

# INSPIRATION

*Blessed to Be a Blessing*

JUNE 2019



## Blessed BEYOND STRESS

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AND THE FEASTS

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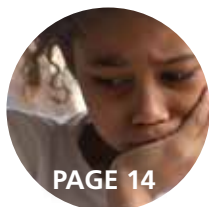
UNSPEAKABLE TRAGEDY,  
UNIMAGINABLE GRACE

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OUR THEME  
THIS MONTH IS

# Blessed BEYOND STRESS

David Cerullo's article on **page 3** explains why this season of your life can be a time of BLESSING, not STRESSING. And on **page 28** you'll see how to receive Robert Morris' powerful book, ***Beyond Blessed***, as our THANK YOU GIFT in appreciation for your partnership.



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## 10 Feelings, Favor, and the Feasts

*by Mike Evans*

As you experience God's favor during the Feast of Pentecost this month, He will change how you see Him and how you see yourself.

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*by Robert Morris*

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*by Ben Cerullo*

In a world facing uncertain times, it's more important than ever for God's people to abide in His presence.

*“Let us now fear the LORD  
our God, who gives rain in its season,  
both the autumn rain and the spring  
rain, who keeps for us the appointed  
weeks of the harvest.”*

– JEREMIAH 5:24 NASB



## A Season of *Blessing.* Not **STRESSING!**



**STRENGTHEN**  
*your walk*  
with David Cerullo

Although God can give you miraculous harvests at any time He wants, the Bible also describes “*appointed weeks*” and “*fruitful seasons*” when your harvests can be especially bountiful (Acts 14:17 NASB). And thankfully, you don’t have to wait for your nation’s economy to improve before you receive this kind of personal breakthrough from God.

**When you believe God’s promises  
and obey His Word, today can be the  
day your finances begin to change  
from STRESSED to BLESSED!**

However, perhaps you've been experiencing a time of testing, causing you to question God's faithfulness. If so, you certainly aren't alone. Even many of the Bible's greatest heroes faced times of hardship or famine.

Yet the Scriptures provide this incredible word of encouragement that God wants you to hear today: *"In the days of famine they will have abundance"* (Psalm 37:19 NASB).

You see, no matter what may be going on in the world around you, the Bible gives this amazing promise to those who obey Him:

*The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land **in its season** and to **bless ALL the work of your hand*** (Deuteronomy 28:12 NASB).

That's great news, isn't it? When you commit yourself to obeying the principles in God's Word, you can experience a *season of miracles*, when He blesses ALL the work of your hands!

Let me share three powerful Scriptural principles for experiencing financial peace and unlocking a new season of blessings and miracles from God...

**1. You can't buy a blessing, but you CAN sow your way out of a problem.**

In Genesis 26, Isaac faced "a *famine in the land*" (v. 1). This truly was a frightening problem, so what did he do? Instead of becoming miserly and hoarding his resources, he determined to *sow more seeds!*

*Isaac **sowed** in that land and **reaped** in the same year a **hundredfold**. And the **LORD blessed him**, and the man became **rich**, and continued to grow **richer** until he became very **wealthy**; for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the **Philistines envied him*** (vs. 12-14 NASB).

Inspiration Partner, let me encourage you today: God has seen the faithful seeds you've sown of your time, talents, and treasures. He knows the countless lives you've impacted around the world through your partnership with this ministry. And as He did for Isaac, He wants to bless *you* with a miraculous harvest of blessings...to be the envy of those around you!

Whether you need a financial breakthrough, a healing in your body, greater peace of mind, or the restoration of your relationship with a loved one, you can trust God by *sowing SEEDS to meet your NEEDS!*

**2. The sooner you plant your seeds, the sooner you'll receive your harvest.**

Just as a farmer must be patient, the Bible teaches that we receive the fulfillment of God's promises through "*faith and patience*" (Hebrews 6:12). Every kind of seed in nature has a different germination period. Radish seeds germinate in a week or less, lima bean seeds sprout in a week or two, but avocado seeds often don't germinate for six weeks.



In the same way, the financial seeds you sow into God's Kingdom may not always sprout as quickly as you would like. That's why the Bible encourages us, "*In due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart*" (Galatians 6:9).

Over the years, Inspiration Ministries has received testimonies from *thousands* of partners who've received a supernatural season of blessings after planting their

financial seeds to touch lives for Christ. Sometimes their harvest was nearly instantaneous, but at other times they had to wait for weeks, months, or even years.

One thing is clear, however: *Your seeds can't start to germinate until you've put them in the ground!* The seeds you plant in faith TODAY will prepare the way for your FUTURE harvest of God's special blessings.

### **3. God has placed special seasons on His calendar when He wants to bless His people in extraordinary ways.**

Although God is *always* pleased when we act in faith to sow financial seeds into His Kingdom, the Bible says there are "*appointed times*" (Numbers 28:2) when He wants us to bring Him *special* offerings, so He can bless us with *extraordinary* miracles.

Along with the Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles, Exodus 23 designates the Feast of Pentecost as one of three appointed times that are special to God. Pentecost takes place this month, so I encourage you to prepare your heart and your special offering today to honor the Lord during this time of extraordinary breakthroughs.

Friend, I'm convinced God has ordained a season of miracles for you – taking you from STRESS to REST! It's His will that you walk in

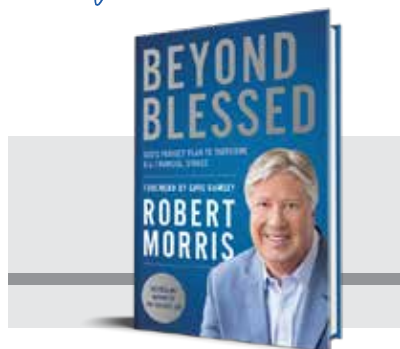


health...receive His abundance... and recover everything the devil has stolen from you. His Word clearly teaches that you WILL experience His miraculous provision when you obey Him, understand His seasons of blessing, and step out in faith to sow your special seeds into His Kingdom.

Whatever turnaround you need in your life – healing, deliverance, protection, a financial breakthrough, or a restored relationship – your special season of miracles can start with a step of faith TODAY!

God bless you,

*David*



P.S. Robert Morris, pastor of Gateway Church, has written a life-changing new book called ***Beyond Blessed***. If you're dealing with financial stress today, this wonderful **THANK YOU GIFT** will give you the insights you need for a life of financial peace and supernatural abundance (see **page 28**).

**STRENGTHEN**  
*your walk*  
with David Cerullo

**My timely  
video series this  
month explains  
how to eliminate  
FEAR – one of the  
biggest causes of  
financial stress!**

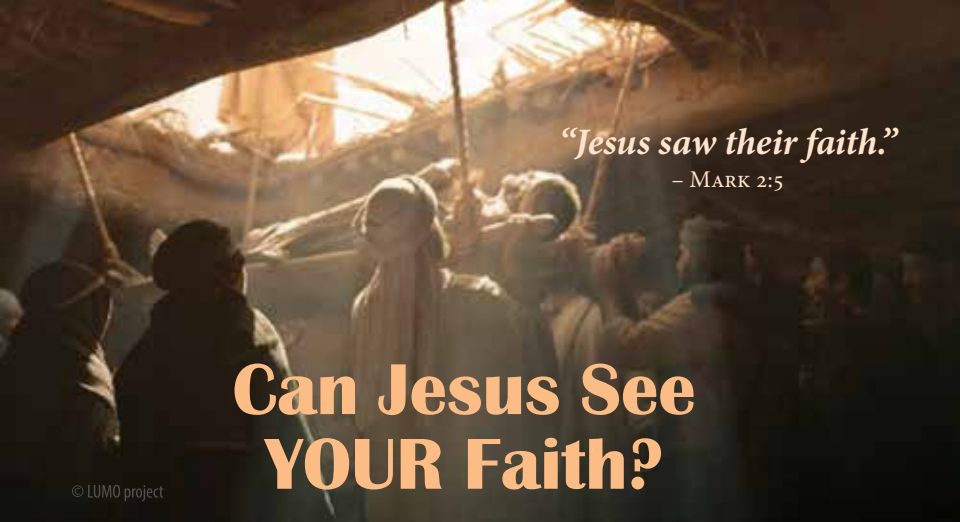
**Starting  
JUNE 17!**



**YouTube**



For information on  
receiving these videos via email  
or browsing the archives, visit  
**[StrengthenYourWalk.org](http://StrengthenYourWalk.org)**



*“Jesus saw their faith.”*

– MARK 2:5

# Can Jesus See YOUR Faith?

© LUMO project

Many people have a serious misconception about the nature of true faith. They assume it's just an unseen, mystical force that no one can see or evaluate.

But the Bible says otherwise...

One day a paralyzed man was carried to Jesus by four loyal friends. Not only did these friends carry the man to the house where the Lord was teaching, but they also had to cut a hole in the roof because of the crowd blocking the doorway.

