

12 STEPS TOGETHER



Tracy Wills

A Fresh Start... Today is another new day, a day that you want to begin in the right way. Go ahead and start you day off right now by thanking God for your new life, and turning your attention toward Jesus Christ.

Give it All... Now that you're focusing on Christ, try to make every part of your day today, a moment that will glorify Him.

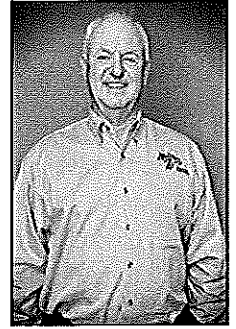
Psalm 23

I once believed that everyone went through the "Valley of the Shadow of Death" only once and it was at the end of life. After my last 15 years I now know that is not true. I recall watching a strong Christian family in our church go through that valley called death. They carried all of us with them teaching us what it meant to fear no evil... evil in the form of cancer. I visited that valley month after month with my grandmother as we were constantly being called to the ICU unit for that one last moment. I watched as my son's teacher name and speak of a child that she would deliver into that valley and have to bury. The shadow of her valley seemed to encompass so many of us young and old. The 23rd Psalm reminds me that we will all "walk" through our own valley someday. We will not just quickly pass through the valley with someone, visit it for awhile with family or friends, or just be touched by someone else's shadowed valley. But at the end of our life we will have our own personal "walk" through the valley. It is only fitting that your actual walk with the Lord is what will get you through. Have a personal relationship with Him and His perfect love will be there casting out fear...He will be there to comfort you. Maybe that is why those that are dying always seem to hold it together better than those of us that are healthy bystanders. I pray that my daily walk with Him will prepare me for whatever valleys are ahead to face. It is not something that I dwell on but I know that time will come and I cling to what the scripture says... "The Lord is my Shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me lie down in green pastures....He restoreth my soul...Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for though art with me..." Psalm 23

Personal Notes:

Take Time... Use this time to talk to God and try hard to dedicate this time to talking with Him about the things He has revealed in your life today.

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Brother Garry

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Philippians 4:19

Have you ever thought about how much biblical truth and church talk contradict each other? I don't know how many times I have been told; Preacher, I just can't do that. Well the bible says otherwise the inerrant, eternal word says, I can do all things! It aint can't! I know bad English, but simple truth is that believer's say I won't do it no matter what the bible says.

So next time before you open your mouth, try an open bible, an open heart, and trusting spirit. You might be amazed at what you can accomplish in His strength!

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2 Corinthians 5:17

I had worked non-stop for days getting the house clean for my company arriving for Cason's first birthday party. As I was on my hands and knees scrubbing a stain out of the living room carpet God spoke so clearly to me..."Are you as worried about having a clean heart and a clean life when I return as you are the guests coming to your house?"

Our God is coming back for us soon. Are you ready?

Do you have everything in order for the King that is coming? If not, then I urge you to do some house cleaning today. Maybe you need to use some "RESOLVE" to resolve some conflicts with friends or family or maybe you need to "PLEDGE" to be more faithful in God's house. It may even be time for you to allow God to "VACUUM" up the mess you have made of things and start over with a clean room.

Let today be a deep cleaning day for you.

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Julie Russell

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Joshua 1:8

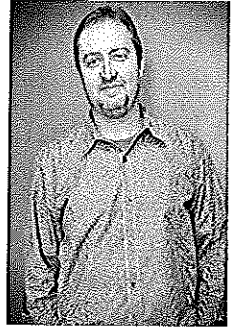
Have you ever tried to put together a child's new toy or a piece of equipment without reading the instruction manual? I know at my house, the instruction manual is often disregarded. We attempt to put our new "toy" together without reading the manual at all. Besides, we know what it is supposed to "look" like when it is finished. Since we know what it looks like, why do we need to read those sometimes complicated and tedious instructions? This careless approach usually leads to much frustration and we eventually find ourselves starting over following the step by step instructions in the manual.

When I teach preschool children about the Bible, we often talk about it being our instruction manual to life. Unfortunately, many Christians disregard this manual, as well, failing to read or obey its instructions. Joshua 1:8, very clearly states that our instruction manual to life must be read. Not only should it be read but it tells us to "meditate on it day and night." Only then, will we be prosperous and successful. It is so much easier to start in the beginning following the instructions, rather than having to take it apart and start all over. So begin today to follow each step that God has designed for your life.

