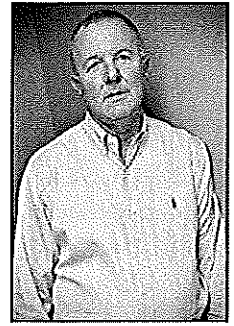


12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Rick

A Fresh Start... Today is another new day, a day that you want to begin in the right way. Go ahead and start your 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.

Luke 2:8-20

As you travel the Holy Land you will encounter churches that are close to, or have been built over Biblical sites such as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. While it is true that this is probably not the exact location of the birth of Christ, it has not stopped man from turning attention from the person of Christ to the place of Christ.

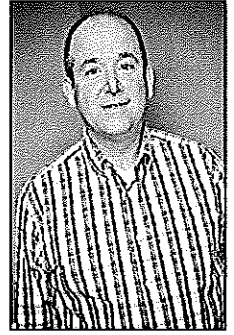
True worship will always lead to the person of Jesus Christ. The shepherds did not build a shrine at the place where the angels appeared to them, nor did they build a church at the manger. The shepherds never lost sight of the focal point of the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ. As I write this devotion, I have no idea where it will fall in the schedule, yet I believe that we must never allow anything tangible to steal our worship of Jesus Christ at any time. We may not build a physical shrine, but we may hold our position in the church higher than the Lord Himself. It could be a routine that we have allowed to take the place of the person of Christ. The enemy doesn't mind us being religious as long as we stay in the realm of generic God, and not specific Jesus. Today is the day that we must evaluate our lives to ensure that our worship is of Jesus and Him alone.

Prayer for today: Lord Jesus, I place You above all things in my life.

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.

12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Tim

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Hebrews 5:12-14

When Princess Diana was killed in a car crash, she was riding in a very expensive automobile. This vehicle I am sure had all the bells and whistles, and all the finest safety features that were available. No matter how much money was spent on the car, it was not safe without a well-trained driver that knew how and what to do.

Often in the church we spend money on a number of first class facilities with all the bells and whistles that are available but without training those who teach and minister, all those facilities are is pretty. Just like the car Diana rode in, it is what and how it is used that makes the difference.

If you teach, you will be judged more strictly (James 3:1), but there are many that will face a judgment for not teaching when God made it plainly clear to them that they should (Hebrews 5:12). If you teach, do not approach the opportunity lightly but seek God's will and approval daily.

If you do not teach, ask God to help you to discern His will more clearly. Often teaching is something that has to be cultivated with experience. God can use a person who will humble their self under His authority. Seek to be trained even if you do not feel called to teach. The wisdom you acquire will help you in your daily walk to avoid mistakes and errors as you go.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Tracy Wills

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Psalm 133:1 and Philippians 2:2

A family that is close knit provides stability, support, and joy for the members of the family. This type of family operates different from a family where the opposite is true. We have all seen families that were not stable, supportive, or joyful. They do not operate in unity! To have unity with one another means to be together, in agreement, harmony, in unison, or in one accord.

The same is true for a church family that is close knit. When members of a church take the time to become acquainted with one another and spend time together, then a church becomes a unit. Mary Tatem, author of *A Scrapbook of Life*, states that "When we take the time to become acquainted with everyone in our church and spend time together, our church becomes a unit. We understand our Heavenly Father better because He gives everyone a portion of revelation of His nature, but He doesn't give any one person the entire revelation." That is why you can have several people in a bible study class get different things out of the same lesson or set of scripture on any given week. Unity in a church sets the tone for worship, fellowship, and growth. Unity...means Together!

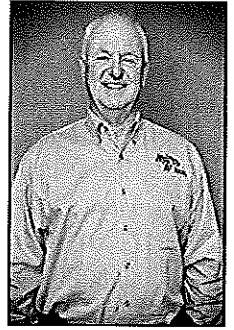
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Brother Garry

Genesis 26: 18

What a beautiful example Isaac gives the believer of today. He is following the example of his father Abraham who was the original digger of the wells. He made it his ministry to uncover the wells of his father.