Jesus was clearly impressed by this display of sacrificial love! Mark 2:5 says He “*saw their faith.*”

In the same way, God sees *your* faith today. Every prayer...every act of kindness...every sacrificial Seed for Souls – nothing goes unnoticed.

**Through your monthly financial seeds into God's Kingdom, you are bringing lost people to the feet of Jesus!**

As a monthly Inspiration Partner, you have recognized the truth of Proverbs 11:30 that “*he who wins souls is wise.*” You realize that just as a soul is precious to Jesus, it should also be precious to *us* as His followers. By partnering with Inspiration Ministries on a monthly basis, you and other partners are helping to bring over 100,000 people every month to Jesus as their Lord and Savior!

**Let Jesus see *your* faith today!**

By calling one of the numbers below, you can *automatically* be a soul-winner and help to fulfill the Great Commission every month.

***US / Canada:***

**+1 877-578-7979**

***UK / International:***

**+44 (0) 80 0043 8420**

***Australia:***

**1800 057 938**

# Christian Programming... *with YOU in Mind!*

Here are a few of the powerful,  
family-friendly programs airing this month  
on Inspiration TV.



## This Month's Featured Documentary

### *Walking with C.S. Lewis*

Join Professor Tony Ash for an insightful walk through  
the personal life, influential writings, and powerful  
spiritual impact of famous Christian author C.S. Lewis.

Thursdays at 10 p.m. US Eastern, 22:00 UK

For more information on these and other great programs,  
visit [ini.tv/schedule](http://ini.tv/schedule).



## Reel Inspiration Movies



Saturday, June 22 at 9 p.m.  
US Eastern, 21:00 UK, &  
Sunday, June 23 at 5:30 p.m.  
US Eastern, 17:30 UK

### *Witness Trilogy – God With Us*

Saturday, June 29 at 9 p.m.  
US Eastern, 21:00 UK, &  
Sunday, June 30 at 5:30 p.m.  
US Eastern, 17:30 UK

## Featured Programmers



*Southcrest Live  
with Dr. David Wilson*  
Sundays at 10:30 a.m.  
US Eastern, 10:30 UK



*Embracing New  
Life with Isik Abila*  
Visit [ini.tv](http://ini.tv) for airtimes.



Visit [ini.tv](http://ini.tv) for airtimes.

**Don't Miss Out!** You can watch Inspiration TV 24/7 on Roku,  
Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Chromecast, via livestream  
at [ini.tv/livestream](http://ini.tv/livestream), or on the Inspiration TV mobile app.



# FEELINGS, FAVOR, *and the* FEASTS

by Mike Evans

Many people desire to live in the favor of God, yet they feel unworthy. The Lord's blessings in their life are short circuited by their low self-esteem – by not seeing themselves as their Heavenly Father sees them.

God designed each of the major Biblical feasts – Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles – to address this tendency to have a faulty understanding of Him and of ourselves. Through the Feast of Passover, He provided His people with safety from the judgment He brought upon the Egyptians, and Passover ultimately led to their deliverance from slavery. However, the Lord wasn't done yet in His plan to restore the Israelites to a place of favor and blessing.

When you stop to realize that God's people had been slaves in Egypt for over 400 years, you can understand how their mind-set would need to be radically

adjusted. As the story unfolded, it became clear that it would take a while for their *feelings* to line up with the *facts* of what God had done for them.

Later, the Feast of Pentecost occurred after the newly delivered Israelites had crossed the Red Sea and were camped at the base of Mount Sinai. While there, God began to outline the special relationship He had called them to have with Him. He promised that by obeying His voice and keeping His covenant, they would be “*a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine*” (Exodus 19:5).

## A NEW IDENTITY

After hundreds of years of oppression, it must have been difficult to grasp that the Lord was giving them a whole new identity and purpose. Despite their new-found freedom, they no doubt still *felt* like slaves at times.

Yet God now declared that they would be *“a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”* (Exodus 19:6). They were called to be *kings and priests* – just as *we* are meant to be today (Revelation 1:6).

Do you see the difference God’s favor can make in your life? You’re no longer a slave...a victim...or an outcast. The Lord has set you FREE and called you to be part of His *“holy nation.”*

Referring to the scene at Mount Sinai, Peter wrote that believers are *“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”* (1 Peter 2:9).

So, when you look at your life today, make sure you are seeing yourself through God’s eyes of love. Rejoice in your new identity, and take steps of faith to walk in His supernatural favor.

## A LIFE OF VICTORY

Although your Heavenly Father wants you to walk in daily victory, that doesn’t mean you’ll never face problems or enemies. In fact, one of His covenant promises associated with Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles is this: *“I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries”* (Exodus 23:22). Yes, you will have enemies and adversaries, but

when you’re walking in a covenant relationship with the Lord, He offers to fight your battles (Exodus 14:14).

Deuteronomy 28:7 promises that if you are obedient to God, you can expect to prevail against any enemies you face: *“They will come at you from one direction and flee from you in seven.”*

When you live in God’s favor, you’ll be able to see the enemy’s attacks from a whole new perspective – as opportunities for a heavenly promotion. Not only will your adversaries be defeated, but they will flee from you in *seven directions!*

Friend, as you celebrate the Feast of Pentecost this month, I pray that you will allow God to transform you by *“the renewing of your mind”* (Romans 12:2). When your feelings begin to match the truth of His Word, overwhelming victory will be yours.



**Mike Evans** is a best-selling author, Middle East analyst, and worldwide Christian ambassador.

# Reaching Even Closed Nations for Christ



Through your  
financial Seeds  
for Souls, God is  
transforming lives  
in over 200 nations  
as they receive the  
Good News of  
the Gospel!

Inspiration Partner, perhaps you've never thought of yourself as a missionary – but *you are!* No matter where you live, your financial seeds are sending the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ around the world through television, the Internet, and social media.

Many of the testimonies we receive are from nations where it's illegal to preach about Christ through conventional means:

## **Christian programming in a Muslim nation...**

"I am writing to send you a financial seed toward your television ministry. It is a great blessing to watch Christian programming here in this Muslim country. I am praying for many more people to come to the Lord Jesus Christ through your ministry."

– Robert, Oman

**Material for spiritual growth...** "I have recently been born again, and it seems like a miracle to receive your broadcasts since Christian material isn't allowed at all here in Saudi Arabia. I need material for my spiritual growth, and God wants me to have this!"

– Richard, Saudi Arabia



**Born again...** “Your teachings on Inspiration TV have touched my wife and me. We became born-again Christians through your teaching. Thank you so much. May God continue to increase your impact!”

— E.N., Libya

We also hear regularly from programmers and cable operators who are grateful for their partnership with Inspiration Ministries:



**Expanding God’s Kingdom...** “We’ve discovered that by partnering with Inspiration Ministries to fulfill the Great Commission, we can more effectively expand God’s Kingdom. From Europe to countries in southern Africa, people email and call us to share how God has touched their lives.”

— Joe, United Kingdom



**Lifting up the name of the Lord...** “It has been an awesome privilege to share the Gospel through Inspiration TV. God is doing wonderful things, and we receive calls from viewers in Australia, Africa, Europe, and many other places. It’s a great thing when people of different nations join together to lift up the name of the Lord, and I am blessed to be a part of it.”

— Chioma, United Kingdom



**Filling the earth with His glory...** “God is mightily using Christian television to reach out to souls all over the world. Inspiration Ministries is being used to help fulfill the Great Commission and fill the earth with His glory!”

— Godfrey, Nigeria

**Thank you, Inspiration Partners! This is *your* soul-winning and discipleship ministry, and the fruit will abound to your account in Heaven (Philippians 4:17).**

You can watch Inspiration TV’s 24/7 Christian programming on Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, Chromecast, via livestream at [ini.tv/livestream](https://ini.tv/livestream), and on the Inspiration TV mobile app.





# NEED A *Breakthrough* FOR YOUR FAMILY?



by John D. Garr, Ph.D.

When God initiated a covenant with Abram (Abraham), it's stunning that it included blessings for our families:

*I will make you a great nation;  
I will bless you  
And make your name great;  
And you shall be a blessing...  
And in you all the families  
of the earth shall be blessed  
(Genesis 12:2-3).*

If your family needs some kind of breakthrough today, this covenant promise is great news. It

means that no matter what difficult circumstances you may be facing, God loves you and stands ready to come to your aid.

But don't miss the first step in your turnaround: gaining a correct understanding of what your Heavenly Father is like. Far too many people think of Him as a harsh, bitter, old man who sits on a throne in a land far, far away just waiting for an opportunity to judge some poor soul who has violated one of His commandments.

Yet God is revealed in the

Bible as just the opposite – as a God of love, mercy, and kindness. Your Heavenly Father is the God of blessing, and the apostle Paul wrote that He already “*has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:3).

God’s nature is declared throughout the Bible. King David said, “*The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works*” (Psalm 145:9). John declared that “*God is love*,” and he maintained that without love it is impossible to know God (1 John 4:8).

What a great God He is!

