

Living by the Numbers God's Way



Any social media guru will tell you that when it comes to promoting yourself, it's all about the numbers. Whether Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, or Pinterest is where you interact, the higher the number the better.

And let's not kid ourselves: it's not only tweens and teens who are concerned about their followers. I know that once I post, I'm constantly checking back to see how many people are liking, loving, tweeting, or sharing it. I have even been known to let the activity, or lack thereof, on my accounts affect my attitude.

The numbers game is no new phenomenon. Oh, no. It's been around for a long time; it's just that now the results are so ... visible. Everyone can see at a glance how you're doing.

Well, you may be surprised to know that numbers are important to God too, but not in the way they are to us. He has a whole different take on numbers, one that we should pay attention to.

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- **10,000 x 10,000:** "Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand," Revelation 5:11. When you do the math on 10,000 x 10,000, that adds up to 100 million angels circling the throne of God and singing praise to Jesus. But, it doesn't stop there. It goes beyond viral to every creature in heaven and on earth and under the sea (v. 13). I can't imagine a more glorious spectacle than this one.
- **7,000:** "Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him," 1 Kings 19:18. In this verse, God is encouraging his worn-out prophet Elijah that he is not the only one left who is still serving the Lord. And so should we take courage when we feel overwhelmed and washed out in our ministries. God always leaves a remnant.
- **5000:** "Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children," Matthew 14:19-21. In this beautiful story, Jesus miraculously multiplies a little boy's

lunch to feed 5000+ hungry people. When we give him what we have to use, he'll do the same for us.

- **1000:** "Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked," Psalm 84:10. There is no better place to be than in the presence of our Lord. Life lived with Him is as rich as it gets.
- **300:** "So Gideon sent the rest of the Israelites to their tents but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others," Judges 7:8. Gideon started out with 32,000 warriors to go to battle against the camp of Midian, who were "as thick as locusts," but God told Gideon to take only 300 men, because He wanted to show it was with the Lord's might that they would be defeated, not man's. When I feel discouraged at the overwhelming odds facing me, I need only remember that if God is on my side, the odds don't matter.
- **40:** "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, he was hungry," Matthew 4:1-2. The number 40 is used often in the Bible, many times having to do with times of trials. One of the things that I glean from these circumstances is that God is always faithful and gives strength and wisdom to the ones going through difficulties.
- **10:** In Exodus 20:1-17 God first gives the 10 Commandments to the Israelites to follow. so that they will remain in good standing with the Lord. Today the law has been superseded by grace with Jesus' death on the cross, but the 10 Commandments still remain guidelines for us to live by.
- **3:** "He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again," Mark 8:31. What

must have been happening spiritually during those three days is awesome to contemplate, for Acts 2:24 tells us that God raised Jesus from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death, because it was “impossible for death to keep its hold on Him.” What is also incredible is that God makes that same Resurrection power available for us in ministry, as Ephesians 1:18-21 tells us! These three days make **all** the difference between Christianity and any other religion.

- **1:** “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time,” 1 Timothy 2:5-6. Our eternity is determined by only One, Jesus, and what we believe about Him. Have you given your life to Him? It’s as simple as confessing your sin, accepting that Jesus took the penalty for your sin, and asking Him to take control of your life. He’ll change your life in ways you never dreamed possible.

God Trumps the Numbers

My takeaway from our brief biblical tour through some important numbers in the Bible is that God is not limited by numbers. From viral proportions down to one, God knows each need and will work in any and every situation that we ask Him to. When we are apt to obsess about our social media standing, let’s do the following:

Instead of counting followers, let’s follow.

Instead of tweeting, let’s sing his praises

Instead of updating your wall, let’s break some down in the name of Jesus.

Action Steps

1. Discouraged by a small number of people signed up for

your event or Bible study? Go with it. Someone needs to hear your message, and God will multiply it to others.

2. Overwhelmed by a larger-than-expected turnout? Ask God to bless your 5 loaves and 2 fish.
3. Remember, though, that the most important number is One, Jesus, and your relationship to Him. If you've made a decision to follow Him today, leave us a comment or contact us and let us know. We are praying for you!

Jane