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# GOD'S PLAN: A Plan for Success

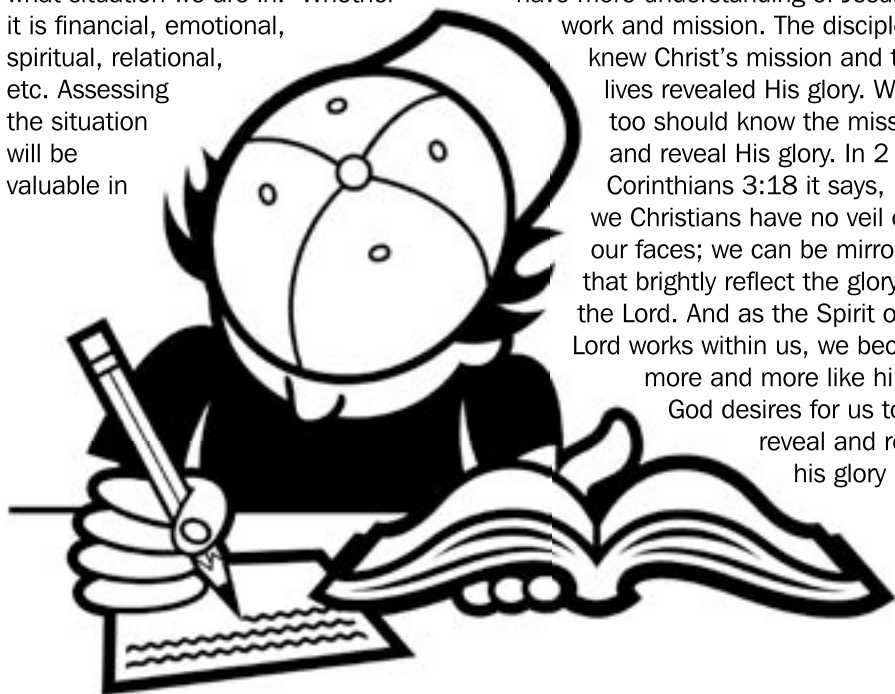
By Tyler Barnett

If you fail to plan, plan to fail. Having a plan in life is an integral aspect to achieve success. All the great military leaders of our past and present have planned their actions right down to each individual rifleman. A solid plan for the future is a good way for us as Christians to become proactive, rather than reactive in our futures. The Lord has a plan for us and hopes that our plan is congruent with His. It is the Lord's plan that dictates: how our past affects our present, our future, and us. A solid plan is one based on the guidance of the Spirit and the teachings of The Word. We must make plans for our future, but we must also be flexible and faithful to what God dictates for us.

Here are a few steps that have worked for the Marines when they plan for the future:

## SITUATION

It is always a good thing to assess what situation we are in. Whether it is financial, emotional, spiritual, relational, etc. Assessing the situation will be valuable in



understanding our plan and executing it. Overstating a situation will lead us to overreact, blowing small issues or goals out of proportion. Underestimating the situation can lead to problems and possibly failure. Take for example, a plan to incorporate an extra class into the semester. With assessment and consideration, we see that it may be possible. This first step of considering our goal is crucial to the successful execution of a plan.

## MISSION

As Christians, what is our mission? Every church has a mission statement but what is your own personal mission statement? Are you spiritually alive to build others up, to evangelize or to care for a family? A good start for any Christian is to consider John 17:4, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." As we grow in His grace and knowledge we naturally

have more understanding of Jesus' work and mission. The disciples knew Christ's mission and their lives revealed His glory. We too should know the mission and reveal His glory. In 2 Corinthians 3:18 it says, "But we Christians have no veil over our faces; we can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him."

God desires for us to reveal and reflect his glory

and we can only do this by getting to know our Savior.

This is but one aspect of God's plan for us. When one buys a new gadget, where do they look for instructions on how to use it? They look to the manufacturer or creator. In the same way all Christians must first look to the Creator for guidance. God created us, so what better direction to turn to when we have questions about our purpose? Some turn to the ways of the world to find despair and meaninglessness. We do have a purpose and it is in God's plan for each and every one of us to fulfill that purpose. Know God's plan for you and make it your plan to fulfill His plan.

## EXECUTION

This is a topic that should have its own book, rather than just a paragraph, so it will be left to the Bible. The Bible gives us guidance on how to achieve our goals in life as well as achieve spiritual goals so it is integral in the planning process. Now that we have put some thought (or rather a lifetime of thought) into our mission, how will we get there? How are we to execute God's plan? Due to our humanity and sinful nature, failure is inevitable. At one time or another we have made mistakes and turned away from the Lord but do not despair; we can still get back on track. It is in our attempt that God finds pleasure. To acknowledge this impossibility and still choose to follow Him is when we begin to fulfill the Lord's plan. We must acknowledge the Creator and our sinful nature, ask Him for guidance, turn to Him and away from sin, and thank Him for carrying us through.

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### ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

Once you have assessed your objective, and how it relates to God's plan, it is time to work out the particulars. Back to the example of adding an extra class: you will have to buy your books, budget more time for studying, rearrange after school activities, and possibly work less hours. God's plan for you includes prayer, worship and a congregation of like-minded Christians. You will have to manage your time and efforts accordingly if you want to achieve your goal. There are certain opportunity costs for our decisions. If we choose to follow Christ and His plan for us, we forego the pleasures of the world.