## FROM CURSES TO BLESSINGS

Despite these glowing descriptions of God’s love for us as His children, many believers still feel like they’re struggling to get out from under some kind of curse. Perhaps their family is dealing with financial lack, a health problem, or broken relationships, and they find themselves blaming God.

How could this be?

While God’s Word constantly speaks of His desire to bring blessing into every life and every family, it also is very candid in warning against the tragic consequences of sin. But since the Lord is the God of blessing, He was not content to leave humanity in sin. Rather than dwelling on our *original sin*, God

brought about the cross of Jesus in order to return us to His *own* plan for humanity: *original blessing*.

Instead of seeking to condemn us for our sins, God “*gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*” (John 3:16). To ensure the fulfillment of His original plan to bless humankind, God was manifested in the flesh in the person of His Son (John 1:14) to offer Himself as an atonement for humanity’s sins (Ephesians 1:7).

**Now all who come to faith in Jesus are delivered from the curse of sin, able to fully enter into their Heavenly Father’s blessing.**

My friend, you can *depend upon* God’s desire to bless you, for that is a part of His very nature as your loving Heavenly Father. Call upon the God of blessing today, and ask Him to bless you and your family with the breakthrough you need!



**Dr. John D. Garr** is the founder and president of the Hebraic Christian Global Community and the author of several books, including *Blessings for Family and Friends*.



# *The 10 Financial* **COMMANDMENTS**

Robert Morris, pastor of Gateway Church, shares 10 powerful Biblical principles for how to experience God's provision and financial peace in every situation.

**1**

**Put God first.**

**2**

**Don't worship material things.**

**3**

**Don't use God's name selfishly.**

**4**

**Be a good steward.**

**5**

**Teach and be a good example to your children about money and possessions.**

**6**

**Live on a budget.**

**7**

**Live below your means.**

**8**

**Don't buy now and pay later.**

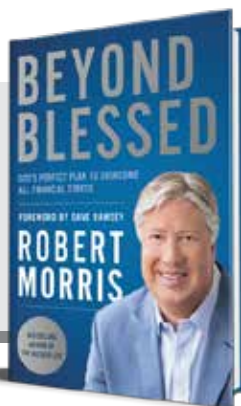
**9**

**Be a good witness.**

**10**

**Be content with what you have.**

For life-changing advice from Robert Morris on experiencing financial peace and God's abundance, turn to [page 28](#) to see how you can receive his book, *Beyond Blessed*, as our **THANK YOU GIFT** this month.



Sea travel was common in Bible times, but dangers were well known. The story of Paul's sea journey to Rome (Acts 27) describes perils caused by storms, wind, and unseen rocks. As expressed by Roman poet Ovid, "The man who has experienced shipwreck shudders even at a calm sea."

A shipwreck was a vivid way for Paul to present the perils threatening believers. In the same way sailors had to stay alert, believers need to be aware of the dangers threatening our spiritual lives. These attacks could come in many forms, through misleading messages, rumors, divisions, and by drifting into treacherous theological waters.

Paul urged Timothy to take this matter seriously, to "*fight the good fight*." This means being aware that we are in a spiritual battle. We need to be strong in our relationship with God, armed with the power and discernment of His Spirit, always sensitive to threats, and ready to resist false ideas.

We also need to *keep the faith*, being prepared to be assaulted by deceiving doctrines and ideas that may sound innocent but which can cause deadly consequences like unseen rocks that can cause a shipwreck.

We also need to maintain a "*good conscience*." This requires that we are rooted and grounded in God's Word with a strong, personal relationship with Him and that we are sensitive to His Spirit and committed to walk with Him.

These are important warnings to avoid shipwrecks and keep us safe.

*Fight the good fight,  
keeping faith and a  
good conscience, which  
some have rejected and  
suffered shipwreck in  
regard to their faith.*

1 Timothy 1:18-19 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be alert and prepared for dangers. I desire to be more sensitive to Your Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Prayer That Changes Things

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 TIMOTHY 2

*I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and dissension.*

1 Timothy 2:8 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, give me a burden for prayer. I surrender my life to You. Pour out Your Spirit and bring revival. I worship You! In Jesus' name. Amen.

Paul taught Timothy basic principles that should be foundations of our prayer lives. These principles can help us unleash the power of prayer, solve more problems, and impact more lives.

Paul knew that prayer is less effective when we are dominated by our own thoughts and interests. We are to lay aside prejudices, personal interests, and emotions and pray for *everyone*, not just friends or those with whom we agree.

In our prayers, we are to focus on God with hearts filled with praise and worship. Overwhelmed by His holiness, forgiveness, and grace, we are to seek His Kingdom, obey His Word, and fulfill His call on our lives.

Paul taught that prayer unites believers. It refocuses our energies away from ourselves and onto God. Prayer provides a forum for solving relationship problems, for healing wounds between husbands and wives, parents and children, enemies and rivals.

Just imagine what would happen if all believers applied the principles Paul taught Timothy. If we prayed *constantly*, not just in church but in every place. If we prayed out of hearts surrendered to God, with a spirit of worship, with clean hands and pure hearts. If we prayed out of lives completely surrendered to Jesus as Lord. If we prayed laying aside anger, bitterness, or divisions. If, instead of worrying, debating, or criticizing, we prayed more often.

Today, commit yourself to this kind of prayer everywhere you go.



First on the list of qualifications for being a deacon in the early church was that candidates had to be “*reverent*.” The Greek word includes a sense of reverence but also the importance of being *serious*. This was a qualification for wives as well.

Paul was not saying that Christians needed to be gloomy or could not laugh. But they couldn't have a casual attitude. They could not be frivolous about the challenges of life or be guilty of kidding around or joking about important subjects.

In all ways, they needed to be *serious* about their faith, sensitive to the needs of others, and serious about the times in which they lived. They had to be serious about their relationship with God, serious about making Jesus the Lord of their lives, and serious about their commitment to know and obey His Word.

This seriousness would help make them trustworthy, responsible, and ready for leadership.

These principles apply to all Christians. Paul used the same word when he said that we were to think about things that are “*noble*” (Philippians 4:8). We are to be careful how we live, seeking to make the most of our time (Ephesians 5:15-17).

Today, make sure that you are thinking seriously about the issues of life and the things of God. Ask God to fill your heart with joy but also to keep you serious about your faith and needs in the world.

*Likewise deacons must be reverent...Likewise their wives must be reverent.*

1 Timothy 3:8, 11 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be serious about Your Word and my relationship with You. Give me a burden for souls. Help me to be faithful. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Tested

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 TIMOTHY 3

*These men must also  
first be tested.*

1 Timothy 3:10 NASB

A person might be considered for leadership in the early church for many reasons: Reputation. Name recognition. Popularity. Family connections. But regardless of any other factor, Paul established this principle: All leaders were to be *tested*.

This was true regardless of their previous backgrounds. A person might have a high profile position such as a politician, athlete, business owner, educator, or celebrity. But, regardless of their background or rank in the world, they all needed to be tested from a *spiritual* perspective.

Paul knew from experience the dangers that could result from being in prominence. As leaders, they would be under greater scrutiny. They would face a variety of spiritual attacks and need to make sensitive decisions.

Leaders need to be *prepared* for intensified attention, criticism, questions, and even rejection. Many put in these positions might fail or fall short.

The Bible reminds us that testing is an important feature of our relationship with God. He continually works to *refine* us to eliminate *impurities*, teach us, and help us mature as believers so we can fulfill our potential. This testing is central to our preparation that we might serve Him most effectively and be ready for every challenge.

In your life, remember to cooperate with God and be sensitive to the work of His Spirit. Don't be surprised if you find yourself being tested and refined. Ask God for discernment in all your decisions.

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for wanting to teach me and help me mature. Thank You for refining me. I will cooperate with You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# The Pillar of the Truth

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 TIMOTHY 3

WEDNESDAY

June

5

Much of Paul's letters to Timothy deal with life in the church. It is important to understand that the church is *not* a building or a social organization. It is a representation of "*the living God.*"

This group of believers has a specific *purpose* and a role to play in the world: It is to be "*the pillar and support of the truth.*"

To impact the world, the church has to have an unwavering commitment to truth. This is not based on personal opinions or interests. It is truth that is defined in the person of Jesus, who is "*the way, and the truth, and the life*" (John 14:6). Without that commitment to Him, the church has no purpose or meaning.

Many people have wavered in this commitment to truth. Instead of being "*the pillar and support of the truth,*" they have become agents of compromise, more concerned with their personal desires or pleasing people rather than God.

Many reject the idea that there is just one way. In fact, some actually believe that there are many truths and many ways. But this is not what the Bible teaches.

Today, search your heart and mind. Make sure that you are free of compromise. Fill your life with God's Word. Believe all of it, and put it into action. Make Jesus your Lord. Renew your commitment to serve Him. And be prepared to take a stand for truth.