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James 3:1-12

Brother Kenny

The tongue is a powerful weapon; referred to in the bible as a two-edged sword. Have you ever been around someone with no filter? Someone who says what they are thinking. My grandmother was like that. She would say whatever came to her mind whether you wanted to hear it or not. I must admit that, most of the time, it was things I needed to hear, but didn't necessarily like hearing.

The tongue was made to lift people up, not to tear them down. When Jesus walked on this Earth, he spoke with kindness and gentleness. His words encouraged and brought joy to those around Him. Today, I encourage you to think about what you are going to say before you open your mouth. Are your words an encouragement to others? If not, keep them to yourself, it will keep you out of hot water!

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Brother Craig

II Peter 1:1-3; Judges 3:9-10; Galatians 5:16

Empowerment is the term for a person who has power increasing and giving power to another? God has given us the Holy Spirit which empowers us to do great things. Let's look at something the Holy Spirit will help us do. You are....Empowered to Victory

Judges 3:9-10 the children of Israel had been captive because of their evil deeds. After a time of persecution they cried out to the Lord and He heard their prayer. God raised up deliverer named Othniel. Look at verse 9-10. The secret to Othniel's victory and many other Old Testament heroes is found in Zechariah 4:6 God says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit". It was a temporary empowerment of the Holy Spirit of God.

Galatians 5:16 "So I say, let the spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what the sinful nature craves". Every day wake up roll out of bed and give that day to the Holy Spirit of God. Let the Spirit of God be your guide each day and do not let your sinful nature guide your life.

The Holy Spirit works in the life of the Christian to honor God in every way. Today you will need the direction, strength, and comfort of the Holy Spirit so decide now to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and not your own.

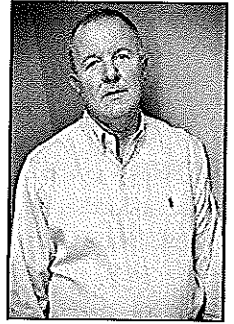
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Brother Rick

Philippians 3:12-14

Towards the end of WWII, President Roosevelt commissioned a famous artist to create what would become the official painting representing the FDR years in the White House. Each day the President would sit as the artist first penciled the outline and then began to add color with their brush. Only days into the project, President Roosevelt collapsed and died later that evening.

After the national funeral, it was decided that the painting would remain unfinished. I have made many trips to the "FDR Little White House" museum in Warm Springs, Georgia, where the unfinished work is on display. On each occasion I have this thought.....of all the works that this artist has painted, what they are remembered for most is the one not finished.

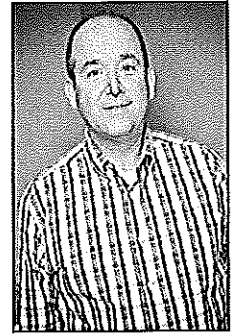
The apostle Paul tells us "Press on towards the prize"! We need to run the race setting aside what holds us back, all the while pressing forward to the finish line, so that when we appear before the Lord we can present our life completed in the will of God. Forget what lies behind and let's run the race with finishing in mind.

"Here we go!"
Bro. Rick

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Brother Tim

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Judges 7:1-8

Gideon began with thirty-two thousand men until the Lord pared them down. Gideon was about to take on one hundred thousand Midianites. Twenty-nine thousand turned back and went to Mount Gilead. The Lord asked Gideon to take the rest of the men to the water for a drink. He told Gideon to take with him any of the men who drank the water out of their hands and leave the ones who knelt down to the water behind. Gideon was now down to three hundred men.

The Lord wanted to pare the number down in order to show that the victory was by His power and not by man's power. However the only ones God could use were the ones that were always battle ready. The ones who lapped out of their hands kept their eyes and heads up and on alert. The rest put their eyes and heads down to the water. They were an easy target.

1st Peter 5:8 says "*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking who he may devour*". Beware of the tactics of the enemy. If you are to be one of God's Special Forces, you must be on guard at all times and take the fight to the devil whenever the opportunity arises.

Will you be heading out toward the Midianite camp today or going back to Mount Gilead?