The problem was the Philistine's had stopped them up. Even today there are many who always want to throw dirt on anything. Just today a pastor told me of some people in his church who favored only local missions. These people are trying to throw dirt on the Great Commission itself, Matthew 28:19-20. Others throw dirt on evangelism, giving, discipleship, and worship just to mention a few historic wells of our Father. We need some present day Isaacs! I want to be known and stand before God as a well digger not a dirt thrower.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Amanda Cobb

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James 1: 19-20

To me, this is one of the most challenging verses in God's word. Psalm 37:8 says *Refrain from anger and give up your rage; do not be agitated-it can only bring harm.* Anger is a very powerful emotion. I am the mother of three boys and there are days it seems that all my oldest two boys can do is fight. One day my anger was getting the best of me during one of their battles and I was thinking to myself, "whose kids are these in my house? Where did they learn to act and react when they are feeling angry or frustrated?" The Holy Spirit whispered to me..."that would be you and your husband." What?? Surely not, we hardly ever argue and if we do, we NEVER argue in front of our children.

Then God clearly asked me, "How do you respond to your children when you are angry or frustrated with them?" OUCH.

While our children have their own personalities and character traits, a lot of what they learn is taught at home through our actions. God calls us to surrender every aspect of our heart to Him. We need to teach our children how to handle their anger in a God-honoring way.

God convicted me that day, that I need to make sure my own behavior is kind, forgiving, self-controlled and compassionate.

Personal Notes:

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



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Proverbs 19:20

Julie Russell

Recently, speaking with my sister on the phone about my schedule for the day and complaining about being too busy, my sister, very lovingly responds, "Julie who makes your schedule?" I am thankful for a sister who will confront me with the truth and that day she nailed it! I am in charge of my schedule. As I am convicted about the busyness of my life, I realize that I must make God's priorities, my priorities. I must seek him in not just the big things in my life, but even in my everyday schedule. I know I must make God a full partner in every aspect of my life. He will lead me down the proper path: His path.

I challenge you today, to join me in seeking to allow God to reign over your heart and your life. I believe if we allow God's will to take top priority in our life, all the details of our daily lives will fall into place. As I am challenged, even as I write this, to make His priorities, my priorities, I know that doing so will lead to blessings that are too numerous to count. "*Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails.*" Proverbs 19:21

Personal Notes:

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Kenny

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.

Colossians 3:12

I can't believe I'm sharing this, but have you ever seen the show on TLC called What Not to Wear? If you haven't it's a show about people who dress in unusual, odd, unflattering, and inappropriate ways. Their friends and family film their unusual choice of styles and submit it to the show. If chosen, the participant has to hand over all of their clothes in return for a New York shopping spree and make over. But first the participants are interrogated and asked to explain their reasons for buying and wearing the clothes in their closet. As hard as it is for people to change and give up old habits- the show always seems to spruce up the person's style.

God tells us in Colossians, the type of spiritual clothing we should wear from day to day, but like The TLC show, sometimes we choose to display things that are not attractive or appropriate for Christians. We may put our needs before others, or react with sarcasm instead of love. Today let's clean out our closets and throw out the old clothes. Put on your Godly attire of compassion, kindness, humility, and gentleness.

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Hebrews 12:1-6

Brother Craig

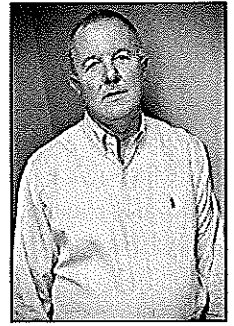
Matt Emmons is an Olympic Rifle Sportsman and represents the USA in the 50 Meter. In 2004 he was poised for the gold with a strong lead and needing only to hit the target to take the gold. He was in such a great position that he only had to hit the target, not the bulls' eye, just the target. He took aim and pulled the trigger thinking he was right on target. After his shot there was a brief applause and then the judge's ruled that he had crossfire into the wrong lane. He hit the wrong target and had to settle for a silver medal. After the competition he was asked about it and he replied, "At the last second I remembered I had not looked up to check the lane number like I usually do".

I believe there are times when we miss what we should be aiming at in our walk with the Lord. Maybe we totally miss the right way to love, or the right way to lead our kids. Maybe as husbands we miss the target of being a godly leader in our home. Maybe we miss opportunities to share with other people about Jesus. I'm sure we all have things we are trying focus on and we really want to score high. Matt Emmons said he forgot to look up and I wonder if that could be the issue for those of us who miss from time to time. We need to look up and look to Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Rick

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Luke 10:38

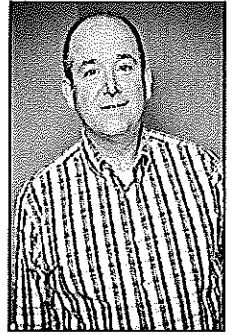
It has been said that home is a haven from the world. Because of this many people do not like to open up there home to outsiders. The home that we live in was built in 1898, and has been host to gatherings for Christmas, Thanksgiving, birthdays, and many other special occasions for family and friends. Martha opened her home to Jesus only to be distracted by preparing for her guest, while her sister Mary sat at the feet of Jesus not missing a word.