*I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.*

1 Timothy 3:15 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I declare my commitment to You. Help me to stand for truth in everything I do. Keep me from compromise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Deceived

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 TIMOTHY 4

*Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.*

1 Timothy 4:1 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, I believe Your Word is true. Help me to be alert to deception. Give me spiritual sensitivity. Keep me from compromise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Holy Spirit gave Paul an important message. So important that He said it “*expressly*.” What was so important? That “*in later times some will fall away from the faith*” (NASB). Once believers, they will *drift away*. How? By “*devoting themselves to deceitful spirits*.”

Paul used a Greek word that implies being misled by *imposters*, people who *seem* genuine and present ideas that *sound* logical and beneficial by people who may disguise false information with attractive descriptions.

Paul described how people will depart “*through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared*” (v. 2). They have rejected Biblical principles and even mock those who dare to believe the Bible and follow Jesus. They encourage us to wander from the truth, to believe, in fact, that there is no truth.

This deception is widespread in the world. Even *believers* can be deceived into replacing the truth with seductive lies. Yet at their root, these will be doctrines of demons, false ideas with *spiritual* origins.

This kind of deception is all around us. We hear it on the news, TV programs, films, and social media. It is spread by politicians and educators, and even the conversations at work or in our neighborhoods.

Be on guard against deception, and remember it might be presented in clever ways. Make sure you know what you believe, and stay sensitive to the leading of the Spirit. Stand firmly rooted in the Bible. It is the truth!

# Spiritual Exercise

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 TIMOTHY 4

FRIDAY

June

7

When Paul encouraged Timothy to “exercise” himself toward godliness, he used the root of the English words “gymnasium” and “gymnastics.” This word was familiar to Timothy. Every important city in the Roman world had at least one gymnasium. These were centers of physical training as well as discussions, learning, and the arts.

Paul used this reference to help Timothy think about how our bodies develop through diet and exercise. To grow properly, our minds, muscles, and bones need to be used properly and often.

The same principles are true in our spiritual lives. We constantly need to grow and develop spiritually. As Christians, we are born again when we accept Jesus as Savior. So as new believers, we are like babies. We need to grow and keep growing.

All believers must remember that it is essential that we mature and become disciplined about our faith. In the same way that athletes exercise to get in shape, we must *exercise* ourselves spiritually. This means studying the Bible, applying Biblical principles, praying, sharing the Gospel, and avoiding the places, people, and things that can weaken our faith and keep us from spiritual growth.

No matter how long you have been a Christian, make it a priority to *grow* in your faith. Don't be content with the mediocre but seek to become more like Christ. As you seek to draw closer to God, exercise yourself toward godliness, and stand boldly for Biblical principles.

*Exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.*

1 Timothy 4:7-8 NKJV

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to grow in my faith. I seek Your truth. Keep me from compromise. My desire is to live for You. In Jesus' name. Amen.



# Rekindle the Gift

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 1

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

2 Timothy 1:6 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to rekindle the flame within me. Give me a greater intensity to serve You. Use me to impact lives for Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Timothy was special to Paul. He knew that Timothy had received a strong spiritual foundation from his grandmother and mother. Paul himself had laid hands on Timothy. He had been empowered by the Holy Spirit, anointed, and called by God.

Yet Paul felt *compelled* to *remind* Timothy about a need to “*fan into flame the gift of God.*” Paul used a Greek word that suggests not running away but returning *into* the fire.

This suggests that a flame once burned brighter in Timothy's life but had grown dim. Perhaps Timothy had allowed himself to become spiritually weak. Perhaps he had become afraid, timid, or overwhelmed. The answer? To *rekindle* the gift he had received. But how?

First, he needed to dedicate himself more to God's Word and spend more time listening to sound teaching. Then, Timothy needed to be more *active* on behalf of the Gospel and not to “*be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner*” (v. 8)

He needed to “*share in suffering for the Gospel by the power of God,*” to draw on the strength of the Holy Spirit, to deepen his prayer life, and to act more boldly in faith.

Ask God to help you rekindle the flame within *you*, for a greater dedication to His Word, and a more vibrant prayer life. Be filled with the Spirit and face life unafraid, knowing that God has equipped and called you.

# The Fire of Revival

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 CHRONICLES 7

SUNDAY

June

9

Peter Cartwright heard about the camp meeting taking place in Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1801. Later, he attended himself. There, his life was transformed.

In his autobiography, he described the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit. During those meetings, “the mighty power of God was displayed in a very extraordinary manner.” It seemed clear that the Spirit was in control: “Seemingly unexpected” things regularly took place.

Camp meetings went on for weeks, lasting night and day. People from all denominations gathered, hungry for God. “It was not unusual” for up to seven preachers (representing many churches) to address the crowds at the same time from different stands that had been built.

Thousands gave their lives to Jesus and “hundreds fell prostrate under the mighty power of God.” This power was so great that people from miles around could hear the loud shouts. Today, we serve the *same* God who brought these revivals to the frontier.

On this Pentecost Sunday, make a commitment to approach God with this same spirit. Seek to be filled with the Spirit. Don't allow doubt or the world to keep you from experiencing the fire of the Spirit. Separate yourself from daily routine. Dedicate yourself to seek Him. Worship Him. Don't limit Him. Believe that He can do *anything*!

*When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven...The priests could not enter into the house of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house.*

2 Chronicles 7:1-2 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, pour Your Spirit on me in a fresh way. Open my eyes to see new truths. I worship and praise You! In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Confidence and Boldness

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 1

*God gave us a spirit  
not of fear but of  
power and love and  
self-control.*

2 Timothy 1:7 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, I believe that Your Word is true. Free me from doubt. Give me the boldness to step out in confidence. In Jesus' name. Amen.

It has been described as the “perfect recipe for underachievement”: the combination of “anxiety and self-doubt.” A noted psychologist reached that conclusion based on years of experience. He found that some people approach life with “self-defeating” attitudes. They simply *expect* to fail.

As another noted psychologist observed, doubt “leads to negative thoughts” that “interfere with your ability to perform.” It also increases stress and makes it difficult for our bodies to function effectively.

In the spiritual realm, doubt is a powerful weapon that cripples many believers. This was the nature of the first spiritual attack, when the serpent sowed doubt in the mind of Eve about God's word (Genesis 3:1).

Paul made clear to Timothy that it was critical not to give in to doubt or fear. If we are crippled by doubt, we will end up timid, afraid, and reluctant to act. Our actions will be less effective.

Paul suggested that we can defeat doubt by remembering and applying the truths we have learned from God's Word. For Timothy, this meant fanning into a flame the spiritual gifts he had been given.

For us, this means putting our spiritual gifts into action. Doing nothing creates an environment that fosters doubt. Instead, we should look for opportunities to *exercise* our faith, be ready to testify, minister to others, believe, pray, and act.

Today, confess God's Word. Believe Him. Be ready to step out boldly in faith.

# Your Calling and Purpose

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 1

TUESDAY

June

11

Paul made it clear to Timothy that he had been saved, not because of his own efforts, but *“according to the power of God.”* And the reason for His actions was that He *“called us...according to His own purpose and grace.”* This is such an important perspective that it should be the key fact of our lives.

Paul was explaining that each of us has been summoned by God and has been given a specific name and vocation. There is a personal objective to our lives, which has been established by God Himself. These are objectives that give our lives purpose and meaning.

Applying these principles to Timothy, Paul underscored that this should change his *attitude* toward everything. He did not have to be afraid or worried about difficult situations in which he might find himself. There was no reason to be *“ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner.”* He needed to *embrace* his calling, whatever it might be.

This is a perspective that all of us should remember *every* day. It is a statement that should give us peace when we are troubled, reassurance when we face doubts, and meaning when our lives are filled with questions.

Today, remember that God has a special calling just for you, a plan for your life. Surrender to Him. Trust Him. Serve Him.

*Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us...according to His own purpose.*

2 Timothy 1:8-9 NASB

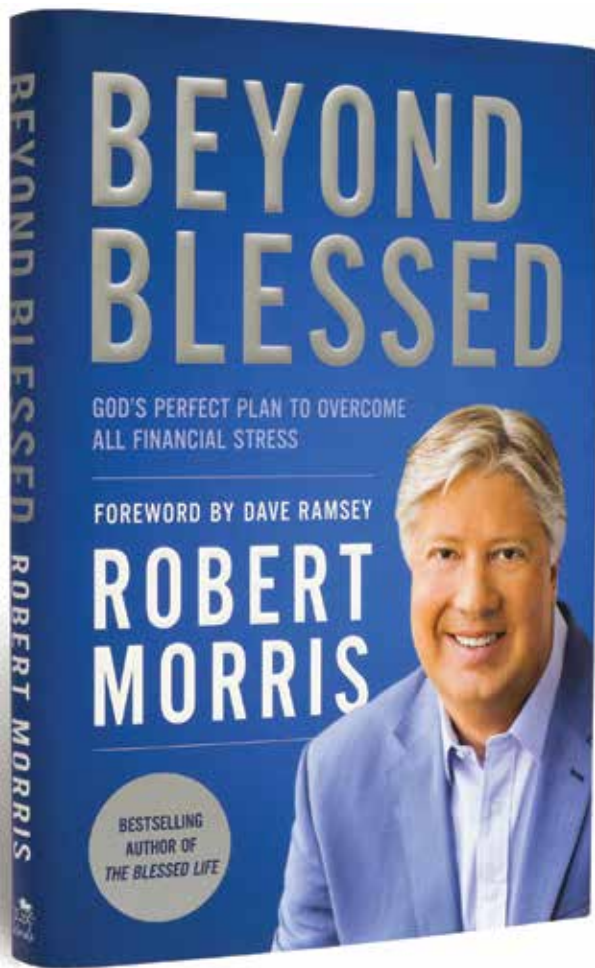
## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for calling me. I seek first Your Kingdom. Help me to please You and serve You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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# What You Know

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 1

*That is why I am suffering here in prison. But I am not ashamed of it, for I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return.*

2 Timothy 1:12 NLT

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to focus on the things I know about You. I believe that Your Word is true! In Jesus' name. Amen.