No matter how well we plan, we will still be faced with obstacles that must be assessed and overcome. This is what makes life interesting and goal achievement so sweet. God has an answer to this: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance" (James 1:2-3). What a unique viewpoint, rejoice in set backs, as they make you stronger. As the saying goes, "whatever does not kill you only makes you stronger." Following God's plan is not an easy one however; evil will tempt those who choose to follow Christ. Plan for this as well and know, "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him" (James 1:12). If you choose to follow God's plan and you persevere, you have already succeeded in God's plan!

### COMMAND AND SIGNAL

A recipe for success includes the guidance of the Word, the Spirit and knowledgeable people around you. In our example, we establish some points of contact that will help us take our extra class such as a counselor at school, our supervisor at work, someone in the class and possibly someone who has been through the same situation.

It is important to know the signs or signals that you are struggling with. If you have problems, once again, turn to the Word, prayer, and fellow Christians around you.

Make plans for your future but realize that they are YOUR plans. If they are not holy and pleasing to God, change your plan in consideration of the Lord. In all that you do, plan to follow God's plan and you cannot go wrong! i

## SETTING PERSONAL LIFETIME GOALS

Setting goals for yourself can help you see where you want to go and all you have already accomplished. It will raise your self-confidence because you will take pride in what you have accomplished and you recognize your abilities. To begin you must first think about what you want to achieve in your lifetime. Ask yourself these questions:

**Career:** What kind of job would you like to have? Have far do you want to go in your career?

**Education:** What kind of education do you need to have? How far do you want to go with your education? What kind of degree do you want? Is there anything in particular that you want to learn? What skills will you need to achieve other goals?

**Family:** Do you want to get married? Do you want to have kids? Will you make a good wife/husband? Will you make a good parent?

**Financial:** How much money do you want to earn? Do you want to buy a home? Do you want to invest?

**Physical:** Do you want to be healthy as you get older? Is there an athletic goal you have? How will you achieve this?

**Pleasure:** What are the things you enjoy doing? What hobbies would you like to learn? Do you want to travel?

**Public Service:** Do you want to make the world a better place? Do you want to help your community? What could you do?

**Religion:** Do you want to be baptized? Do you want to be in God's Kingdom? What are you going to do to ensure that?

Prioritize your goals and then make a plan. Decide what you want to accomplish in 25 years, 10 years, 5 years, 1 year and 6 months. You have now taken your lifetime goals and broken them into long and short-term goals. This makes it a little more manageable. Finally, goal setting is as simple as setting a daily to-do list of what you need to do now to accomplish your goals. It could be researching a job, filling out an application for school, taking a class, a job interview, opening a savings account, etc.

Constantly re-evaluate your goals and check to see that you are staying motivated and on task. Review, update and modify your goals. Once you achieve a goal, enjoy the satisfaction of it. Think about what you have learned from achieving the goal and how it will help you achieve others. Goals change as you get older. It is okay to let a goal go if it is not important anymore and add a new one. So, now GO OUT AND SET SOME GOALS!

# YOU *NEED* TO SET GOALS

By Mike James

For a Christian, the most important goal that can be attained is entering the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). But like any goal, you have to set up a plan that includes specific practices in order to achieve the goal. An old saying states, "A journey of 1,000 miles begins with one step." In other words, to accomplish your goals you have to complete a number of smaller tasks in order to achieve the ultimate goal. Let's look at achieving the goal of getting into the Kingdom and in the process we will see the major points you will need to achieve any goal.

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**...if we stick to our commitment and persevere, despite some pain, we will be resurrected at Christ's second coming and will attain our goal.**

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In order to get into God's Kingdom we must first come to an awareness that God is real and that this world is in need of change. Once we determine the reality of God we will seek to find out what God desires. This will lead us to His Word where we will learn that we need to repent and be baptized. We will begin to follow God's law and grow in knowledge and understanding about God. This increase in knowledge will lead us into many operative practices like fasting, Bible study, prayer, church attendance, tithing, meditation, evangelism and good works. Finally,

if we stick to our commitment and persevere, despite some pain, we will be resurrected at Christ's second coming and will attain our goal. That's all it takes. Sounds easy right? Well let me now get into the details of what I've just said and you will be able to find the keys to goal achievement.

**STEP 1**  
*step 1* The first point in your goal achievement plan is having the idea of what you want to accomplish. When we realize as Christians this world is not all it's cracked up to be, we start to ponder a better world. Eventually we learn about God's Kingdom. So what I would call Step 1 is having some type of **vision**, an idea that you are really passionate about. Without the passion it will be hard to sustain the work you will need to complete your goal.

**STEP 2**  
*step 2* is doing **research**. For example, in my Kingdom of God goal above, after I realized God was real I set out to begin learning all about God. This process is still with me to this day and will be till I die. My research led me to the church. Once you figure out what your goal is, you need to begin to learn all that you can about how to achieve it.

**STEP 3**  
*step 3* is **setting up practices** that will be stepping-stones to achieving your goal. This is usually the toughest part. It will take discipline and commitment for you to continue to work your plan on a continuing basis. Many goals are abandoned because people do not have the stamina to continue to do

the tasks they need to on a consistent basis. It's up to you to, just do it.

**STEP 4**  
*step 4* One other thing you will need to be aware of in achieving your goal is there will be roadblocks along the way. Many people are stopped because of unforeseen occurrences. What you have to remember is that you can be assured achievement of your goal will not always go according to your plan. That's why I would say step 4 is being **flexible**. If one door closes in your face don't forget there are many other doors to try. For a Christian trying to get into the Kingdom, a roadblock could be a recurring sin or doubt about your belief. God did not give up on man even though man continually failed God. God foresaw all the possible problems (roadblocks) in leading man to salvation and created a plan that would help us get there despite ourselves.