My point for today is that we must give Martha credit that she did open her home to Jesus. Now, it is true that she failed to fellowship with the Lord because of her being so busy, yet the open door is where the focus is for today. When we keep our homes closed to outsiders, we are really closing our hearts to the Lord. The homes that we live in actually belong to the Lord, and should be used to display fellowship, hospitality, and the love of Christ to all who may come. I am not inferring that we should remove the locks from our doors, but instead we should use our homes as ministry tools to promote fellowship and evangelism. I recently read about a family that invites one person who is not family to Christmas lunch each year. While this might not be for everyone, it does teach us to look for the opportunity to host a few friends or neighbors over for a cookout, or maybe just a glass of tea on the porch. We can also use our homes to promote our small groups with class fellowships, making sure to invite non-members. The next time you pull in to your driveway, ask yourself this question. Do I see a welcome sign?

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Tim

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Proverbs 19:21

I have always thought that most people wind up in the career they are in by happenstance. Some people spend years in college or in a particular profession only to find out that God had another vocation in mind for them. The years they spend in another vocation are not wasted for God uses the workplace and all areas of our life as a training ground for a much bigger assignment.

I read where Samuel Morse who invented the telegraph had desired to be an artist while he was growing up. Morse's mother and father passed away along with his wife. He went to Europe to spend time painting and reflect on the direction for his life. On the way back he overheard some men talking about their experiments in electromagnetism and Morse drew the conclusion that if electricity could be made visible in a circuit then intelligence could be transmitted by electricity. He then patented the telegraph.

God's plans for us do not always make sense or lead us down the path of logic and reason but we know that His plans always prevail and that His purpose that is perfect. Maybe I only thought that career choices were just happenstance.

Personal Notes:

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Tracy Wills

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Romans 8:28

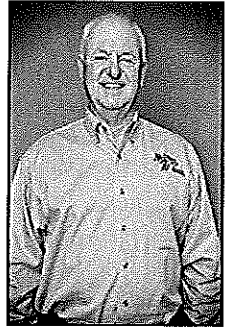
This is one of the verses that I remember learning as a child. It comes back to me frequently throughout life. As children of God, we have an assurance in the craziest of circumstances that everything is going to be all right. There have been times that I have been able to sit and watch this verse in action in other people's lives as well. There was a lady in our church recently diagnosed with breast cancer. She was handed a bad situation and it all worked out for the good. She is still giving God the glory for it all. I recall precious families in our community that lost their homes in the tornados this past April. I passed by their way recently and can see beautiful homes being built. I was reminded of this verse.

I am not downplaying the fact that not everyone survives cancer or that these families still lost everything that they own. It just all works out in the end and often better than we could have expected. Even in situations of death we can find God's hand in the situation. It is in these times that our lives are broken and in need of repair that He comes to us. He begins repairing our wrinkled lives and the torn places in our hearts. When disaster looms, we can take comfort in knowing God has not been caught off guard by any of it. He has the power to patch all of the components, bringing the good result He desires. Our responsibility is to love Him and to seek His help in fulfilling His purpose.

Personal Notes:

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Garry

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Philippians 4: 8

I love Philippians 4: 8 because I know of no other scripture that gives us a look at a true biblical attitude. We are to focus our life on things lovely, things pure, and things of good report. What a contrast that is to what the world is focusing on.

Watch the news, read the paper, or just listen to most conversations. If you're not careful this old world will flat out steal your joy. God's word warns us to be a separate and even a peculiar people. We do that by focusing on the eternal and not the temporal. We do that by thinking on "these things" maybe there really is power in positive thinking.

Personal Notes:

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Amanda Cobb

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Hebrews 12:1

What or who has you entangled so that you cannot do what God has called you to do? Is it an unhealthy relationship, your job, sports, a hobby, or a habit?

Listen to the definition of the word tangled: to catch and hold in or as if in a net or snare; to involve in something that hampers or obstructs. I have always heard the saying, "If the devil can't make you bad, he will make you busy."

