffeine. Then there are the **espresso type drinks** like lattes, cappuccinos, macchiatos and Americanos which contain the same amount of caffeine as regular straight serving of espresso. Note that the milk added to these drinks does not enhance or take away from the caffeine value. So the actual serving size of caffeine is the same in these drinks as the regular espresso.

Then there is **instant coffee**. An eight ounce cup of instant coffee usually contains about 30-60 mg of caffeine (depending on whether you take one teaspoon or two teaspoonsful of the instant coffee).

Then there is “**decaf coffee**”. Adda says, “Don't let the name fool you because caffeine is still in there.” (*Adda, 2016*). The average eight ounce cup of decaffeinated coffee contains around 3 mg of caffeine. Additionally, Adda does a comparison of commercial brands and how they rate in caffeine content by size.

Should we be concerned about these caffeine levels? According to Adda's research, she has determined that caffeine is high in antioxidants (which is good for our health). However, too much caffeine can disrupt sleep, cause restlessness, and anxiety as well as heart palpitations. On an average, people consuming 400-600mg of caffeine a day may not notice adverse effects but on the other hand each person is different and caffeine affects individuals in different ways. If we use wisdom, we should discuss caffeine consumption with our doctor. Even in small amounts, if you find yourself edgy or irritable check your caffeine consumption. [end]



DON'T DRINK COFFEE? HERE ARE SOME FOODS THAT MAY BOOST YOUR ENERGY

[Based on an article by Brendan Brazier (*US News & World Reports/Feb 20, 2015*)]



According to Brendan, if you're waking up tired or finding your energy is tapering out at 10am or 3pm and can't wait to crawl into bed at night? Then you need an energy boost. He recommends “high-net gain” foods that contains lots of nutrients; “low-glycemic” foods that lower the GI (glycemic index); foods “high in protein” because protein helps give you energy; and foods “high in fiber” help keep you full, regulate your digestion, and manage blood sugar. So believers, let us make good food choices so we can have the energy we need to give God

our best praise...cause praising God takes energy and you got to feel like it! Praise Him for the food! [end]



Health Huddle

Wear red in February for American Heart Month

By: Sis Nichole Johnson-Graves, Asbury Church



The first Friday in February was National Wear Red Day . It was started to raise awareness about heart disease and prevention. This month of February wear your red to show your support for heart health awareness. In this Health Huddle article, I wanted to alert my sisters to heart health awareness by sharing these two very interesting facts about overall heart health.

Know the factors that may increase your chances of getting heart disease.

Anyone, including children, can develop heart disease. It occurs when a substance called plaque builds up in your arteries. When this happens, your arteries can narrow over time, reducing blood flow to the heart. Smoking, eating an unhealthy diet, and not getting enough exercise all increase your risk for having heart disease. Talk with your health care provider.

What are the signs and symptoms of a heart attack?

For many people, chest discomfort or a heart attack is the first sign. Someone having a heart attack may experience several symptoms, including: Chest pain or discomfort that doesn't go away after a few minutes. Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back, light-headedness, nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), or a cold sweat. Pain or discomfort in the arms or shoulder and Shortness of breath.

If you think that you or someone you know is having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately

Love,

Nichole Johnson-Graves (*writer for Health Huddle*)

Reference:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/dhbsp/index.htm>

American Heart Association: <http://www.americanheart.org> National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>

[end]

Ten ways to love

1. Listen without interrupting.
(Proverbs 18)
2. Speak without accusing.
(James 1:9)
3. Give without sparing.
(Proverbs 21:26)
4. Pray without ceasing.
(Colossians 1:9)
5. Answer without arguing.
(Proverbs 17:1)
6. Share without pretending.
(Ephesians 4:15)
7. Enjoy without complaint.
(Philippians 2:14)
8. Trust without wavering.
(Corinthians 13:7)
9. Prove without punishing.
(Colossians 3:13)
10. Promise without forgetting.
(Proverbs 13:17)

It's still not too late to sign up for the 2016 Spring Sessions of “**Designing You**” Women's Bible Study and Life Group starting Saturday April 2nd at 10:00am in the Gathering Place in the Asbury Family Life Building.

Email: spittman@4pillarchurch.org

*If you would like to share an article, please email Sis Sharon Pittman at spittman@4pillarchurch.org