

THIRTY MORNINGS

The Husband's Devotional

One passage. One action with a time on it. One line for what actually happened.

A devotional that ends in a feeling has not finished. Every one of these thirty mornings closes with a single action that has a time attached to it, and a line to write down what happened when the time came. At the end of thirty days you will not have a nice memory of a season of growth. You will have thirty lines of evidence, some of them blank, and the blank ones are the useful part.

- Thirty entries, ten minutes each
- One passage a day, read out of your own Bible - the text is the source
- One action a day, with a time, specific enough to fail at
- A written line for what happened, filled in on the day
- A closing count, because thirty days of feelings is not a measurement

Print it, or work it on a screen with a notebook beside you.

Break the cycle. Build the system. Be the man.

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For personal and small-group use.

Before day one

Ten minutes, same slot, thirty days. Pick the slot now and write it at the bottom of this page. A devotional with no time attached gets done for nine days and then gets done "most days," which is a phrase that means it stopped.

How each morning works

- Read the passage first, out of your own Bible. The references here are the whole point - I am not reproducing the text, because a man who reads a paraphrase of scripture in a PDF and calls it his reading has quietly swapped the source.
- Read the short piece under it. It is deliberately short. This is not a study.
- Do the action. It has a time on it because a thing without a time does not exist.
- Write one line at night: what actually happened. Including the days you did not do it, which you write as a blank rather than an explanation.

The thing this is trying to avoid

Thirty days of reading about being a better husband, at the end of which a man feels closer to God and his wife has noticed nothing. That is not a failure of sincerity. It is what happens when the input is spiritual and there is no mechanism connecting it to anything that lands in the house. The action line is that mechanism. It is the whole reason this exists.

MY TEN MINUTES ARE AT _____

START DATE _____

DAY 1

Go first

01

Genesis 3:8-12 - read it before you read on

The first man, once it had gone wrong, hid and then explained. Every word of the explanation was accurate and none of it moved toward the problem. The modern version is not blame. It is waiting - to see if she raises it, to see if the temperature drops. Waiting is hiding with better manners.

TODAY

Today, start one conversation you have been waiting on. Name the hour now.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 2

Later is not a time

02

Proverbs 3:27-28 - read it before you read on

Do not tell your neighbour to come back tomorrow when you have it with you now. The proverb is about a debt and it reads exactly like a marriage. "Later" is a way of ending a conversation while sounding like you have agreed to have it, and she has learned what it means.

TODAY

Every time you would say "later" today, say an actual hour instead.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 3

The number

03

Luke 14:28-30 - read it before you read on

Sit down first and count, so you are not the man standing in front of something half-built. Counting means looking at a real figure while it can still be discouraging. In most houses there is one number the wife does not have, withheld not to deceive but to postpone a conversation.

TODAY

Tell her one number today, before she asks. Money, schedule or whereabouts.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 4

Ninety seconds

04

James 1:19-20 - read it before you read on

Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. It is quoted as a temperament and written as an order of operations. The damage is almost never the anger. It is the ninety seconds between the trigger and the sentence, and nothing said in there comes back out.

TODAY

Decide today, while calm, what you do in those ninety seconds. Write it down.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 5

Say the miss

05

Psalms 32:3-5 - read it before you read on

While he kept silent, his bones wore out. The silence was the cost, not the sin. An unnamed miss does not stay the same size - it accrues. A named one costs an evening. Naming it is cheaper every single time, and it never feels cheaper.

TODAY

Name one thing tonight, out loud, before it gets raised. No explanation attached.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 6

The window

06

Ecclesiastes 3:1 - read it before you read on

A time for everything. Not a season for everything, a time - which implies something scheduled rather than something felt. Most marriages do not lack affection. They lack a window that outranks work and the phone, and that has a number rather than a description.

TODAY

Set a fixed window tonight. Same time most nights. Both phones in another room.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 7

07

Rest is a command, not a reward

Mark 2:27 - read it before you read on

The Sabbath was made for man. Not earned by him. A man who rests only after everything is finished never rests, because nothing is ever finished, and the house learns to live around a father who is always partly at work.

TODAY

Name the block this week that nothing gets scheduled over. Tell her the hours.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 8

08

Answering before hearing

Proverbs 18:13 - read it before you read on

Answering before you hear is called folly and shame - a moral category, not a communication style. Men mostly interrupt because they have already located the problem and the sitting-in-it feels like waste. It is not waste. It is the part where she finds out whether she is carrying it alone.