What has Satan thrown on you to hinder you from being obedient to God?

Re-evaluate your life today and see what has you so tangled up that you can't serve.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Julie Russell

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

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Galatians 6:14

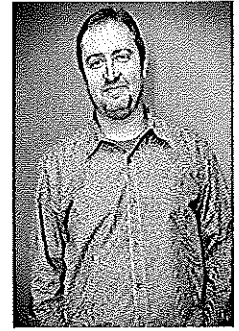
As we consider the sacrifice that Christ made as he died on the cross, we should be extremely humbled and grateful. Today, as we spend this time with the Lord, we should do so with heartfelt love and devotion to Him for giving His life so that we may live eternally. On the cross he bore the sins of all mankind, although his life was one of perfection. As our King, he wore a crown, not of precious jewels, but of thorns. His hands, which were scarred with the piercing of nails, were the hands that healed the sick and raised the dead. The crowd mocked him in disgust, and for each of us, he chose to remain on the cross.

As Christ humbled himself for each of us, we too, should humble ourselves and boast only in Christ. Our words and our witness to others should be a reflection of Christ in us. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving each day for his ultimate act of humility.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Kenny

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John 4: 1-26

I love the story when Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water. She was so surprised to find out that she was talking to our Messiah? There is a song that, Mark Hall from Casting Crowns wrote. It is called *The Well*. He made this statement, "the woman at the well thought she was standing by a well and talking to a man. In reality she was standing by a hole in the ground and was talking to the well. She thought she had already found her source, but she was dying of spiritual thirst. We often come to the Father with buckets of our own, but we don't always want to wait for Him to fill it. We try to fill our buckets with the things we think we need and then we ask God to bless our ideas, our source, and our well. We soon realize that Jesus is not the "blesser" of our plans; but rather the author of our life. He is our source and any other well we attempt to draw from is just a hole in the ground.

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Psalm 55:22

Brother Craig

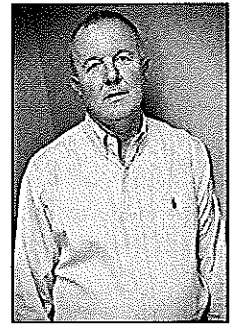
Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Russian literary genius was imprisoned in a horrible Siberian camp because of his religious and political views. He had no contact with the outside world and was subjected to strenuous work under adverse conditions. Frustration drove him to consider suicide, but his faith would not allow it. Instead, he thought of a plan that would end his life. He would attempt escape and let the guards kill him. Just as he was about to run, another prisoner whom he had never seen before came and stood in front of him. Alexander felt he could almost read his thoughts. The prisoners were not allowed to speak, so with a stick, the stranger drew a cross in the dirt and walked away. Alexander knew he was sent from God and was convicted about what he planned to do. He decided to rest in the Lord and trust Him. Miraculously, within a few days he was released to Switzerland and was a free man.

We are often tempted to take things into our own hands aren't we? Can I encourage you today to simply cast your care on the Lord and trust Him? Believe and follow in His timing and plan for His purpose.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Rick

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Joshua 3:14-17

The time had now come for Israel to enter the Promised Land. The journey had taken over 40 years. During this time the people had suffered because of their disobedience, yet now with new leadership they found themselves at the River Jordan.

The river was overflowing because of the rainy season, making the water deep, swift, and dangerous. Once again the people of God were brought to a moment of trusting God to help them cross over to the other side, just like their ancestors did at the Red Sea. God would provide again dry ground for His people.

We as believers often find ourselves at the waters edge spiritually speaking. The water seems dark, and dangerous. The water is too wide to try cross on our own. It might be family issues, or financial problems. Sometimes we may have crossed back over on our own during a spiritual dry season, now only to be longing to come back home. I do not believe in a "name it, claim it" Gospel, but I do believe that our God can make a way for us in accordance with His will. If you are standing at the waters edge today, you may say there is no way over to the other side, yet with God all things are possible.

God will make a way where there seems to be no way,
He works in ways we cannot see, He will make a way for me.
He will be my guide, hold me closely to His side,
With love and strength for each new day,
He will make a way, He will make a way.

