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JENTEZEN FRANKLIN

KEEP
LOOKING
UP

40 DAYS TO BUILDING YOUR TRUST IN GOD

**KEEP
LOOKING
UP**

Books by Jentezen Franklin

Love Like You've Never Been Hurt

Restart Your Heart

Acres of Diamonds

Overcoming When You Feel Overwhelmed

KEEP LOOKING UP

40 DAYS TO BUILDING YOUR TRUST IN GOD

JENTEZEN FRANKLIN



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INTRODUCTION

A nest is a safe place. It evokes feelings of security and comfort. It's homey. But God doesn't intend for us to get so comfortable in our nests that we don't want to leave. Even mother birds must ruffle their nests to get their young to fly on their own. God will do the same for you and me. When we get too comfortable, too content, too complacent, God will allow our nests to be busted up so we can learn how to fly.

Does it feel like your nest is being busted up? Are you overwhelmed? I know what that feels like. I've been in the place where I knew God was taking me because of what He promised in His Word, yet at the same time I didn't understand why certain things were happening.

We were not born to live and die in our nests. We are destined for higher ground. The enemy knows you have a heavenly calling and are pregnant with the promises of God. That's why the attacks are plenty. Think of it this way: Jacob had to be crippled before he was crowned with a new name, Israel. Joseph had to go through the pit to get to the palace.

Remember Job, the man in the Bible who lost almost everything? He cried out, “I shall die in my nest.” In the most tragic of circumstances, Job had to face some tough questions. Sooner or later, we must face the same ones:

1. **Can God be trusted when I suffer?** Job lost his family, his finances, his physical health, even his reputation. But amid the unimaginable losses and heartbreak, he learned how to praise God like never before. Yes, Job could trust God in his grief and pain.
2. **Can God be trusted when people I love forsake me?** Job wrote, “My relatives have failed, and my close friends have forgotten me” (Job 19:14). If you’ve been abandoned, rejected or forsaken by ones you’ve loved the most, be encouraged. Like Job, you must see that there is One who will never leave or forsake you. Yes, Job could trust God when his friends and family weren’t there for him.
3. **Can God be trusted when I walk through extreme darkness?** Job was in absolute darkness. Are you there right now? Job thought God owed him some answers, but God never answered his questions. Can you trust God when He gives you no explanations and no light? God eventually did remind Job of His sovereignty, sufficiency and sympathy. Job responded with praise, and God restored Job double. Yes, Job could trust God in the midst of darkness.

I love what Job said, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him” (Job 13:15). I hope and pray that you can say the same thing. And through these pages, I want to remind and keep reminding you that God can be trusted in your overwhelming times.

This is especially important to take to heart because we are living in the last days. Jesus is coming back one day soon. Luke 18:8 asks, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” What a telling question! It doesn’t take much faith to sit around and moan and groan in a busted nest. Faith demands the use of our wings. I don’t know about you, but I’d rather fail at trying to fly than sit in the nest, waiting to die.

We need to live as if we believe that Jesus Christ could come at any minute. We need to live as if we have overcome, and to do this, we must learn how to endure through the hard times.

This 40-day devotional is based on what I call 5 Steps to Overcoming through Overwhelming Times. These steps are anchored in the words of Jesus and the conversation He shared with His disciples while they were at Herod’s temple (see Matthew 24). Jesus’ followers asked Him for signs of the last days, and instead of providing them with the answers they wanted, His message was meant to prepare His followers spiritually, emotionally and mentally for what was to come.

These 5 Steps will help you be courageous and full of hope as you endure the race of faith and ensuing chaos of every day that lies before you.

- Step #1 Look Within
- Step #2 Look to Jesus
- Step #3 Look Ahead
- Step #4 Look Out
- Step #5 Look Up

As you work through these steps, I encourage you to keep a journal nearby to record your thoughts and responses to the prompts.