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Malachi 3: 6-17

When I am teaching the children what it means to tithe, I always use Malachi 3:10. Malachi wrote this scripture to show the children of the people returning to Judah from Babylon that they had wandered away from God. Malachi was letting them know that God would remember those that love and honor Him and that He deserves our best. Our tithe is one way to show that we love and honor God. I made this acronym to help the children learn what a tithe is but it also helps in memorizing Malachi 3:10. Think about this verse and what it tells us to do. It says we are to bring a...

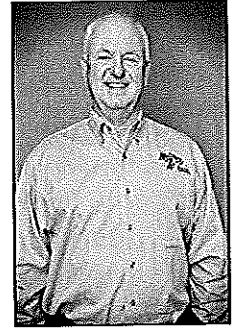
T-tenth I-into T-the H-house of God E-enjoy His blessings

That is a simple way of explaining what a tithe is. I love surprises and I am sure that you do too. It is important to remind ourselves, children especially, that we do not tithe just for the last part (the big E)! We tithe because we love God and want to honor Him in our giving. But I must admit that I do love the last part of that verse where God tells us to "Test" him in our giving. He wants to throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing that we cannot contain! Later in this passage, He promises protection, to spare us, have compassion on us, and to remember us. We pay insurance on our homes, cars, medical, dental, life... why not pay for a Heavenly form of insurance. Test Him and see!

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II Samuel 6:3

Did you know it's possible to do the right thing the wrong way? King David had a great idea to bring the Ark from Abinadab's house to Jerusalem. However, David was not reading the word because the Ark was not to be carried on a new cart but by staves on the shoulders of men. The result was a catastrophe. Uzzah died and David was discouraged.

The way we ensure we do the right thing the right way is to do it God's way. The way we ensure we do things God's way is to always read the directions which are found in his word. This is proof to always be leery of new cart theology. We have an unchanging God and He has given us a unchanging word.

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Isaiah 55:2

If God took away your spouse, your children, your home, your car, your job and your friends would you or could you be satisfied? Jesus is completely satisfying. In fact, He is the only means by which any of us can truly be satisfied.

Beth Moore says she believes a person can receive Christ as Savior, serve Him for decades and meet Him face to face in glory without ever experiencing satisfaction in Him on this earth.

God wants to be our everything. The Hebrews word for satisfy in Isaiah 55:2 is sob'an, meaning "to have enough." Why do we work so hard for things that are never enough; can never fill us up and are endlessly insufficient?

Let God satisfy your every need today.

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Psalm 27:4

Each day we are faced with many options of activities, chores and duties that demand our attention. Work, school, church, being the taxi driver for our kids, spending time with family and friends, laundry, preparing meals, —the list is truly never-ending! These all require our attention and many are very important. Speaking from my personal life, I often feel like I am on a merry-go-round that never stops. Quite honestly, I am not very good about slowing it down, much less making it stop. For the most part, I love all that I do (minus the wonderful chores of housecleaning!) I love all my children's activities- dance, soccer, acting, choir, etc.; I love my church and my family's involvement there. I love volunteering serving food to those who are needy. I love spending time with family and friends. It is just my personality that I don't slow down very often. I really enjoy all that I do. However, I am often convicted of my busy schedule, because I believe that busyness is a tool that Satan can use to hinder our walk with the Lord, if we don't keep our focus and priorities in the right order.

I believe that David had come to the place in his life, where his focus and priorities were not the activities of his day, but it was truly to dwell in the presence of the Lord and seek Him. David knew that the most meaningful thing he could do was to have a constant fellowship with the Lord. As Jesus tells his friend Martha, in Luke 10:41-42, out of all the things that require our attention, "but only one thing is needed" a vital fel-

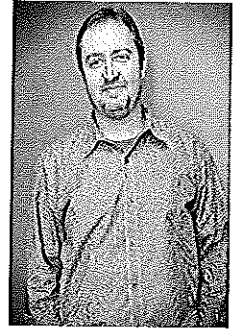
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Brother Kenny

Luke 15:8-10

Don't you hate it when you lose something? I remember working on cars for a living. My tools were a very important part of my job and without them, I could earn no money. So basically, no tools meant no paycheck. Sometimes I would forget and leave a tool under the hood of a car. Funny thing is occasionally, the tool would make its way back to me the next time I serviced the car. But not all of my experiences ended this well. On more than one occasion a tool would go missing because a co-worker took it without asking.