Don Moen

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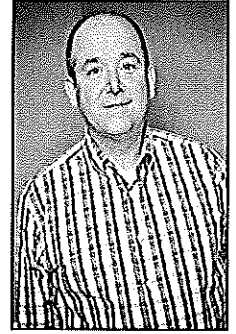
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Brother Tim

James 1:19-20

Anger is the warning light on the dash panel of what drives us. The light comes on and tells us that something is wrong and needs our immediate attention. The source of anger is usually some unmet expectation we have of someone or the trespass of our personal rights. Often we believe we are entitled to some particular outcome in a situation and when that does not transpire anger arises and the warning light is on.

At the core of our anger we usually find pride is at stake or fear of what others may think, some unknown outcome, or the fear of rejection stabs us where it hurts the most. Someone has said that the circumstances of life, the events in my life, and the people around me in life do not make me the way I am, but reveal the way I am.

Consider your words, measure them carefully and remember what you say in response will be remembered far beyond whatever the circumstance or crisis of the moment is. Don't allow the radiator of your heart to boil over and burn those around you. Think before you speak and be quick to listen. Evaluate every outcome and allow for anger to subside. Then you may earn the right to speak with wisdom and authority.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Tracy Wills

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Psalm 147

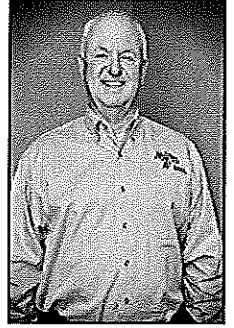
"Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely." (verse 1) I love the book of Psalms because I have a love for music and poetry. This particular chapter is a great reminder to me of just how big God is. When we focus on whom He is and what He has done, it makes us want to praise Him. As I read this chapter, I find myself wanting to add my own praises. Start a praise page where you can write down thoughts of praise. We often do what I call "Praise Over Your Plate". We will go around the table and everyone shares something that they want to praise God for or something that shows how great He is.

God is so mighty that He doesn't need our help to do any of the things listed in this chapter. But as His children, He allows us to be a part of His goodness. For instance, in verse 3 "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." He doesn't need us to carry out the promises of this verse. But He allows us the privilege of comforting people. Maybe it is a casserole dish, personal visit, card, or prayer. We demonstrate His love within us when we care about a person's grief. We are acting as messengers to assist in the healing process. Praise Him and reflect on who He is today.

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.

12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Garry

A Fresh Start... Today is another new day, a day that you want to begin in the right way. Go ahead and start your 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.

Joshua 1: 6

Joshua's word to the people on the edge of the land of promise was to be strong and of good courage. They had battles to fight and victories to win. He knew it was going to take a special kind of people and faith to conquer Canaan's enemies.

Strength and courage are still necessary today to do kingdom work. My Pastor Dr. Jim Knight would always say we need low maintenance, high impact Christians. When my kids were small they had a toy called a big wheel. It was pretty much a plastic tricycle. But for all who are familiar with a big wheel it was a high impact, low maintenance toy. You could not tear it up, or wear it out; you just eventually gave it away. Joshua's advice and my analogy is today we need more big wheel Christians.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Amanda Cobb

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Isaiah 43: 18-19

We are not to keep dwelling on things that have happened in our past. God tells us to be alert and be present because He is about to do something brand new! He has something brand new for you, your family and your ministry. Wouldn't you hate to miss what He has for your life because you are always looking back and never really looking ahead?

God seeks to deliver us from the sins of our past and move us toward the promise of our future.

Are you going to dwell on your past or dive into the future with God as your anchor?

I would much rather be a diver instead of a dweller. What about you?

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Julie Russell

Titus 2:7-8

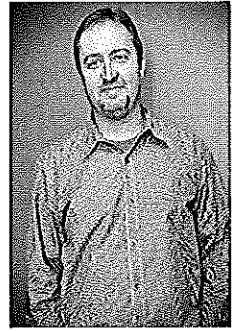
“Monkey see, monkey do” is a common phrase that we find to be true, especially in children. I remember seeing my children imitate me and their dad many times. It always made me stop and think about what kind of role model I was being. Children imitate those that they are around. As parents, we often feel like our words fall on deaf ears, but our actions never do. Children are always looking at us and imitating us. With so many negative role models in our world today, we, as parents must reflect Christ in all that we do. We must set a Christ-like example for our kids and realize that our actions mold the character of our children.