How can anyone really be sure of anything? The world is filled with people with opinions. We hear them every day through the media, in the news, on TV programs, and on social media in our homes and neighborhoods. Experts tell us what they think. Politicians give their spin on world conditions. We can be overwhelmed with rumors and gossip.

In this environment, it can be hard to know what to believe.

But Paul told Timothy that he had *certainly*. He *knew* whom he believed. He had trusted his life to Jesus. He was not worried about what other people might say or do. He was not concerned about world conditions or even his own life.

The Bible says you should *know* that Jesus died for your sins, that He sent the Holy Spirit to be your comforter, and that He loves you and has a great plan for your life. You can trust His promises to lift your burdens, provide for your needs, and answer anytime you call upon Him. You can be confident that Satan and his demonic forces already are defeated, and that, through Jesus, you are victorious!

Today, think about what *you* know. Do not let the world shape your mind and heart or allow you to feel discouraged, worried, afraid, or inadequate. Declare God's promises to be true, and realize that they are true for you, right now!

# Loyal to the End

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 1

THURSDAY

June

13

Paul had established churches and brought salvation, healing, and teaching to countless people. Yet as he approached the end of his life, he felt abandoned and alone, abandoned by many of those who had been blessed by his ministry.

He particularly was hurt by the actions of Phygelus and Hermogenes, who had “turned away from” him. In contrast, we see the support provided by Onesiphorus, the slave who came to mean so much to Paul. He often had “refreshed” Paul. The Greek word, used here for the only time in the Bible, suggests providing something cool on a hot day.

How grateful Paul was for Onesiphorus, who had helped him as he went through trials and difficulties. He helped because he was not “ashamed” of the chains that shackled Paul.

Others may not have wanted to be associated with Paul. But Onesiphorus “eagerly searched for [Paul] and found” him in Rome. He *always* was loyal, not just when things were pleasant, but when Paul was attacked and faced enemies and when there were risks to being his friend.

This is the kind of loyalty that God desires. The Bible tells us, “*Many will say they are loyal friends, but who can find one who is truly reliable?*” (Proverbs 20:6 NLT).

In your life, seek to be trustworthy and loyal, motivated by true Christian compassion, always ready to refresh others, always grateful and showing gratitude.

*All who are in Asia  
turned away from me,  
among whom are  
Phygelus and Hermo-  
genes. The Lord grant  
mercy to the house of  
Onesiphorus, for he  
often refreshed me.*

2 Timothy 1:15-16 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be a more dependable person, keeping my word, being a good testimony. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Being a Mentor

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 2

*The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

2 Timothy 2:2 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, thank You for all that You have done for me. Use me to spread the Gospel and share what You have given me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

How can we measure the *impact* our lives can have on others? One important way is through being mentors. This means helping others develop and mature in practical and spiritual matters.

Based on a recent international research project, the Gallup organization concluded that “mentors can play an important role in supporting new companies in their development process. Without a mentor, an entrepreneur may find it difficult to access resources, build networks, and create partnerships that help the enterprise grow.” In fact, people with access to a mentor are *more likely* to achieve more lasting results and be more successful.

All believers have opportunities to be mentors, share their testimonies, pray with those who have needs, teach others lessons they have learned, help relieve burdens, and bless others financially.

We see this kind of influence in Paul's relationship with Timothy. As his mentor, Paul wanted to give Timothy sound teachings and opportunities to grow. He also encouraged Timothy to continue this pattern of mentoring in his relationships with others.

Today, remember that you can influence people in all of your relationships. As God has blessed you, seek to bless others. Share out of the resources you have been given. Be a source of encouragement. Look for opportunities to teach others things that God has shown you and principles that lead to success. Seek to help others mature and be a greater impact in the world.

Paul told Timothy that if he wanted “*understanding in everything*,” he needed to do something. It wasn’t enough just to read Paul’s letters or listen to the Law and Prophets. Timothy needed to go a step *further* and “*consider*” these words.

Paul used a word that means exercising the mind. In other words, he wanted Timothy to *think*. To *seek*. To dig *deeper*.

Paul was giving Timothy a challenge: If he wanted to receive understanding, he had to put in *extra* effort. This involved absorbing the words he had heard and read, mulling them over, praying and seeking God, and being sensitive to the leading of the Spirit.

If he did those things, Paul promised that Timothy would gain “*understanding*.” The Greek words here indicate that Timothy might have grasped bits and pieces of information, but this did *not* mean that he had understanding. God wanted to help him put the pieces together, so he would have true understanding “*in everything*.”

This same challenge applies to you. Remember the power and importance of reading God’s Word and hearing anointed messages. But if you want a *deeper* understanding, you need to dig deeper. If you want all the pieces to fit together, you need to exercise your mind, study, probe, and pray.

God is ready to reward *your* faithfulness and your desire to learn and grow. He is ready to put more of the pieces together for you.

*Consider what I say,  
for the Lord will give  
you understanding  
in everything.*

2 Timothy 2:7 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I seek a deeper understanding of Your Word. Open my mind and heart. Pour out Your Spirit on me in fresh ways. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

# Like a Father

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 1 TIMOTHY 1

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ... To Timothy, a true son in the faith.*

1 Timothy 1:1-2

In many ways, Paul acted like a father to Timothy. When we study the New Testament, we find Timothy almost everywhere. In several of Paul's letters, Timothy is right there as a cowriter, or Paul's messenger, or the subject of his concern. Of course, the Bible includes two of Paul's letters directly to Timothy.

This presence demonstrates the vital role Timothy played in spreading the Gospel. Why was he so important to Paul and to the early church?

Paul called him *"a true son in the faith."* Their relationship was that close!

Timothy was sold out to the Gospel and consistently accepted every assignment. Moreover, he was a man Paul could *trust*. And he always seemed to have the attitude of a servant.

Because he was so trustworthy and dependable, Paul gave him many sensitive, important assignments. Many times, Paul made him his personal emissary. In addition, he was flexible. Not focused on his own agenda, he was humble and willing to go wherever he was needed. And when others seemed to desert Paul, Timothy was right there.

What can you learn from Timothy's life? Like Timothy, seek to be humble and committed to God's Kingdom, sold out for the Gospel, dependable, and ready to serve.

Today, submit your life to God. Ask Him how you can serve Him. Remember, you have been blessed, so you can be a blessing.

## PRAYER:

Father, I submit my life to You. Show me how I can serve You with the time, talents, and treasures You have given me. In Jesus' name. Amen.



# Becoming a Special Instrument

MONDAY

June

17

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 2

The Bible makes it clear that God has a plan for each life, and He wants to use us to accomplish His purposes. At the same time, as Paul expressed to Timothy, some are “*special instruments*,” particularly prepared and “*useful to the Master*.” What makes these people so special?

The distinguishing feature is a deeper level of *personal* commitment, not being passive but *proactive* by evaluating our choices and priorities and how we spend our time and resources. Do what is necessary to be available for God and *more* sensitive to His leading. Be *more* committed to His Word.

We demonstrate this commitment by purifying ourselves, making a conscious decision to cleanse our minds and hearts, and eliminating “*anything dishonorable*.”

No one magically becomes a special vessel. This requires *preparation*. Paul talked about being cleansed. He described how we have choices regarding the ideas we think about, the things we do, and the words we speak.

If we want to be vessels prepared for every good work, we will cleanse ourselves. We will make every effort to do and say things that are pleasing to God, avoid the wrong people and situations, monitor our words, always seek to honor God, and be serious about the faith.

Today, seek to do your part in the decisions you make and the things you do. Demonstrate that you want to be one of God's special instruments.