**STEP 5**  
*step 5* The fifth and final step in achieving your goal is **accountability**. Jesus was accountable to the Father for a number of things while He lived a human existence. Even though it was tough, Jesus made it through because He went to the Father in prayer to help get through the tough times. Being accountable to someone other than yourself can help push you along (Matthew 26:39). You will need a mentor, friend, family member, coach, team or teacher to help you achieve your goals. Having someone there to talk over the issues and come up with new ideas for the roadblocks will make

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# IMAGINE WHAT GOD COULD DO

By Dr. W.P. "Ab" Abercrombie

Through the years I have taken note of my fluid and changing definition of success. When I was a young child, pleasing others seemed to be my goal, and I especially wanted my parent's approval for the things I did. Their evaluation was the only measuring stick I had. If they were happy with me, then I was a success.

By middle school I had discovered music and sports along with the recognition of others for accomplishments in each. The spirit of competition emerged and I quickly moved toward an orientation of "winning and losing" as I approached activities in my life. My parent's approval was still important, but I now viewed it as much more "conditional" in its nature. My father seemed more excited when I won "first chair" status in the trumpet section or when I made the starting lineup on the football team. Success, I determined, was much sweeter in the winner's circle.

High school brought the acute awareness of friends, females, and fun. By this time, my parent's approval was the antithesis of success. If they liked it, there must be something wrong with it. I wanted popularity, recognition, fellowship, and good times. If I was connected and included in "the group," this was my greatest achievement. I still loved competition and wanted to win, but not at the cost of my inner circle.

After winning an athletic scholarship to college I now focused on the next level of accomplishment. By this time my identity was that of a "jock." I loved being on the team, standing out, and being something special. I was known by the number on my jersey and my accomplishments on the field. I guess that identity would have sustained me longer if only I hadn't been such a "flop" at the collegiate level. In college the winner's circle is pretty small and needless to say, I was well beyond the outer rim.

Since I had built my entire reputation

as #75, there had to be a reorientation. "Winning," to coin a phrase, "isn't everything." I swallowed hard, looked around, and decided I needed to re-invent myself. I surmised that if I wasn't going to be an All-American, I'd better be smart and make a lot of money. So an "A" student I became, graduate school I pursued, a doctorate I received, and a private practice I built.

I was educated; I owned my own business; I had a beautiful wife; a baby daughter; a house on the bay; and I even had my old football stories to tell. It's amazing how much greater you were, the longer you are away from the game! I was the unhappiest "winner" you could have ever met.

So I decided I needed to work harder; build more business; hire associates and dominate the market. I worked 50, 60, 70 hours a week. But the harder I pressed, the greater my desperation and pain. I had spent the past 35 years of my life chasing the world and alas, the world had won. My proclaimed victory had in fact become my greatest defeat.

My call to reality came from the Gospel of Matthew, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (16:26).

I had accepted Christ as my Savior when I was 17 years of age. I knew the truth for years but failed to apply it to



my life. When I was grasping for answers in college, I came to a critical point. I felt God call me into the ministry and knew in my heart that I should transfer to a Christian university that had recruited me. But instead of yielding to my identity as a “new creation” I sought out the wisdom of the world; I embraced its definition of success; and I proceeded to run from God for over 15 years.

Imagine what God could do with my athletic drive and desire to win. The Apostle Paul wrote with an understanding of competition and victory, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize” (1 Corinthians 9:24).

The key here is the prize one seeks to obtain. While I was chasing after earthly reward and recognition, neither of which will endure, Paul encourages the believer to pursue an everlasting outcome for his labor by answering God’s call, “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).

Imagine what God could do with my academic prowess and drive for education. Paul counseled his student Timothy to prepare himself for the work of the Lord, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

Approved means “accepted and pleasing” to God. He is pleased when we devote ourselves to the “word of truth”; to understanding it fully; and to apply it correctly. When I directed my life toward the world and away from God, I resisted the course of learning He had prescribed and embraced the counsel of man. God tells us in Proverbs 1:5, “Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.”

Imagine what God could do with my work ethic, my energy, and my willingness to toil for long hours. Until my rededication to Christ, all of my hard work had been in service of the self and in pursuit of the world’s approval. If only I had acted with the same zeal for God’s favor.

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ

you are serving” (Colossians 3:23-24).

When I realized that my citizenship, my inheritance, and my rewards lie in Heaven, my sense of responsibility shifted from the immediate to the eternal. Building “treasure in Heaven” comes only through the submission of the self, to the call of the Father. It is a call that is answered out of love and surrender to

the work He has defined for each of us.

“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Imagine what God could do with a submitted sinner like me...i

## Creating Self-Motivated Children

Don’t reward with materialistic prizes or withholding punishment. These rewards will cause children to be motivated to do more for those prizes instead of being motivated to do better. Your child should be intrinsically motivated to want to do better; in other words, a self-motivated child who enjoys the feeling of accomplishment.

- Let your child make his/her own choices. When he/she has a buy into it he/she is more likely to be excited about it and increase his/her effort. For example, ask your child what he/she would like to study in the Bible.
- Expect your child to do well. Set high expectations for him/her but be warm and loving about them.
- Encourage your child. Use a lot of positive feedback.
- Foster all of your children working together with each other.
- Use “teachable moments” to help guide what you teach your child and what your child needs to learn.
- Give your child opportunities to learn and grow.
- Let your child make mistakes and then teach him/her how to fix his/her mistakes. Let your child learn from his/her failures.
- Teach your child the relationship between effort and success.
- Support your child.