Paul wrote to the church of Philippi, “Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:9). We should be able to say this to our children with confidence. Be an example today that reflects obedience to our Lord. Demonstrate to those around you a walk with Christ. What a blessing it is to see children following in the footsteps of Godly parents.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Kenny

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Ephesians 4:13

I looked up the definition of unity and found this meaning. - *A whole or totality as combining all its parts into one.* For twenty years of my life I worked on and rebuilt engines. It amazes me how all the parts work together. The bottom end of a motor has a crank, which is connected to rods and then to the pistons. The crank is connected to the timing chain, and then it is bolted to the camshaft. Wow, are you with me so far? The camshaft has lifters riding on the lobes of the cam. The lifters have push-rods going to the rocker arms and from the rocker arms to the valves. Ok, I know what you are thinking, "Kenny, where are you going with this." The point is that it takes all of the parts working together to make an engine run! If you take a single part away, the engine won't run correctly or it may not even run at all.

The church is very similar. We must stand united as a family in order to run smoothly. Every person must do their part to ensure that God's work is completed. Let's keep Christ first in all we do so that we stand united as believers in Christ!

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12 STEPS TOGETHER

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Brother Craig

Colossians 3:1-11

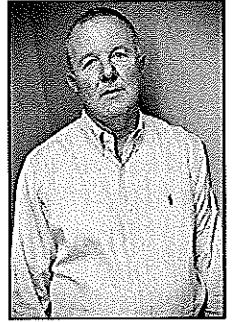
I recently read a story about the two Collyer Brothers of Manhattan who were never satisfied and it finally ended their lives. When police found their bodies one had been crushed under a pile of trash and the other starved to death. When cleaning out the house they removed 130 tons of trash and 10 tons of valuables that sold at auction for about \$2,000. The estate sold for \$91,000 which in 2008 would have been 1.2 million. This life apart from Christ will never satisfy and you will die trying to be satisfied.

As Christ followers we have put the things of the world behind us and we are living in a new way. As we live in His way we are looking at His example and understand that, as verse eleven says, Christ is all in all. We can find total satisfaction in Him alone.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Rick

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Matthew 2:1-6

The birth of Christ is an amazing story. We know about Mary, Joseph, the Innkeeper, Angels, and the Shepherds. We also know that some time after the birth of Jesus; Magi from the east came seeking the "King of the Jews" by going to what seemed like the most logical place to find Him. That is Jerusalem; the spiritual center of Judaism. Bethlehem and Jerusalem are only a few miles apart, which make it hard to believe that those who lived so close to the King of Kings, were not aware of His presence. King Herod had to consult the chief priests and scribes to determine where the Messiah would be born, because he was not aware of what had been written by the prophets. Even the religious leaders missed the birth announcement. The very God they claimed to worship each day was now very near, yet they missed the opportunity to see God in the flesh, and maybe even hold the One that really held them.

The Bible teaches that God is omnipresent, yet it is possible to miss Him if we are not careful. Sometimes we are in a hurry, walking past the person whom we should stop and help. Sometimes we are speaking when we should be listening for His voice. We may miss Him if we close our heart, wallet, or refuse to give of our time. Let's spend this day looking for every opportunity to worship The King of Kings!

"Open the eyes of my heart, I want to see you."

Paul Baloche

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Brother Tim

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I Peter 4:12-13

We have never been promised that the road would be easy and it is good that it is not. If we never experienced pain, trials and suffering we would miss the understanding of what He has done for us. It seems logical to us that God would protect us from all pain but that is not the way He has worked it out. All the Old Testament saints suffered much but they became stronger for it.

The health and wealth gospel would have you to believe that everything will come to you easily. Those who teach such doctrine are pedaling a counterfeit gospel. The Lord has not promised us a free pass from pain but He has promised us grace and ultimate deliverance from pain.

Remember there are no coincidences in the life of a Christian. God is in control and nothing happens that He does not allow to happen and if He allows it to happen it is a teachable experience for us. His Word says ²⁸ *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Romans 8:28 (KJV)

As you go throughout your day, look inside the pain and circumstances for the nugget He is providing for you to learn from. Vance Havner said God marks across some of our days "Will Explain Later".