In this passage of scripture the woman lost a coin and she wanted it back. We need to be more like this woman. Look around in your Bible Study class and see who is missing. We need to find our brothers and sisters in Christ so they can come home. The world wants to steal them from us and it will if we don't watch out. Reach out to them. You may be the person they need to hear from today. When they come home, rejoice and love them. Have a blessed day.

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II Samuel 22:29-36

Brother Craig

In 1859 the Great Blondin -- the man who invented the high wire act, announced to the world that he intended to cross Niagara Falls on a tightrope. Five thousand people including the Prince of Wales gathered to watch. Halfway across, Blondin suddenly stopped, steadied himself, backflipped into the air, landed squarely on the rope then continued safely to the other side. During that year, Blondin crossed the Falls again and again -- once blindfolded, once carrying a stove, once in chains, and once on a bicycle. Just as he was about to begin yet another crossing, this time pushing a wheelbarrow, he turned to the crowd and shouted "who believes that I can cross pushing this wheelbarrow." Every hand in the crowd went up. Blondin pointed at one man. "Do you believe that I can do it?" he asked. "Yes, I believe you can," said the man. "Are you certain?" said Blondin. "Yes," said the man. "Absolutely certain?" "Yes, Absolutely certain." "Thank you" said Blondin, "then sir, get into the wheelbarrow."

What Mr. Blondin was saying was if you believe then trust me and get in the wheelbarrow. Do you trust the Lord enough to step into whatever is in front of you? Trust Him and He will never lead you astray.

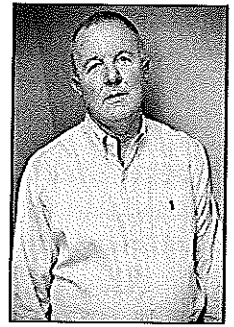
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Brother Rick

Romans 8:28

If you lived in Germany under Nazi rule in the 1930's and early 1940's you most likely would have been required to read Mein Kampf which was written by Adolph Hitler during his rise to power. This book was part of his blueprint for the systematic murder of millions of Jews in death camps across Europe during World War II. Following the war, the plates used to print this evil book were found and melted down to make a brand new type set which was then used to print the first "Free Press" newspaper. What had been used for evil; now was used for good.

We often ask how good can come from something bad. The Bible says "All things work together for good." The storms of April 27, 2011 will be forever remembered for the terrible loss that our communities suffered, yet this time also will be remembered for how the church answered the call to reach out to those who were hurting. During this time the door opened wide to share the Gospel with those whose hearts had been tenderized by tragedy. As believers we know that our God is active in carrying out His plan for our lives. Let's look for the opportunity to share the "Good News" while giving Him the "Glory".

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Mark 1:15

In the information age we live in people are constantly obsessed with the unbelievable. We are all inclined to be interested in and to believe the strange, the out of the ordinary, and the seemingly unbelievable especially if we have confidence in the source.

Ripley's Believe It Or Not has nearly 13 million people to attend their various attractions all over the world every year. Some leave those attractions believing all that they witnessed, and others are more skeptical of what they saw. Believing is being uncertain of the next step, but certain that only God can take you there. We are uncertain of what tomorrow holds but we are certain of who holds tomorrow.

The greatest spiritual crises you will ever face is when you have to move further in your faith than the beliefs you have already accepted.

Faith is like a wheelbarrow, it has to be pushed to work. How does your faith stand today? Is it idle or is it working?

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Matthew 6:25-34

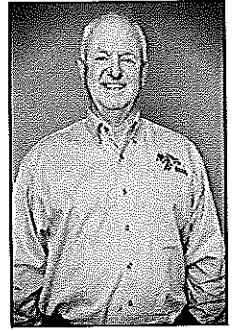
When studying to teach this passage to the children the Lord showed me many things through scripture, my radio, and in conversations with others. Worry in context means "to be anxious about". Worry is a natural characteristic of the unbeliever but it should not be for those of us that are Christians. There are times when we all battle the sin of worrying because of our human nature. I didn't realize how much I worry and speak of being worried until I started studying these scriptures. The one thing that stood out to me is that **when we worry we IGNORE the faithfulness of God.**

One Sunday when teaching this passage of scripture to the kids, I was focusing on how God cares for the birds and the flowers and how much more he loves and cares for us. My husband and side kick in Children's Church often speaks up and adds a little comedy into my lessons. In the middle of me explaining vs 26 and how the birds do not sow, reap, or store he chimed in from the back row. He starts talking about one of his favorite things... deer hunting! He asked the children if they had seen a John Deer and that all started talking about people they knew with John Deere tractors , or that they had a toy or shirt with a John Deere on it. He quickly said "no, have you ever seen a Deer by the name of John driving a tractor? He drives around and plants corn fields and soy beans because he is worried about how is going to eat". The children were all laughing at this point and saying that he was crazy. That silly story comes to mind now every time I start worrying. I picture a deer on a tractor and remember that just as completely ridiculous as that is- so is a child of God worrying over things that are in the Father's hands.