## Helping Your Child Set Goals

1. Set your own goals first and be an example for your children.
2. Sit down with your child and together come up with some short-term goals for your child. Depending on the age and maturity of your child, you could also do long-term goals. These goals could be about getting an A in math on the next report card, making a goal in the soccer game, or memorizing the books of the Bible by the end of summer.
3. Help your child figure out the steps to achieving his/her goal.
4. Check in periodically with your child to see how he/she is doing with accomplishing his/her goal. If the goal needs to be re-evaluated and modified, do so.

Once your child achieves his/her goal make a big deal about it with a lot of positive reinforcement, praise and love. Don’t use materialistic things to reward your child for accomplishing his/her goal. Knowing he/she has made you proud of him/her will be more satisfying. This will also cause your child to want to accomplish more goals and set them higher.

# THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

By Loren Chamberlain

The Bible is made up of sixty-six books explaining the whole “Purpose of Life.” It is a sad thing to say, but most people on earth have no idea of the awesome reason why they are here, much less the purpose of it all, even after reading the Bible.

Present estimates put the number of galaxies in the known universe at over ten thousand million, million, million individual stars or “suns.” And this is probably underestimated. Why did God design such an immense universe? And why did God create such an innumerable number of stars? For no purpose, for some purpose, for an astounding purpose?

## THE PURPOSE OF HUMAN LIFE

In the Beginning, God created the animals “After their Kind,” “God made the wild animals according to their kinds” (Genesis 1:25). God created man after “His own Kind,” after the “God Kind.” Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). And again it is stated, “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). The phrase “after its kind” is never applied to “man.” The reason is because the primary purpose of human life is not to physically reproduce after the human kind, but to be spiritually reproduced after the “God Kind.”

God the Father and Jesus Christ are reproducing themselves. They are enlarging their God family. They are begetting sons and daughters, “Real” sons and daughters. Literal members of the God family, that’s the purpose of human life. That’s the purpose for this earth and for that matter the entire Universe! The apostle Paul stated, “For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name” (Ephesians 3:14).

## THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE

What could bring us to the point of believing such an awesome possibility of the Universe being used in God’s overall plan to create new members of the God family? And how could we possibly base this postulation on the Bible, could it be logic and common sense?

Everything God the Father does is for a purpose. “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace...But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40). “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). God is not a wasteful God. He created the entire Universe and it would be out of character for Him not to use it. We must remember, God knows every star by its own individual name. “He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name” (Psalm 147:4). This is truly amazing when we realize how many stars there are.

In the Book of Revelation, chapters 21 and 22, God really does kindle our curiosities and imaginations. With this briefest of information He whets our appetites.

In the “new heaven” and “new earth,” those who have qualified and who will by then have been changed into the God kind, will still be living on this earth. “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (Revelation 21:1-2). Also in verse 24, it is stated, “The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.”

But with all this said we must understand that God





also reveals, “Man will not be forever limited to the earth. “You [God] have put all things [and “all things” means all things!] in subjection under his [man’s] feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him” (Hebrews 2:8).

What are “all things”? God tells us in the book of Hebrews 1:10 (quoting Psalm 102:25): “...In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.” “*The heavens—the entire universe—is*” “all things.” And “all things” will eventually be put under man’s subjection and control. Man is destined to assist God in administering the whole universe.

What will we (“the saints” in Biblical language) do with the universe? As an initial project, we under the Father’s and Christ’s direct and personal authority, of course, will “*restore all things*” (Acts 3:21), the whole universe to its originally created orderly arrangement. “I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and who say to Zion, “You are my people”” (Isaiah 51:16). In the future, after the universe is put back into order, the God

→ **Our purpose is to fulfill God’s purpose.**

→ **God’s Purpose:**

A people who will reflect His glory	<i>Revelation 4:11</i>
To conform us to Christ	<i>Colossians 1:27</i>
To love His people	<i>1 John 3:1</i>
To establish His Kingdom	<i>Isaiah 46:9-10</i>
To accomplish His plan for good	<i>Romans 8:28-29</i>
To carry out His ways in our lives	<i>Isaiah 55:8-9</i>

→ **Our Purpose:**

To love God and others	<i>1 John 4:21</i>
To wait on God with hope	<i>Isaiah 64:4</i>
To trust God through suffering	<i>Phil. 1:29-30</i>
To serve God with reverent fear	<i>Deut. 10:20</i>
To fulfill God’s purpose	<i>Phil. 3:12</i>

Source: [Becoming a Woman of Purpose](#) by Cynthia Heald, Navpress 1994.

family will begin implementing the next stage in the Father’s overall plan. We can only guess at just what that will be because God does not reveal what we do not yet need to know. However, there are certain concepts that establish and set the main purpose and fundamental character of the Kingdom of God.

## THE INCREASE OF HIS GOVERNMENT

The greatest goal God can set His will to achieve is the reproduction of “Himself,” the creation of new sons and daughters in His God family. God is working toward this goal on earth at this time. That is the great purpose being worked out here below. There is no greater work. God the Father will literally beget billions of sons and daughters on this earth. “Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). It is entirely possible that the Father will continue to beget children even after His 7,000-year plan for earth has been completed. God the Father by begetting children expresses and manifests the very highest form of spiritual love—giving, sharing, selflessness, outgoing concern. Creating new God-plane Beings is the supreme act of selfless, outgoing love.

It is difficult for human beings to imagine an eternally increasing

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achieving your goal that much more sure.