*If anyone purifies himself from anything dishonorable, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.*

2 Timothy 2:21 CSB

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit my life to You. Help me to be a special instrument. Use me in the lives of others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Stability

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 3

*All who desire to live  
godly in Christ Jesus will  
suffer persecution. But  
evil men and impostors  
will grow worse and  
worse, deceiving and  
being deceived. But  
you must continue in  
the things which you  
have learned and been  
assured of.*

2 Timothy 3:12-14

## PRAYER:

Father, help me base my life on Your Word. Thank You for equipping me and giving me stability. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Paul had been through many trying situations. He had faced many enemies and endured much persecution. He had been stretched emotionally and abused physically.

In this letter to Timothy, written from prison, Paul recounted many of these trying experiences, testifying that God had delivered him from *every* ordeal. He wanted Timothy to realize that every Christian could expect problems.

The simple fact is that we live in a world of sin. If we face challenges, we are not to give up or become discouraged. Regardless of how we feel, we must not run away and hide. Instead, we should *persevere*. We should never lose hope but continually trust in God, believing that He will guide, sustain, and deliver us.

This attitude starts as we base our lives on His unchangeable Word. Paul knew that God's Word provides stability and the standards we need to stand firm. It is "*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*" This Word enables us to be "*complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*" (vs. 16-17).

You may be going through challenging situations. The Bible reminds us that God is *trustworthy*. You can depend on Him. Make sure that you are confident, standing on His Word. Fill your life with the Bible. Read it. Memorize and study it. Meditate on it. Make it the rock on which you base your life.

# Complete

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 3

For many, the Bible is important. But Paul taught that it should be *more* than that. It is *essential* in order to be complete as a Christian. In his lexicon, Marvin Vincent describes how the Greek word for *complete*, used here for the only time in the Bible, indicates the “harmonious combination of different qualities and powers.”

But the fact is that we all are *different*. In individual ways, we all need experience and perspective to be able to develop balance and completeness, to *understand* how things work, to *discern* what is important, to grasp our individual strengths and weaknesses, to learn the roles that we are to play in the world and in the body of Christ.

For believers in this process, the Bible is not an option but *essential* if we want to be complete.

The Bible provides truths that help us know when we are wrong and realize when we have made mistakes. This is “*profitable*,” providing essential training and enabling us to “*do every good work*.”

It gives us balance and helps us develop spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. It enables us to fulfill our potential, have maximum satisfaction, and be pleasing to God. It provides principles that can lead to success and blessing.

Today, remember that God has given you His Word. Make it central to your life. It will make you *complete*.

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, give me a greater passion for Your Word. Teach me. Help me to be complete. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Loneliness

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: 2 TIMOTHY 4

*Make every effort to come to me soon; for Demas has deserted me...Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me...the Lord stood with me and strengthened me... The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed.*

2 Timothy 4:9-11,  
17-18 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I trust my life to You. Speak to me. Thank You for being with me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Gospel is a message of hope and encouragement. As members of the body of Christ, we are to be a community of believers: sharing, being concerned, and praying with each other. We also are to follow the example of Jesus by being humble servants (Philippians 2:5-8).

But not every believer has this level of commitment. As Paul experienced, we can find ourselves alone and abandoned. For him, it was painful when Demas loved the present world more than serving Jesus. In fact, Paul felt that “*all who are in Asia turned away from [him]*” (2 Timothy 1:15).

Paul had to be prepared for these moments by learning to count on God and realizing that He was with him in every situation. He was not to be defensive or vindictive but willing to forgive others, even those who had abandoned him. Paul may have been disappointed by the actions of some believers, but he learned that these could be opportunities for God to speak to him and teach him.

Make sure that you focus on God, no matter what is going on in your life. Be sensitive to His leading. Seek to develop a more intimate relationship with Him, even in moments when you might feel abandoned or disappointed. Spend time in worship and praise. Read His Word. Pray and listen for His voice. Others may fail you, but God always is faithful.

Parchments were central to Paul's ministry. As we see in his letter to Timothy, he used parchments to copy and distribute information.

Roman historian Pliny the Younger describes how parchment had been invented for the king of Pergamum as an attempt to break the Egyptian monopoly on papyrus, but complications made parchments impractical. As monasteries later learned, it took as many as 150 sheets of it for each Bible.

A major breakthrough occurred with the development of the printing press in the fifteenth-century AD. The Bible was the first book printed. Spurred on by this development, the Bible became widely available, read, and studied.

We live at a time when we have access to the Bible through countless formats: large print, pocket sized, study Bibles, and digital versions. Yet, in spite of this convenience, millions *never* read the Bible. A recent study from the Barna Group revealed that only 14% of Americans use the Bible each day; 13% use it several times a week. Most read it infrequently or never.

Today, there is no excuse for not reading the Bible. Within its pages, we find the keys to success and a life with God. As Paul explained to Timothy, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."* This is *"profitable"* in so many ways that we *"may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16).

Make sure the Word is central to *your* daily life.

*When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments.*

2 Timothy 4:13 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, give me a greater hunger for Your Word. Teach me. Guide me. Speak to me. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# We Never Know

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ECCLESIASTES 11

*Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good.*

Ecclesiastes 11:6 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to be faithful with the resources You have given me. I trust You for the results. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Looking back, a former army chaplain recalled a time of unusual stress when he struggled with issues related to his faith and understanding of the Scriptures. There also seemed to be little fruit from his ministry.

Therefore it was with great surprise that he heard the comments of a man with whom he had not spoken in years. The man described the impact the chaplain had made on his life and how blessed he had been by his ministry, teaching, and example.

The chaplain realized this blessing occurred during that time when he didn't *feel* he was having any meaningful impact. He then realized how God had used him in spite of his own weaknesses. He learned God works in ways we may never understand or realize.

The Bible reminds us we never really know the impact of our lives, or what other people are going through. We must be careful not to base our conclusions on feelings. The reality is that God can use us regardless of how we feel.

The Bible expresses this truth many ways. One way is that we are to sow seeds all the time for we never know the impact of our efforts.

In your life, seek to be faithful to fulfill your calling regardless of how you feel. Trust God to bless your efforts and bring about a harvest in His time.



# The Matchless Worth

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 42

SUNDAY

June

23

Samuel Medley's wounds were so severe that the surgeon said that amputation was the only hope. He had been wounded during the sea battle off Port Lagos in 1759. Born in Cheshunt, England on this day in 1738, he was not a believer. Nonetheless, he prayed diligently. When the surgeon examined him again, he said a miracle had taken place. The surgery proved unnecessary.

As he recuperated, Medley continued in his sinful ways until he heard a sermon by Isaac Watts based on Isaiah 42. Medley was convicted of his sins and committed his life to Christ.

He later entered the ministry. One of his churches in particular, in Liverpool, was noted for powerful worship. Medley himself wrote more than 200 hymns. One of the most memorable, "O Could I Speak the Matchless Worth," told of his gratitude for what God had done for him.

How, he wrote, could he "speak the matchless worth" and "sound the glories forth which in my Savior shine"? All he could do was "sing His glorious righteousness and magnify the wondrous grace which made salvation mine."

He wrote about the "precious blood He spilt" and His love and example. And how much he longed to be in Jesus' presence where "I would to everlasting days make all His glories known."

In your life, sing praises to God! Tell of His matchless worth! He is worthy!

*I have called you in  
righteousness...I will  
appoint you...as a light  
to the nations, to open  
blind eyes, to bring  
out prisoners from the  
dungeon and those who  
dwell in darkness from  
the prison.*

Isaiah 42:6-7 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, may my life bring You glory. I commit my resources to You. Use me to impact others. I worship You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# Hearing Clearly

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: PSALM 37

*Be still before  
the LORD and wait  
patiently for him.*

Psalm 37:7 ESV

## PRAYER:

Father, help me to hear more clearly from You. I desire to know You more intimately, to be more sensitive to Your leading. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The entire city of Cremona, Italy, recently was ordered to keep quiet. *Everyone* was urged to avoid any “sudden and unnecessary sounds.”

The purpose was to record accurately the sounds of instruments made by Antonio Stradivarius and other craftsmen. Elaborate procedures assured an atmosphere of absolute silence and pristine conditions to record each instrument.

This care was necessary because over time, the distinctive sound of these instruments had been fading.

The curator of the Cremona museum devoted to musical instruments observed that each Stradivarius had “its own personality.” But their distinctive sounds “will inevitably change,” and could even be lost within just a few decades. “After they reach a certain age, they become too fragile to be played and they ‘go to sleep,’ so to speak.”

The dedication of the people of Cremona illustrates the importance of having ears to hear. They created conditions so sounds could be heard clearly and each instrument was allowed to speak in its own voice.

These principles apply in our spiritual lives. The world can be a noisy place. How critical it is that we find times and places when we can fellowship with God to clearly hear His still, small voice. Only then can we learn from Him and receive the guidance and direction He has prepared for each of us.

Today, seek to make time for God, a time to hear from Him and the words He has just for you.

George Orwell's chilling novels instilled powerful images in the minds of the public, particularly his last book, *1984*.