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Exodus 17:11-12

At the time of writing this devotion I must admit my arms are really tired. It has been two weeks of battling for this pastor. Amalek has been battling me and ministry seems more like the wilderness than the Promised Land. Now don't get me wrong, I am holding on to the rod of God (His word, His will) I am just weary in the work. I have both a heavy heart and heavy arms.

Yet hear me, I know I'm not alone, God is with me but so are my Aarons and my Hurs. The Associate Staff, the deacons of Mount Zion are the many sold out soldiers supporting me. We are all in this together and none of us could survive alone. Even in your life make sure you have your own Aarons and Hurs to get you through those difficult days and difficult battles.

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Philippians 1:14

Have you ever asked God "why me?" God's will for your life is perfect. He never makes mistakes. In this scripture God reveals the truth to us that He uses our struggles to minister to others. Paul tells us that because of his chains others have been encouraged.

Unless you have walked in someone's footsteps and experienced it for yourself, it can sometimes be hard to minister. God uses our life experiences to help others that may be on the same journey. So the next time God places an obstacle in your path, don't ask "why me?"

Just know that if you are willing He will use you to minister to others later on that may be going through similar circumstances.

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Mark 4:35-41

To many times I think we associate the word "peace" with the lack of problems and struggles in our lives. Peace however, is knowing, that even in the difficult times that the Lord is in control and is able to handle every situation that we may face. James Merrit recently said, "Peace is not the absence of problems, but the presence of Jesus." We can clearly see this in the wonderful miracle of Jesus calming the storm. Crashing waves, howling wind, and the flashing lightening presented a large problem to the small boat filled with Jesus' closest friends out in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. As Jesus commands the storm, "...Peace, be still." (Mark 4:39), the raging storm becomes quiet. In the presence of Jesus, all was calm and peace prevailed. Jesus was in control.

In our lives today, when the storms of problems, worries and pressures seem to invade our peace, we must turn to Jesus and trust that He is in the midst of our storms. We cannot allow Satan to take root and rob us of the joy that Christ can give through peace. Not only in his Word did He tell the storm to "be still", He told his people in Psalm 46:10, to "Be still and know that I am God." Know that today it is Christ who can give you complete peace!

Personal Notes:

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Kenny

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Proverbs 29:11

Have you ever driven a car that was hard to control? I have! You try to keep the car straight but it keeps pulling from one side or the other. This usually means that the front end is out of alignment or that the tires are worn out. You may hit a pot hole in the road and the car goes crazy. You slam on your brakes, the pedal starts vibrating and steering wheel is shaking under your hands. You are out of control!

The same is true in your life. If you are out of alignment with Christ you can't go straight. The world will pull you from side to side, and as soon as you hit a pot hole in your life, you will hit the brakes and lose control. Keep Christ in the center of your life and you will make it home safely every time.

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Acts 2:41-42

Brother Craig

How often do you think about your family? Do you really give much thought about how valuable it is, and how blessed we are to have such a great family? I'm talking about your spiritual family and the value of having one. When I read about the early church and its way of interacting with one another to honor Jesus Christ I am a bit convicted. If they were beginning the church as we know it then what were they doing and what should we be doing. Well, what does it say they were doing? They were studying doctrines which are foundational subjects of fact the bible teaches us concerning God and the way we live our lives in relation to Him and one another. They were coming together to deepen their lives together as a body of believers growing together. They were helping one another by sharing in meals and observing the Lord's Supper together. They were also praying together and talking to the Father of them all. How can we be more active in being the church? Not doing church but really being the church that came together for the purpose of living for the Lord and strengthening each other and reaching others.

What can you do today that would change from the way you "do church" to the way you "be the church"?