Another facet of accountability is personal accountability. In achieving your goals an important key could be writing your goals down in a notebook and checking the notebook on a regular basis. This will help you carry through on the practices or commitments you will need to achieve as you begin to move toward reaching your goals. Never forget, as we read in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." So achieve your goals, but don't lose sight of the ultimate goal, entering the Kingdom of God. **i**

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number of members in the God family. It is also impossible for us to comprehend eternity. Even though we can't comprehend an eternally increasing number of children in the God family, we must understand that we are still faced with an eternity of time. The Scriptures seem to indicate there will be no end to the increase of God's family. "Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end" (Isaiah 9:7). What this verse emphasizes is the *increase of God's government shall have no end*. The key word is *increase*—the family of God forever increasing in number, area, power, responsibility, creativity, happiness, excitement, and fullness of life.

Is it possible, then, that this is what the enormity of this universe is for; territory, or growing room for the continually expanding family of God?

### **AN OCCUPIED UNIVERSE**

No matter how large the family of God becomes, we needn't worry about the Universe being over crowded. It is possible the known Universe is infinite in size. If it is not, we can be sure there is nothing too hard for the Lord and there is nothing impossible for God. He could, if He desired, stretch out the heavens even more and create even more stars. Jesus looked at them and said, "with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

God and His family are spiritual. Therefore all physical reality becomes inconsequential. Remember, all physical reality is temporary. "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18).

We realize from the verse we just read that physical reality is patterned after, and perhaps even formed from the much more real spiritual reality. We do not have to limit God's overall spiritual plan by the confines and limitations of His own physical creation as comprehended by our finite human minds. "Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Psalms eighty nine alludes to the unending plan of God to increase His family throughout the Universe: "I will sing of the love of the Lord forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. You said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations'" The heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones" (Psalm 89:1-5).

We must take special note of the following words and phrases: "forever" and "to all generations" in verse 1; "stand firm forever" and "in heaven itself" in verse 2; "establish your line forever" and "through all generations" verse 4; and "the heavens" and "the assembly of the holy ones" in verse 5.

"The assembly of the holy ones," spoken of here are the converted human beings who will have been born into God's family. The assembly or the congregation of the saints (God's family) is mentioned as "continuously increasing" and forever (eternity). In other words, a continuous, unending process of forever building up, and this could well be the magnificent future of God's family. God's government is never ending and is characterized by Peace! **i**

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# Trusting God

## FOR YOUR Success

By Anika Sandy-Hanson

American society focuses on education as the key to success. Children, as young as two-years-old, are placed in settings to increase their cognition and their ability to think. Over the course of my Ph.D. program, colleagues 10-20 years older who desire a doctorate degree have surrounded me. The saying goes that education is important for everyone from those 2 to 92, and most of us between those ages sometimes wonder what all the hard work is for. Why go to school, why study, why participate in extracurricular activities, why do any of it? One response is that education helps to ensure our success in the workplace. But is that the magic key? Examples from the Bible and from contemporary society say maybe not...especially if we have a different definition of success.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines success as, "the achievement of something desired, planned, or attempted." The second definition is, "the gaining of prosperity or fame." In our society success usually entails getting the money and recognition; thus, success has come to mean the attainment of career goals or the ability to get money and fame. This practice is not new; many Biblical figures were recognized for their fame. First Kings 4:31 highlights Solomon's

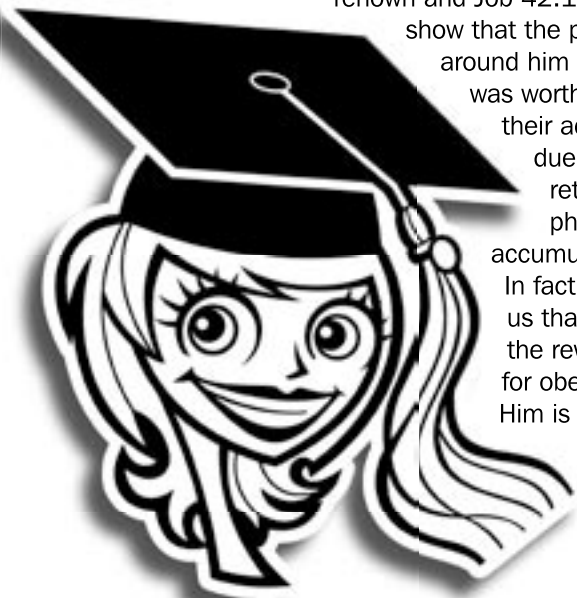
renown and Job 42:10-11 show that the people around him felt Job was worthy of their admiration due to his returned physical accumulations. In fact, God tells us that one of the rewards for obeying Him is physical blessings

as exemplified by Genesis 28. Whether we measure our success as these physical blessings or in some other way, can we really trust God to ensure that we achieve our goals?

The Bible shows us many examples of individuals who had to wait on God for their success. Genesis 12:2 is the first place we see God promising to make Abram into a great nation, not until Genesis 17:19 do we see any mention of Isaac, the son God intended to use to fulfill His promise to Abraham. In Ruth 1 it does not appear that God has destined Naomi or Ruth for great success, and even in Mark 15:31-32 it appears that Jesus Christ was defeated. Success appeared to have eluded the Messiah.

Analyzing the entire story shows us these Biblical figures did not abandon their trust in God and this faith allowed them to be successful. Abraham was blessed with Isaac in Genesis 21:3-5 and he lived to see a Godly and upright son who showed him and Sarah as successful parents. Ruth 4:13-17 shows us that Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz were blessed as a family. They trusted in God to deliver them from a difficult situation and they were successful in becoming married and having a family, one that stretched all the way to Jesus who also saw the success of his life's work. In Matthew 28:18-20 Yashua blesses his disciples and commands them to continue his successful work of spreading the Gospel and bringing others to salvation.