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Tracy Wills

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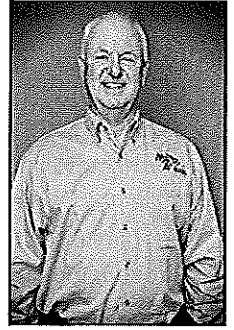
Ephesians 4:32

Gloria loved to scrapbook and document family history. She had spent the last two years making a family album with the oldest family pictures she owned. She spent many hours working on this priceless possession. She finished just in time to take the book on a road trip to visit family. Everyone loved her book and praised the time and effort that she put into creating it. When she arrived home from the long trip they made the discovery that the book was missing. Alan had placed it on the hood of the car as he was packing the luggage in and had left it there. They had driven through rain the entire day and there was no hope that the scrapbook would ever be found and salvageable. Gloria's anger at her husband of 34 years could not be contained. The couple faced a crisis. Gloria could let this accident threaten her marriage. Or she could focus the energy required to keep her wrath festering at restoring her marriage with her forgetful yet remorseful husband. As important as her keepsake was, she could have thrown away her marriage over a possession. Possessions never bring more pleasure and value to our lives than relationships. To overcome a breach in a relationship, one must forgive offenses. Christ died a horrible death to allow us to find forgiveness for our offenses, both large and small. Keeping a picture of His crucifixion in the scrapbook of our lives gives us motivation to put away our anger and hurt to forgive others.

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Brother Garry

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Philippians 4: 8

I love Philippians 4: 8 because I know of no other scripture that gives us a look at a true biblical attitude. We are to focus our life on things lovely, things pure, and things of good report. What a contrast that is to what the world is focusing on.

Watch the news, read the paper, or just listen to most conversations. If you're not careful this old world will flat out steal your joy. God's word warns us to be a separate and even a peculiar people. We do that by focusing on the eternal and not the temporal. We do that by thinking on "these things" maybe there really is power in positive thinking.

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Amanda Cobb

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II Corinthians 10:5

Did you know that Satan strongly encourages ideas, temptations, doubts and negative thoughts in our mind? We must be on guard ALL the time.

In Beth Moore's book "Breaking Free", she states that the two most horrible seasons of warfare and temporary bondage in her Christian walk did not come in times of rebellion. They both followed huge spiritual markers in her life. She goes on to say that she thought if she ignored the devil, he would ignore her. We must ask God to renew our minds each and every day. Stay in God's word and realize that Satan is real and he is looking to devour Christians. Always remember that your negative thoughts and temptation does not come from God.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and yet He was tempted by Satan (Luke 4: 1-2).

Temptation often comes upon us strongest when we are closest to God. – Belinda Webb

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12 STEPS TOGETHER



Julie Russell

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Proverbs 16:3

Recently my oldest daughter, Brianna, has acquired her driving license. What a challenge it has been for me to sit in the passenger's seat and let her be in control of the wheel. Especially in rush hour traffic in Charlotte, North Carolina. As we were traveling through this busy city, I wanted so badly to say, "stop, let me do the driving!" However, I handled it well (Brianna may not agree!) and we made it through the traffic. I had no real reason to be concerned. Brianna is an excellent driver. I was just uncomfortable sitting in the passenger's seat letting someone else navigate through the crazy traffic. Simply put, I wanted to be in control!

I am convinced that as Christians too many times we are unwilling to let God be in control of our lives. Letting go and letting God take control is not always an easy thing to do! Jeremiah 29:11 tells us that God has plans for us and that those plans will lead to success. If we know the outcome with God in charge, why do we fail to let him lead us? We must allow him to be in charge of every detail of our lives. God says, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye" (Psalm 32:8). Allow God to take your life and direct it with his eye. His vision is much clearer than ours and it will lead us to a life of joy!

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Hebrews 10:25

There are many types of glues, tapes, nails and adhesive materials available to use when you want to stick things together. We have spiritual glue that holds us together as well. Hebrews 10:25 tells of the ingredients of the glue. You need a church family, worship, and fellowship. Like adhesives, we need to stick together with our fellow believers in our church body. Why do we have to go church? Well- we GET to go to church so that we can stick together with our fellow believers in our church body. When we come together for fellowship and worship with other Christians we learn and grow. We also protect ourselves from drying out and taking a detour in our spiritual walk. When pieces of an item become unattached they are more likely to get lost. Anybody that has kids with board games, a husband with a socket set, or a woman with too many shoes has experienced that first hand. Anything not attached is harder to keep up with. The same is said for us if we are not attached to a church. When we are not attached to a church family or participating in church life, we are prone to lose our enthusiasm for God. It is then that we will find ourselves drifting into ways that are contrary to His will. There's safety and joy in fitting into the life and worship of a good church. I am thankful for my church and the people that are stuck like glue with me at Mt Zion. Thank God for your church family today and evaluate whether or not you are attached to a small group.

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