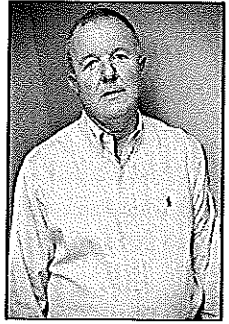
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Brother Rick

Proverbs 16:24

Construction can be a slow process. A building project can take months or even years to complete using skilled people who bring the architect's vision to life. Sadly, what takes much skill and hard work to build can be destroyed in a matter of days or even hours.

Relationships in the body of Christ are no different. We can tear down with one word what took years to build. We must speak words that heal instead of hurt; words that build rather than bruise. Our goal should be to "taste" before we speak. If our words are not "pleasant" then we should "sweeten them with the Word of God". We must remember that our relationship with the Lord can be hindered by our relationship with one another. May our words today be "sweet to the soul and health to the bones" of the Body of Christ.

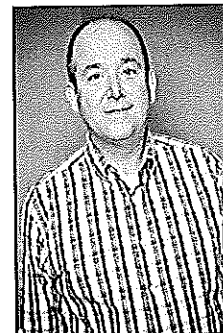
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Brother Tim

I John 1:9

Times sure have changed a lot. When I was a little fella (about 7yrs old) my mother and I would catch one of the old green city buses that made its route through Weaver and we would go to Anniston. My dad worked on Noble Street and our family had one car. We would shop a while until time for my dad to get off work. My mother would shop while I went from store to store looking at toys and all the things that interest a seven year old boy. In every store I went in I would be met by people who would say "hey little Leo" (my dad's name). In those days you could go anywhere in town and not only did you feel safe but for the most part you were. I am sure there were some unsavory characters in those days but they knew not to lay a hand on a little guy because every merchant on Noble Street knew who I was and who's I was.

The same holds true for you and me. The days we live in are perilous and growing more wicked each day, but we know that He is always watching over those who belong to Him. The unsavory one knows who's we are as well. The point is this. If you are secure in your relationship with your heavenly father don't allow the wicked one to deny you the freedom to live and enjoy life. Your Father knows you and He watches over us no matter where we are and even when we are unaware.

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Tracy Wills

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Matthew 6: 19-21

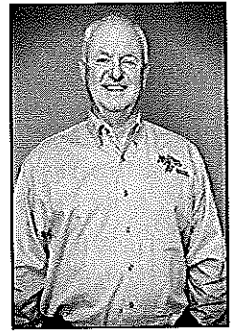
Too blessed to be stressed - I have read that painted on signs at craft fairs, on bumper stickers and heard it in everyday conversations. One day, I am going to paint myself a sign that says "I am SO blessed that I am stressed"! What is it that stresses me out and creates anxiety in my life? There are too many activities to be involved in, too many clothes to wash, too many appointments, too many bills,...the list goes on and on! There are times when I am absolutely convicted as I clean my house and I work myself into one of these stressed out frenzies. The Holy Spirit whispers to me, "who bought all these overpriced toys, who has a multi-person wardrobe in every closet of this house, who wanted that shirt in every color, who joined that magazine club?"

I have come to the place in my life where I am beginning to ask myself, "Why do we store up all these things? What are the needs of my family and what are just wants? What blessings are we missing out on by pouring what we have into these THINGS?" Matthew 6:19-21 is a great reminder that we will not take any of this STUFF with us. If you have ever lost a family member and had to clean out their store house you know all too well that the things you keep and treasure decrease in value when you leave this earth. They end up being passed around, boxed up, dropped at a thrift store, or trashed. Our heavenly things that we treasure will not rust or rot away. Knowing this makes it easier to say no when you have the impulse to buy things that you really do not need or to over indulge just because you can. I am blessed and I do not want to be stressed because of the way I have used my blessings.

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Brother Garry

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Matthew 11:28-29

In this passage Jesus gives the invitation to come to Him and find rest. He also says we are to take His yoke upon us. The meaning of the yoke was to become His disciple or follower. Too many people are too weary and worn out and trying to find rest. You will never find rest in rules or even a day such as the Sabbath. The believer's true rest is in Christ but you have to come to Him and that simply means trust Him and give Him your burdens.

I heard about an African Missionary who picked up a man walking with a heavy load on his back and he let the man ride in the back of his truck. Later, realizing the man was standing in the back of the truck with his burden still on his back. The man told the missionary I did not know your truck could carry me and my burdens. Trucks can but Jesus can as well, give Him your burden's today!