TODAY

Today, in one conversation: do not speak until she stops, then say it back first.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 9

09

Do not be harsh

Colossians 3:19 - read it before you read on

Love your wives and do not be harsh with them. The second half is there because the first half is not sufficient on its own - a man can love his wife genuinely and still be sharp with her at 6:40 on a Thursday, and the sharpness is what she will be able to quote back in five years.

TODAY

Watch your tone once today at the moment you are most tired. Note the hour.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 10

Know the state of it

10

Proverbs 27:23 - read it before you read on

Know the state of your flocks. Not the revenue - the condition. In a house the state of things is held by whoever tracks it: when the car is due, which child is struggling this month, what the balance actually is. That tracking is invisible, exhausting, and usually hers.

TODAY

Take one domain today and own it whole, including the remembering.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 11

Leave the gift

11

Matthew 5:23-24 - read it before you read on

If you remember at the altar that someone has something against you, leave the gift and go. Not after the service. Not once you have prayed about it. The instruction interrupts the religious act - which means a man who is spiritually busy and relationally overdue has the order backwards.

TODAY

Repair one thing today before your next act of worship. Today, not this week.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 12

Living with understanding

12

1 Peter 3:7 - read it before you read on

Live with her according to knowledge. Knowledge here is specific and acquired - you have to have paid attention long enough to have some. And the passage attaches a consequence to failing at it: your prayers get hindered. That is not a small clause.

TODAY

Write down one thing about her week you would not have known without asking. Ask.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 13

Slow to anger

13

Proverbs 14:29 - read it before you read on

Slow to anger has great understanding. Hasty temper exalts folly. Note the trade being described: speed is bought with understanding. Every fast reaction is a purchase, and the price is knowing less than you did a minute ago.

TODAY

Today, when it rises: leave the room for two minutes. Actual minutes, timed.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 14

The soft answer

14

Proverbs 15:1 - read it before you read on

A soft answer turns away wrath. Grievous words stir it up. This is mechanical, not moral - it describes what a sentence does to a room. Most escalations in a marriage are one man's tone, applied twice.

TODAY

One soft answer today at the exact moment you want to be right. Note which one.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 15

Keeping an oath that costs

15

Psalms 15:4 - read it before you read on

He swears to his own hurt and does not change. That is the standard: the promise kept after it turned out to be expensive. Most promises in a marriage are broken not by betrayal but by re-pricing - it cost more than expected, so it got quietly renegotiated alone.

TODAY

Name one promise you have re-priced. Either keep it today or say out loud that you will not.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 16

Before the sun goes down

16

Ephesians 4:26 - read it before you read on

Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on it. Notice the anger is not banned - it is given a deadline. A deadline is a system. It means the argument gets an end time before it has an outcome, which is the only thing that stops it compounding overnight.

TODAY

Set the deadline tonight, out loud: nothing carries past a stated hour.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 17

Faithful in little

17

Luke 16:10 - read it before you read on

Faithful in the least, faithful in much. Marriages are not usually lost on the large things. They are lost on a hundred small ones that were each individually too minor to raise, until the total was too large to discuss.

TODAY

Do one small thing you said you would do, today, before it gets mentioned.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 18

The plank

18

Matthew 7:3-5 - read it before you read on

Take the beam out of your own eye first - and then you will see clearly to help with the speck. The passage does not say ignore the speck. It says you are not equipped to work on it yet, and that most of what you can see wrong in her is being viewed through something.

TODAY

Write the one thing you would change in yourself before raising anything with her.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 19

Where your treasure is

19

Matthew 6:21 - read it before you read on

Where your treasure is, your heart follows. That is the order, and it is the opposite of how men usually think about it. You do not feel your way into investing. You invest, and the feeling relocates. Which means an unfelt marriage is often just an unfunded one.

TODAY

Spend something today - money, an hour, or capital at work - on her. Write what.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 20

Guard the heart

20

Proverbs 4:23 - read it before you read on

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it flow the issues of life. Guarding is active and boring: what you look at, what you laugh at, who you talk to about her, what you let yourself rehearse in the car. None of that is dramatic. All of it is upstream.