The stories of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac; Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz; and Jesus and His disciples are only three examples of why we can trust in God to ensure our success. From these individuals we can learn that true success is not in attaining career goals, a family full of children, fame, or fortune. Success comes in attaining the goal of obedience to God and alignment with His plan for our lives. Although we may not always know His plan for some areas, we do know His plan for our eternal souls. God wants us to be saved and be a part of His Kingdom; thus, when we focus on this goal and live according to the guidelines He set out for us, and then we can achieve success in all other areas of our lives. **i**



Is God involved in the lives of His creation? Has anyone seen great miracles like the ones Jesus performed?...

# Does God Care?

By Jeff Reed

It is believed by many in our present world that God does not actively participate in the events and lives of His creation. With scientific advances increasing and a growing reliance on human technology and knowledge, there are many that don't believe in God at all. Many who believe in God put Him in a far off place. They believe He has stopped being involved in the lives of His creation when they ask, do we see great miracles like the parting of the Red Sea, the Flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? Has anyone seen great miracles like the ones Jesus performed? Has anyone reading this article witnessed the blind receive sight, the deaf hear, or seen anyone raised from the dead? Have any angels appeared to you and made any proclamations? Is there a lack of evidence that God is actively involved in the world? Does God care?

We can find the answers to these difficult questions in a very unlikely place. The book of Esther records the historical events that are commemorated by the Jewish observance of Purim. This book is particularly about one very important event. It is about the Jewish nation's deliverance from attempted genocide. If this genocide had occurred, then the promise of the Messiah would not have been fulfilled. Jesus was prophesied to be descended from this Jewish nation. It is crucial to God's plan and purpose that the Jewish nation continued to exist. Without Jesus coming to pay the penalty for our sins, we all would be lost.

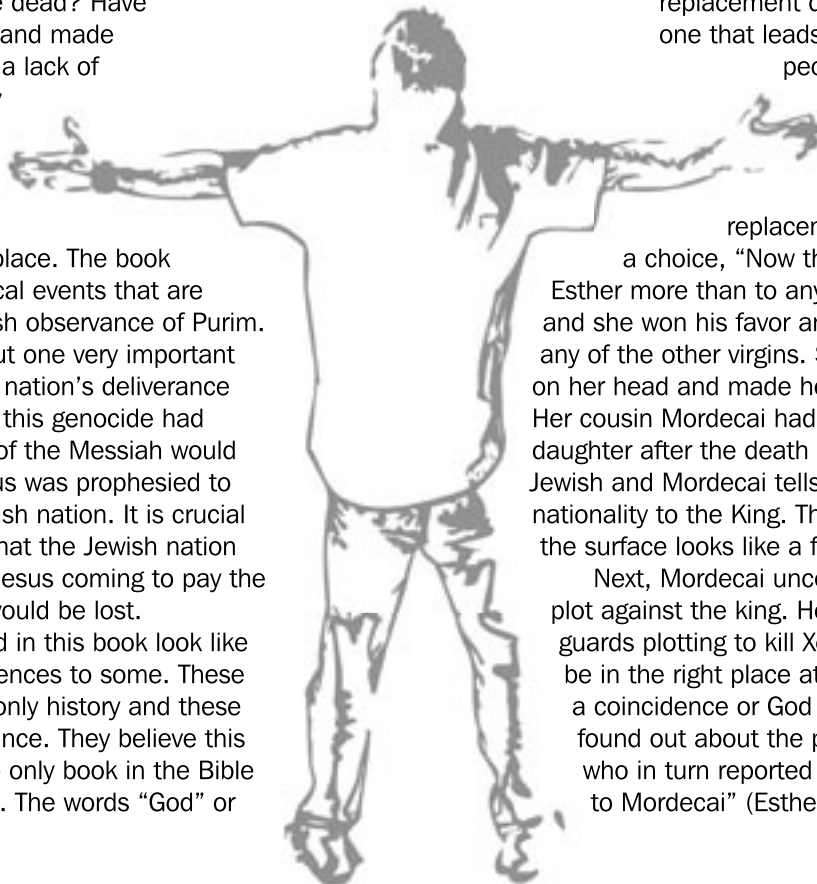
The events that occurred in this book look like a series of fortunate coincidences to some. These people look at this book as only history and these series of events as blind chance. They believe this to be so, because this is the only book in the Bible where God is not mentioned. The words "God" or

"Lord" simply do not appear. Because of this, these same people question whether this book should be included in the Bible. There are no great signs, wonders, or miracles that occur in the book of Esther. God doesn't speak to anyone in it or send His angels or prophets to declare His will. But we will see in this story that God cares about His people.

The book begins with King Xerxes giving a great banquet lasting seven days. There is a great description of his opulence. He may have been one of the richest kings ever in the ancient world. During this feast his queen disobeys him, he removes her, and he looks for a replacement queen. This event is the first one that leads to God's salvation of His people. Just merely reading about this single event you wouldn't think God had any involvement.

In his search for a replacement queen the king makes a choice, "Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen" (Esther 2:17). Her cousin Mordecai had raised her like his own daughter after the death of her parents. She was Jewish and Mordecai tells her not to reveal her nationality to the King. This is another event that on the surface looks like a fortunate coincidence.