You may feel like your nest is busted, like you're tumbling and falling and absolutely overwhelmed, but know that because you have a Father in heaven who can fly faster than you can fall, you are overcoming!



LOOK WITHIN

Global health crises. Political turmoil. Social divisions. Environmental calamities. Wars, and more wars. We live in days like none before. The signs of Jesus' return are everywhere you look. It's both exciting and terrifying.

When the disciples peppered Jesus with questions about the end times, though Jesus did offer some idea of what the end would look like, His first response for His disciples then and for us today was to “take heed” or “look within” (see Matthew 24:4).

Prophecies are not intended for our speculation; they are for our motivation. Instead of being concerned about the signs of the times, Jesus wants us to take spiritual inventory . . . to check ourselves, first and foremost. His return is motivation for us to get on our knees, to get our families right, to watch our temptations, to determine if we're truly serving God or settling for a lukewarm faith. My prayer is for the devotionals in the first part of this book to help show you how.

Watch Your Words

Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit.

Proverbs 18:21

Jesus gave us great advice found in Mark 13:33: “Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.” Take note of the word *watch*. In the next few days, I’ll share with you five aspects of your life that you need to *W.A.T.C.H.* in order to overcome:

- W — your Words
- A — your Attitude
- T — your Temptations
- C — your Character
- H — your Household

What is your overall outlook on life? Are you an optimist or a pessimist? Do you tend to see silver linings, or do you

mostly see gray skies and rain? Think about this: God spoke the world into creation, then He created man in His image . . . and gave him the power to speak! What does that mean for you and me? God says in Isaiah 57:19 that He creates the fruit of our lips. The words we say affect our world.

Words change the atmosphere of your life. You can speak life or you can speak death. You can speak depression or you can speak joy. You can speak hopelessness or you can speak faith. It's up to you! I want to give three sources for your words so you can watch with better diligence what comes out of your mouth.

1. Watch the words that come your way from the devil.

When Jesus predicted His death and resurrection as recorded in Matthew 16, Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked Him. Jesus' response? "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Matthew 16:23 KJV). Peter was saying things that were not of God, and God needed to check those words. If you are chained to an addiction, grieving the loss of a loved one or struggling under a pile of debt, the devil is going to tell you to quit, that you won't make it and that you'll always be a failure. Recognize the words of the enemy, and rebuke them with a word from the Lord that you are loved, saved, delivered and healed.

2. Watch the words that come from other people. Have you ever had a great day and suddenly you hear or see one negative comment from someone, and it ruins everything? This happens to the best of us—but it doesn't have to affect us so deeply. Don't turn your ears into garbage cans. Be selective with what you receive from other people. Leave the words from others that speak inferiority, defeat or negativity

alone. Don't allow that kind of language to dampen your overcoming spirit.

3. Watch your own words. We are to speak words of life. We are to speak words of faith. We are to speak words that agree with God. We are to speak what God speaks over ourselves, our families and our communities.

Never speak words that allow the enemy to think he's winning. If you're going to be an overcomer, you're going to have to watch your words. Send your words in the direction you want them to go.

— PRAY —

Lord, You know every part of me—who I am, the thoughts that live in my deepest places, every word I've ever heard and spoken . . . everything I've ever done. Teach me to discern all of these, to stop each word and each thought at the door of my mind and identify its source. Then, give me both wisdom and strength to receive only those that come from You. I want my decisions and my actions to glorify You, and to be an overcomer. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

— REFLECT —

Words are like seeds. Just as your garden produces plants based on the seeds you sow, so it is with the words you speak

over your life, your future and your family. How have you seen words give life or create death?

— **ACT** —

For the next seven days, challenge yourself to take a fast from negative words. You are not allowed to complain about the temperature outside, your nosy neighbor, the President of the United States, how your body looks, how loud the music was in church . . . you get the idea. Take note of when you consider saying something negative, or when you begin to utter a negative statement. How hard is it for you to stop the habit? When the fast is over, look over your notes. Consider being more intentional about what you say.