Published in 1949, he wrote about a future when an all-seeing political leader, "Big Brother," was always watching while "thought Police" sought to control what people thought. A byproduct of powerful governments, the public was brainwashed and engaged in "doublethink."

Born on this day in 1903 in India as Eric Blair, Orwell later changed his name. He achieved lasting fame in 1944 with the publication of his book *Animal Farm*. Written in the form of a fable, it gave his account of the Russian Revolution, which reflected his own socialist attitudes.

His novels introduced many memorable concepts into general vocabulary. His name spawned the word Orwellian, suggesting the future he described. People have perceived many so-called enemies as "big brothers" in governments, the military, and even private companies.

But the Bible presents an even more chilling portrait of our real, spiritual enemy. This is Satan who prowls the earth like a lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). The Bible also warns of the appearance of "*many antichrists*."

Make sure you are alert and on guard, prepared for the many ways Satan and his demons will try to deceive you. He can seem to be harmless and even an agent of good, an "*angel of light*" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Be a warrior for Jesus, always ready.

*Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.*

1 John 2:18 NASB

## PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, help me to be on guard against the attacks of the enemy. I want to be ready for Your appearing. Thank You for victory. In Your name. Amen.

# Hunger for God

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ISAIAH 55

*Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat... Eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.*

Isaiah 55:1-2 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I cry out for revival. Give me a greater hunger to know You more intimately. Use me to reach the others with the Gospel. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Beginning in 1801, America was swept by what became known as camp meetings. This movement began with a mighty revival that took place in Cane Ridge, Kentucky. Soon, camp meetings sprang up throughout the region.

In his first-hand account, Peter Cartwright described how people would come from "forty to fifty miles around, sometimes further than that." The crowds were so large that special buildings had to be built. Some camp meetings lasted as long as four weeks.

Cartwright recalled, "I have seen more than a hundred sinners fall like dead men under one powerful sermon, and I have seen and heard more than five hundred Christians all shouting aloud the high praises of God at once."

Skeptics mocked those who attended camp meetings, and some "old starched" preachers spoke out against them. But Cartwright observed, "the work went on and spread almost in every direction, gathering additional force, until our country seemed all coming home to God."

Camp meetings changed America because people hungered for God. How about you? How concerned are you about seeking God? Do you crave His Word? How hungry are you for more of His presence?

Remember that His power is the same as it was during these camp meetings. Don't let anything stop you. Seek Him with your whole heart. Pray for revival in your church, your family, and your country among government and business leaders. Hunger for a more intimate relationship with God!

Peter Cartwright was converted through one of the camp meetings that swept throughout the United States in the early nineteenth century. He later became an evangelist known for boldness and powerful preaching. He often spoke three hours at a stretch several times a week. He had a booming voice that brought conviction. Thousands were converted under his ministry.

Cartwright did not compromise his message. Once he warned General Andrew Jackson (who later became a US President) that he would receive no special treatment before God. His earthly power and accomplishments did not change his need to humble himself and repent of his sins, like any other person.

A pastor who heard these words apologized to Jackson for this bluntness. But Jackson defended Cartwright. He said that Christ's ministers ought to fear no mortal man, adding that he wished he had a few thousand officers like Peter Cartwright.

Many Christians fail to have this boldness. They react with fear just thinking about witnessing for Jesus. Yet He told us that we have an *obligation* to share our testimony. In fact, we should look forward to the opportunity to tell others about Him. He also told us that we should not worry about what to say and would be given the "*utterance and wisdom*" we need (v. 15).

Ask God to give you a spirit of boldness. Do not compromise your faith. Stand firm. Be ready to give your testimony to anyone at any time!

*They will lay their hands on you and will persecute you...bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.*

Luke 21:12-13 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, take away my fears, worries, and anxieties. Help me trust in You. Give me boldness to be a witness for You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# When We All Get to Heaven

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: JOHN 14

*Do not let your  
heart be troubled;  
believe in God,  
believe also in Me. In  
My Father's house are  
many dwelling places;  
if it were not so, I would  
have told you; for I go  
to prepare a place  
for you.*

John 14:1-2 NASB

## PRAYER:

Lord Jesus, thank You for preparing a place for me. Thank You for Your mercy and grace. I sing and shout Your victory. In Your name. Amen.

Eliza Edmunds Hewitt was an invalid most of her life as the result of a serious spinal problem. But this did not weaken her faith or diminish her commitment to the Gospel. Born in Philadelphia on this day in 1851, she found fulfillment writing hymns.

Partly because of her health problems, she was sensitive to the difficulties people face on earth and looked forward to being with Jesus in Heaven where she could have a heavenly body. In 1898, she wrote a hymn that reflected this hope called "When We All Get to Heaven."

She wrote, "Sing the wondrous love of Jesus, sing His mercy and His grace. In the mansions bright and blessed he'll prepare for us a place... When we all see Jesus, what a day of rejoicing that will be... We'll sing and shout the victory!"

We may go through difficulties on earth, but we should serve Him every day, realizing that "just one glimpse of Him in glory will the toils of life repay." We need to march "onward to the prize before us," knowing that "Soon His beauty we'll behold; soon the pearly gates will open; we shall tread the streets of gold."

Today, remember that some day all of life's struggles will be over, and you will spend eternity with Jesus. Don't wait to celebrate. Right now, you can "sing and shout the victory!"

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ACTS 10

As a young man living in Kentucky in 1801, Peter Cartwright felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Concerned about mistakes he had made, he fell on his knees and asked God to have mercy on him. But he still “found no relief.”

It was a time when the region was buzzing about the first camp meetings. As Cartwright described, “it excited great wonder and surprise” and “kindled a religious flame.”

Later that year, eager to be free of his burdens, he attended a revival inspired by the Cane Ridge camp meeting. There was so much hunger for God that “the church would not hold the tenth part of the congregation” and a special stand had to be built.

One night during the camp meeting, he was moved by God's power and began praying fervently. Suddenly, he had a *fresh encounter*. He recalled, “Divine light flashed all round me, unspeakable joy sprung up in my soul. I rose to my feet, opened my eyes, and it really seemed as if I was in Heaven.” He never again had doubts.

Do you need a breakthrough? God gave one to Peter Cartwright. The Bible describes how God gave a similar breakthrough to Cornelius, a Gentile who went to great lengths to hear the Good News.

God can give you the breakthroughs you need. Cry out to Him. Seek Him. Don't let anything stop you. He is the God of breakthroughs!

*We are all here present  
before God to hear all  
that you have been  
commanded by the  
Lord. The Holy Spirit fell  
upon all those who were  
listening to the message.*

Acts 10:33, 44 NASB

## PRAYER:

Father, I need breakthroughs in these areas: \_\_\_\_\_. Thank You for answering my prayers. I depend on You. In Jesus' name. Amen.



# Not Knowing How to Pray

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: ROMANS 8

*Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

Romans 8:26

## PRAYER:

Father, I commit these situations to You: \_\_\_\_\_. Thank You for the answers! Show me more about praying in the Spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen.

What do we do when we don't know *how* to pray? Or *what* to pray for?

There may be many experiences that lead to these feelings. Moments when our mind may be filled with doubt or confusion, when we feel stretched or perplexed, when the situations we face may not make sense. These moments reveal our human weaknesses.

These are times when we can turn to the Spirit. This truly is a gift from God. It's a dimension to life that unbelievers never could understand. The *amazing* promise is that the Spirit will make intercession for us.

The Bible is filled with directions about prayer. We are to "*pray at all times in the Spirit*" (Ephesians 6:18 NASB). We are to "*pray without ceasing*" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). As Jesus taught, we should pray "*at all times*" and "*not lose heart*" (Luke 18:1 NASB). We ought to be confident that "*all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you*" (Mark 11:24 NASB).

But for those moments when you don't know *how* to pray, remember that God has given you the Spirit. As you have needs or face problems, when you don't know what to do or what to pray for, turn to the Spirit. The Bible encourages you to *pray in the Spirit*, to *depend* on the Spirit, and to *rely* on the Spirit's power. Do it today!



## How Jackie Still Saves Souls on *Earth...* 15 Years After Going to *Heaven!*

When an Inspiration Partner named Jackie died in 2004, she left instructions for some of her land to be sold and a portion of the proceeds to be given to Inspiration Ministries. It took a while for her estate to be processed, but her generous financial gift was finally received in 2014. Now, 15 years after her death, her bequest is still winning souls through our worldwide media outreaches!

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# *The* Dandelion Principle

by Jim Buchan

It's already dandelion season in the Carolinas, and I'm having traumatic flashbacks to my childhood. When I was about 11 years old, my dad assigned me the summer chore of ridding our yard of dandelions.

This was no small task. We had a big yard, and every summer there were *lots* of dandelions.

When Dad gave me this job, he was very particular in how he wanted it done. He handed me a long wooden rod, similar to a broom handle. It was equipped with a sharp metal attachment, specially designed to dig up dandelions by their roots.

"Jimmy," he said, "after you've dug out each dandelion, you must immediately put it in the garbage so the seeds don't spread." Dad gave me these directions with such earnestness that I felt I'd been entrusted with the most important chore ever.