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Amanda Cobb

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Philippians 2:14

As I was substitute teaching in kindergarten one day, a little girl began to whine and complain about something. Immediately all of the other students held up three fingers that made the "W" sign. When I asked what they were doing they said, "she is whining and when someone is whining, we hold up the "W" so they realize it." I loved it. God tells us in Philippians 2:14 to do EVERYTHING without complaining (whining). That can be very difficult at times but if God tells us to do it then He will equip us to do it.

I wonder how many times each day that God hears His children whine and complain about their life or their church? If only we had someone to hold up the "W" sign to us each time we were whining. It might help us realize it and maybe we would stop.

What about you? Are you a whiner? Make a conscious effort today to not complain or argue about anything!

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Julie Russell

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Proverbs 16:24

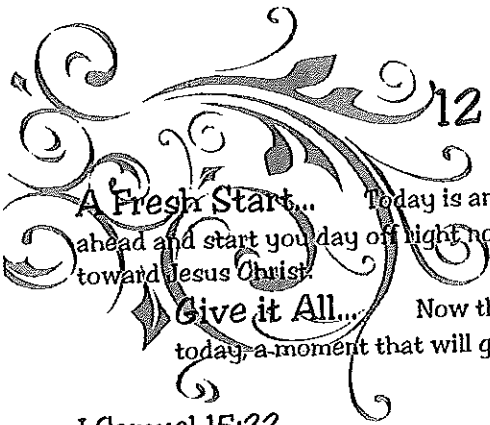
Words from our mouth can be a weapon of destruction or a tool of encouragement and life. It is all how we use it. Our mouth is one of the areas that can cause us the greatest amount of trouble. We can say things that have extremely negative consequences in a matter of seconds. (read James 3:5-6) The power of words can change the course of a person's life. Once negative words are spoken, unfortunately, we cannot take them back. At that point, only an apology and forgiveness can take place. In order to make sure our words are good and uplifting to others, we must fill our heart with good thoughts. "Out of abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). If we fill our hearts with loving, praiseworthy and pleasant thoughts, it will cause us to speak the same type words. We must have the desire to speak words to build others up and not tear them down. Sometimes we are wise just to remain silent. This is, often, very challenging for us, especially when anger is involved. "A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control." (Proverbs 29:11). We must be slow to speak (Proverbs 29:20)

The most powerful thing we can do with our mouth is to bring someone into the saving knowledge of Christ. We must be bold to speak of our faith to anyone that God places in our path. We must be able to share the reason for the hope we have in us (1 Peter 3:15). Choose your words carefully today. Commit to speak only words which glorify our Lord and lift others up.

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Jennifer Harmon

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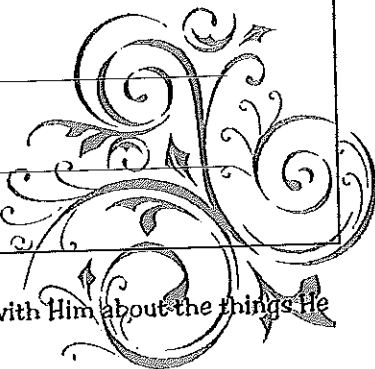
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I Samuel 15:22

When I served two years as a missionary in the Northern Africa and Middle East region, I had the opportunity to meet some wonderful people and listen to their incredible stories of God's blessings in what seemed the worst of circumstances. One couple shared the story that during their first term, their 16 year old son died of an asthma attack while playing in a high school basketball game in Kenya. This couple shared that after some time in counseling, they returned to the field and today are in their 25th year of service. Another group of missionaries shared about the tragic day when 3 of their co-workers were shot and killed by a Muslim extremist in the hospital they had worked in together for years. The survivors returned to work at the hospital following the tragedy.

The reality is that each of these individuals could have just decided to pack up, move back to the U.S. and give sacrificially to foreign missions instead of serving on the field themselves. But, that is not what the voice of God was telling them to do. For them, sacrificial giving to missions would have been good, but not as great as the simple obedience to what God had led them to do. What are you trying to put in the form of "sacrifice" that God is desiring just simple obedience? What has God told you to do? Pray and ask God to show you what obedience would be in your life today and do it.

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