Next, Mordecai uncovers an assassination plot against the king. He overhears two royal guards plotting to kill Xerxes. He happened to be in the right place at the right time. Was this a coincidence or God intervening? "Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai" (Esther 2:22).



“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

In the third chapter of Esther, we are introduced to Haman who is a high official in the king’s court. He devised a plot to exterminate the Jews on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. He has the king pass a law for this very purpose. Mordecai learns of this plot and through correspondence asks Esther to petition the king. By doing this she would be risking her life. “All the king’s officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life” (Esther 4:11). Esther bravely approached the king and was spared.

Esther then invites the king and Haman to a series of banquets. At the final banquet she reveals her true Jewish identity and reveals that Haman has plotted to destroy her people. This infuriates the king and he leaves the banquet in a rage. Haman pleads with the queen for his life and the king returns to find that, “Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, ‘Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?’” (Esther 7:8). Haman is immediately executed. Again, was this only a fortunate coincidence?

Because the king remembers his loyalty in uncovering the assassination attempt, Mordecai is given Haman’s position, which is second in the kingdom. Esther again pleads for

her people and the king issues a decree so the Jewish people can defend themselves, saving them from annihilation.

When all these events are viewed together it is clear God is working in the lives of His people. They are not coincidence, but evidence that God cares. I encourage you to read this book, so you can experience all the nuances of this story. You will see that even though no great visible miracles occur, God is working “behind the scenes.”

Look at your own life and the events that have led you to learn about the good news of God and his plan. You will see that it was not mere chance, but that God cares. **i**

## *Everything Has God’s Fingerprints On It*

God has created everything and is a part of everything that happens in our lives. It is our job to recognize His presence in our lives and give Him the glory for it. It is very easy for us to see God’s plan when we get the job we wanted, we get a raise, see a beautiful sunset, enjoy a hike through the mountains or watch the waves crashing on the beach. However, there are times when it is difficult to see how God is working in an ugly situation; when we lose a job or have a family tragedy.

We need to always look for the positive and good in everything. God tells us He works things for good. “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28) Losing a job doesn’t seem like there could be any good in it. Now you have more worries about being able to pay bills and getting food on the table. But, God will work it to be good. It might open up a better job opportunity for you, allow you to spend more time with your family or bring you closer to God, forcing you to rely on Him. “My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, my power is made perfect in you. So I am very happy to brag about my weaknesses. Then Christ’s power can live in me. For this reason I am happy when I have weaknesses, insults, hard times, sufferings, and all kinds of troubles for Christ. Because when I am weak, then I am truly strong” (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

God defines good as respecting, loving, serving, following and obeying Him. Good is wanting to do what is right, being humble, showing mercy to others, bringing peace and living a Christian life. Read more about what God defines as good in Deuteronomy 10:12-13 and Matthew 5:1-12. As we look for the good in our lives we will grow spiritually and become closer to God. It will change our perspective on things when we struggle. When you struggle, look at how blessed you are to have all that you do. God takes the good and bad in our lives and makes them work together for our good, the good He intends. Remember that everything has God’s fingerprints on it.

Reference: *Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff . . . and it’s all small stuff* by Richard Carlson, Ph.D. pp. 121-122.

# money,

## *Am I a better person if I'm poor?*

By Brian Christensen



**B**lessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:3)! Does Jesus mean we should be poor in order to really know God? Will God deny salvation to all successful and rich people? These words by Jesus have been commonly misunderstood and quoted out of context to imply this view. As with all statements in the Bible, it is wise to expand our reading before and after to better understand what is being said. We should look at the setting and context of why it was said along with the translation.

Jesus further explains His meaning as he continues on in His Sermon on the Mount. He is trying to impart His wisdom on how much our mind and attitude effect our ability to learn and understand God's way. If someone does not have much skill at a sport they like, then they practice and learn more about it. If we are in need of a job, then we try to obtain one. We might send out resumes, interview, check for job listings, etc. Suppose we do not have or make much money. Then we would try to achieve more by earning a degree, attending a training class, better managing our money, or working a second job. If we are "poor" in spirit, then we will seek Jesus and God's knowledge more often. As we begin to understand the truth and are baptized, we must keep our wisdom in check and always have the mind-set of being "poor" in spirit. This way we never lose our passion for God and our thirst for more. Brethren, attitude is everything!

It is important to note that general statements about people are very dangerous and usually incorrect. It is neither fair nor accurate to say all poor people have more spirit and all rich people do not. The term "rich" and "poor" are

defined differently by each of us. Jesus tells us numerous times that money and possessions have no bearing on our salvation. Having money or being poor is no guarantee. It is important to have a rich heart and mind. The treasure we seek first and value most should be the wisdom of God. This wisdom will help us to manage and be thankful for our possessions.

It is also possible to seek success through God, and gain wealth by applying His wisdom to our daily lives. We must accept and trust God's will for our success and talents. At the same time we must also try our best at everything we do, for even if we fail, it may be a part of our growth and pleasing to God.

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 clearly shows; fear, blame and stagnation have no part with God. In this example, the "richest" person had the most faith and was rewarded. The "poorest" person even tried to blame his master for his fear and inaction. The importance of this parable is not the talents; it is the faith, heart, and passion behind the actions of each of them.