After following his instructions

and digging out a few dandelions, I decided to take a break until later in the day. That turned out to be a bad decision, because it was a blazing hot afternoon when I returned to my assignment. As I surveyed the countless dandelions before me, I began to resent this difficult and time-consuming task.

But then I got an idea...

Instead of taking time to dig out the dandelions by their roots, I opted for a much easier solution: I just walked around the yard and snapped off the dandelion heads. There was no need for the special dandelion digger in order to do that.

By the time my dad returned from work, the yard looked great. *No dandelions!*

"The yard looks amazing, Jimmy," Dad complimented me.

However, my plan had an unforeseen outcome. While it seemed brilliant in the short run, after just a few days the yard was filled with dandelions again.

Actually, they were the same dandelions as before. They simply had resurfaced.

It didn't take long for Dad to figure out I had taken a shortcut instead of following his instructions. He handed me the dandelion digger once again, telling me to do the job correctly this time.

So now you know why dandelions still trigger unpleasant memories for me.

But as I reflect on the story, I'm more aware than ever that the Dandelion Principle is one of life's greatest lessons:

**When dealing with a problem, we must dig out the roots instead of dealing only with the symptoms.**



Think of how profound this is...

- Financial problems can't be solved by taking out a new loan.
- Health problems can't be remedied by taking more pain medicine.
- Emotional problems like anxiety, anger, or depression require deeper healing than pills or alcohol can provide.

- Marriage problems are never improved by ignoring them or by having an affair.

As I discovered that hot summer day when told to eradicate our dandelions, the only smart approach to problem solving is to dig deep and address the roots. Shortcuts will always be tempting, of course. But whenever we go with the lazy, shortsighted approach, the dandelions will surely return quickly – usually in even greater abundance than before.

Although I'm a lot older now, I still have a tendency to address my problems by masking the symptoms rather than digging out the roots. If you're like me, there may be some longstanding issues in your life where you've taken the same approach, and gotten the same results.

With God's help, let's resolve today that we'll do whatever is necessary to truly uproot the bothersome weeds in our lives – not just temporarily, but once and for all.



**Jim Buchan**  
is Director  
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Communications  
at Inspiration  
Ministries.



# Unspeakable Tragedy, Unimaginable Grace

**How would *you* respond to a heartbreaking loss?  
As the story of Gentry and Hadley shows, God can  
provide hope amid even life's greatest tragedies.**

People thought they had it all. Gentry and Hadley were a beautiful, young Christian couple, madly in love and serving as worship leaders in their church. After a few years of marriage, they welcomed their first son, Dobbs, who was a true gift from the Lord. Because of his infectious laugh, friends and family soon nicknamed him “the joy baby.”

Dobbs hadn't even reached two years old when this family of three discovered they soon would have a new addition: another “joy baby” was on the way!

At 36 weeks pregnant, Hadley took a trip with Gentry and Dobbs to the Carolina coast to attend a

family wedding. Amid the hurriedness and stress before the ceremony, young Dobbs amazed his mom and dad by comforting them with a Bible verse he had recently learned: “*Be still and know that I am God*” (Psalm 46:10).

## FROM HEAVENLY...TO HEAVEN

As Gentry and Hadley would later recall, the wedding was a “heavenly” occasion. Still feeling the afterglow of the ceremony as they drove home, Hadley turned and reminded Dobbs, “I love you, buddy.” It never crossed her mind that this would be the last time she would ever be able to tell him she loved him on this side of Heaven.

While they were stopped at a red light, a large box truck suddenly slammed into their car. In addition to being on drugs, the distracted truck driver was texting at the time of the collision and had rammed them at full speed.

In an instant, everything completely changed for this young family. Within minutes, paramedics were surrounding them and rushing them individually to the hospital.

At the hospital, Gentry learned that Dobbs was “with Jesus now,” as his heartbroken parents put it. This loving father sobbed as his parents held him tightly.

Gentry had to share the news with Hadley, who had undergone an emergency Cesarean section to deliver their unborn baby, Reed. Unable to believe the news about Dobbs, she cried out in anguish, “No! This can’t be!”

Gentry and Hadley turned their focus to comforting baby Reed as he took his final breaths. While holding their dying newborn child, they sang praises to God as they wept at the realization of their new reality – life without children.

## **WORKING ALL THINGS FOR GOOD**

People love to quote Paul’s words in Romans 8:28 about God’s ability to turn around any situation

and use it for good. However, what good could *possibly* result from a horrific tragedy like this? It seemed like a huge victory for the devil, the thief who always comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). And what about the negligent truck driver who had turned their heavenly day into such a hellish nightmare?

Grief is a painful ordeal under the best of circumstances. But the pain is even worse if a loved one dies when they’ve barely begun to live – and especially if the death has been caused by someone’s negligent or evil act.

Yet, as an important step in being healed of their grief, Gentry and Hadley were compelled by God to publicly forgive the man who caused the accident that killed their two little boys. Their powerful example ignited a chain reaction of forgiveness, impacting many people around the world who had suffered a personal loss or injustice.

There also was an amazing flood of donations from people who wanted to help with the family’s medical and burial expenses. So deeply were people’s hearts touched by this tragedy that all expenses were covered, and an additional \$150,000 remained.

Gentry and Hadley prayed and determined that the money would be used to build a Christian school



in Haiti, named in memory of Dobbs and Reed. There the message of salvation through Christ is now continually shared with hundreds of children.

## LOOK WHAT GOD HAS DONE!



*Gentry and Hadley with  
Isaiah Dobbs and Amos Reed*

A couple of years after the accident that claimed the life of their two sons, Gentry and Hadley experienced the most amazing part of their redemption story: They were surprised by a new pregnancy – with twin boys! To them, it was God’s way of restoring to them an earthly family to love and care for.

Hadley shares, “We named our twin boys after their brothers in Heaven. Isaiah Dobbs and Amos Reed are a beautiful part of God’s redemption to our story.”

Through it all, God has shown Himself faithful. “We’ve learned that no matter what we go through...no matter how hard it is...even in the face of death...there is always hope with Christ,” Hadley says. “And we can joyfully look forward to the day when we’ll be reunited as a family in Heaven!” As Gentry likes to say, “It’s not over until it’s good, because God is good!”

To watch the full story of Gentry, Hadley, and their boys, visit [inspiration.org/Eddings](http://inspiration.org/Eddings). And if you need prayer for some difficult situation in your life today, our faithful prayer ministers would love to pray the Prayer of Agreement with you for the breakthrough you need:

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# The Secret to Supernatural Peace

by Ben Cerullo

In a world facing uncertain times, it's more important than ever for God's people to abide in His supernatural peace. We all want to know that everything is going to be OK, but sometimes that's easier said than done.

Experiencing God's peace can be difficult when life seems to be caving in and all hell is breaking out around you.

However, the apostle Paul provided an amazing secret to unshakeable peace: *"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit"* (Romans 15:13).

You see, peace comes in believing God's promises and in trusting Him with your life. When your eyes are fixed on Him, peace will arise in your heart, and you will be filled with indestructible hope. Regardless of your circumstances, you can say as King David did, *"I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I*

*shall not be moved"* (Psalm 16:8).

I love the story in Matthew 14:22-33 about Peter walking on the water. As long as his eyes were set on Jesus, Peter did just fine. But when he got distracted by the wind and waves around him, he began to sink!

Friend, perhaps you find yourself surrounded by wind and waves like Peter was. But remember: Jesus must always be your strength and confidence, your rock in times of trouble. Although He never promised that your life would be easy, He gave you this great promise: *"Trusting Me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I've conquered the world"* (John 16:33 MSG).

When you discover this great secret – keeping your eyes on Jesus in every situation – you will experience peace that *"surpasses all understanding"* (Philippians 4:6-7). Instead of sinking, you'll be able to walk on water!

# Go from **STRESSED** to *Blessed*

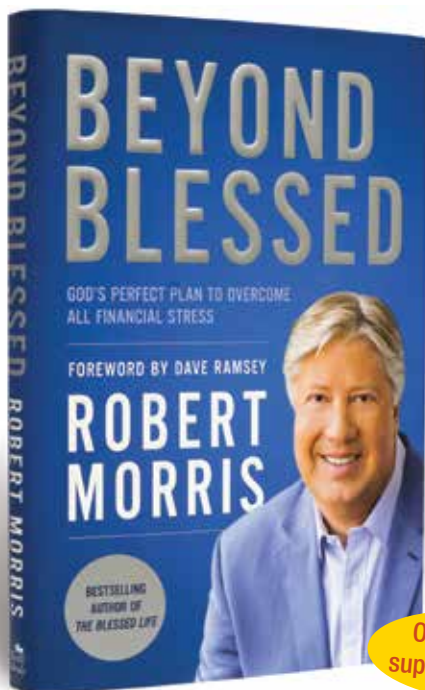
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