TODAY

Name one input you will cut this week. Cut it today, not on Monday.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 21

Watching your own step

21

Galatians 6:1 - read it before you read on

Restore gently, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted. Even the man doing the restoring is told to keep one eye on his own footing. There is no position in scripture from which a man is safe to correct someone without watching himself.

TODAY

Ask one man this week to check on one specific thing. Name the thing, and him.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 22

Confess to one another

22

James 5:16 - read it before you read on

Confess to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. To one another - not privately to God and then considered handled. Private confession costs nothing and changes nothing, which is exactly why it is the version men prefer.

TODAY

Say one true thing to one man today. Not the tidy version of it.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 23

A small rudder

23

James 3:4-5 - read it before you read on

A great ship is turned by a very small rudder. The tongue is small and it boasts great things. Nothing else in your house has this leverage - four words at the wrong hour set the direction of the next two days, and you will not be able to steer it back by being nice later.

TODAY

Choose one sentence today you will not say. Write it here so you know it by name.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 24

What love actually does

24

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - read it before you read on

Read it as a list of behaviours, not a description of a feeling. Patient. Kind. Not easily provoked. Keeps no record of wrongs. Every item is something a man does or fails to do at a specific moment, which means every item can be scheduled, measured and missed.

TODAY

Pick the one item on that list you fail most. Attach a time to fixing it today.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 25

25

Serving is the leading

Mark 10:43-45 - read it before you read on

Whoever would be great among you must be your servant. This is said to men arguing about rank. In a marriage the equivalent argument is about who does more, and the passage does not settle it - it dissolves it. The one who leads is the one who serves, which means the scoreboard was never the point.

TODAY

Do one thing today she would normally do, without mentioning that you did it.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 26

26

Nourish and cherish

Ephesians 5:28-29 - read it before you read on

No man ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it. That is the measure: the automatic, unthinking care you already give yourself. You do not have to be reminded to eat. The instruction is to make her care that reflexive.

TODAY

Notice one thing you did for yourself today without thinking. Do its equivalent for her.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 27

27

Two are better

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 - read it before you read on

Two are better than one, because if one falls the other lifts him up. And woe to him who is alone when he falls. Note that falling is assumed. The passage is not about avoiding the fall - it is about not being isolated when it happens, which is a different problem entirely.

TODAY

Tell her one thing you are struggling with, without solving it first.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 28

Doers, not hearers

28

James 1:22-25 - read it before you read on

Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. The man who hears and does nothing is compared to a man who looks in a mirror and immediately forgets his own face. Twenty-eight mornings of reading with no action is that man, exactly.

TODAY

Look back at the last week of action lines. Do the one you skipped.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 29

Rock or sand

29

Matthew 7:24-27 - read it before you read on

Both houses got the same storm. The difference was not the weather and it was not sincerity - it was the foundation, which was laid long before the rain and could not be improved during it. What you are building now is being built for a season that has not arrived.

TODAY

Name the storm you are not ready for. Write the first thing that would prepare you.

WHAT HAPPENED

DAY 30

Finish the tower

30

Luke 14:28-30 - read it before you read on

Back where we started, on purpose. He sat down and counted, so the thing would be finished rather than abandoned at the halfway mark with everyone watching. Thirty mornings is not the tower. It is the sitting down and counting.

TODAY

Count your evidence lines. Then set the next thirty days, with a date.

WHAT HAPPENED

The count

Thirty days of feelings is not a measurement. Go back through the WHAT HAPPENED lines and count them. Blanks count as blanks - do not go back and fill them in from memory, because that converts the only honest record you have into a story.

DAYS THE ACTION WAS DONE

OUT OF 30, THAT IS

The 70% line

Twenty-one out of thirty is 70%. Above it, the ten minutes are real and you can add something. Below it, do not add anything and do not start again harder - move the slot to a time that actually exists in your day, and run the same thirty entries again. A second pass at 80% is worth more than a first pass at 45%, and there is no prize for novelty here.

The three lines worth keeping

Read back through the thirty. Find the three days where writing the line was uncomfortable. Those are the three decisions worth turning into permanent systems with a time attached.

The question, asked once

At the end of the thirty days, ask her one question: "Is there anything that got easier this month?" Then write what she says, exactly, including if it is nothing. Do not explain the devotional. Do not show her this file.

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