When Jesus proclaimed the Beatitudes, He was trying to explain the importance of our attitude and our approach to life. He also recognized the fact that sometimes when people have no money or possessions, there is a higher chance they will seek and turn to God. This is because there is nothing to stand in the way or distract them. Desperation will usually bring us closer to God. Statistics show the poorest countries have the highest percentage of "religious" people. This same thought process is why some religious people do not marry. They believe this will make them closer to God by devoting themselves only to Him. Sometimes, this might be true. Some Priests and Nuns, for example, are extremely devoted to their religion and have some of the greatest Christian love. They may not have a true understanding of the total truth however deeply they may understand the need for us to love one another. Conversely, others have allowed themselves to be corrupted and commit horrible acts. This is why Jesus is so emphatic about the importance of our attitude and perspective of life. If we maintain the right mind-set, we can do anything! As we become successful or gain material



# money, money



## *Am I a bad person if I make a lot of money?*

By Margie Marang

**N**ot necessarily, it's not how much money you have, it's how you use it. We are going to look at a few places in the Bible and see how the Word of God says to use our money. In Matthew 19, starting in verse 16, a rich young man came to Jesus and asked Him what good thing he could do that he may have eternal life. Christ told him if he wanted to enter into life, keep the commandments. The young man wanted to know which commandments? Jesus told him in so many words about the Ten Commandments. The young man said he kept the commandments from his youth and wanted to know what he still lacked?

Jesus could tell he was tied to his money so He told him to sell every thing he had, give the money to the poor and follow him. If he did this he would have treasures in heaven. When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. The money was his physical security and he was not about to give it up.

Remember what the Israelites did after they left Egypt? When food and water was in short supply they wanted to go back into Egypt where they had physical security. Back in Egypt they were fed and had a place to sleep. They wanted to give up their freedom for physical security.

If you make a lot of money God expects you to give tithes and offerings accordingly. In Luke 21:1-4 it says Christ looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury and he saw a poor widow putting in two mites. So he told His disciples, truly this poor widow has put in more than all of the rich people. All of these, out of their abundance, have put in offerings for God. But she out of her poverty put in all the lively-hood she had.

In Matthew 5:44 it says we are to love our enemies.

So how do we love our enemies? The same way we love our neighbor. And it says we are to love them as we love ourselves. How do we do this? What is the main goal in life for a Christian? It is the Kingdom of God. That's what we are to inherit, so that is what we have to want for our neighbors and our enemies.

How do we help our neighbors and enemies make it into the Kingdom of God? If we have a lot of money we use that money to support a work that is getting the gospel out to the world; to give them the opportunity to have what we have, God's Holy Spirit, which makes them an heir of God. That's the only way we can use our money so that we love our neighbor and our enemies as we love ourselves.

Another thing to remember when we use our money to do a good deed or to get the gospel out is in Matthew 6:1-4, "take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in Heaven, Therefore when you do a good deed do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the Synagogues and in the streets that they may have glory from men. Assuredly I say to you they have their reward. But when you do a good deed do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. That your good deed may be in secret and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly."

Remember a lot of money does not make a bad person. The love of that money can make a bad person. Anything physical is very temporary and money is one of those things that won't last. The only things that will last are spiritual. Be willing to give up everything you have so you can be in God's Kingdom. **i**

# Trust in God!

By Rory Ries

**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).**

**G**od wants to be involved in your life. He wants to have a relationship with you and He wants to bless you in everything you do as long as it is in obedience to Him. There are many promises out there that each one of us can claim if we acknowledge our Great God.

We are faced with decisions throughout our life. A major decision all of us have to face at one time or another is what do we do with the life God has given us. We are going to spend a large portion of our life working so we may live a productive life and provide for the ones we care for. God is very specific in saying, “If anyone will not work, neither shall they eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). God also says, “if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).

It is a serious matter when an individual is seeking a career or taking time to figure out what one wants to do with his life. It is a huge step and it is very important we look to God for guidance and direction in our decision-making process. Who knows us better than God? He knows each hair that is on our head (Matthew 10:30). God instructs us if we seek the Kingdom first He will provide for us all that we need (Matthew 6:33). God also says He will give us the good things because we come to Him and ask (Matthew 7:11).

Solomon, who was one of the wisest men who has ever lived, acknowledged that man should enjoy the good in his labor because it comes from the hand of God (Ecclesiastes 2:24). He said it was a gift from God, man enjoying what he has worked so very hard for. Solomon also said it was man’s heritage that he be able to rejoice in his own works (Ecclesiastes 3:22). There is no better feeling for a man than to sit back at the end of a Friday afternoon and look out at his land and see how God has blessed him with a home and property he can call his very own. To experience this feeling one must work hard and one must always live their life in obedience to God.

How does one start their journey in seeking a career? A

career is different than a job. A career is what you will be doing most of your life. Most of us have had several different jobs along the way to developing a career that has lasted many years. How do you know what it is you want to do with your life? How can you know when you have decided to choose a career it is the best decision you can make and that career is for you?

Normally, I don’t write much about myself but I feel I need to get out of the third party and just give testimony to what God has done for me. My story may enlighten some who may be sitting at the crossroads trying to decide which way to go. I was there once and wasn’t sure what to do with my life. I loved history, and still do, and I wanted to finish my college education with a degree in History. I was on my way and felt good about it as I took one class after another dealing with the history of man. Along the way I started to wonder what I would do with a degree in History after graduation. There are not a lot of options, however, I thought maybe I could teach.

I prayed about it and prayed about it. I fasted and I sought a multitude of counsel. The counsel that kept coming back to me was to give up the history and seek a career in counseling. I really thought they were all nuts. I couldn’t counsel anyone. My desire was to be a Historian not a counselor. As time went on the feeling of not knowing what to do became overwhelming so I prayed again and asked God to inspire my advisor to give me the right answer as far as what to do. His answer was, you guessed it, go get a degree in counseling. I had promised God I would follow my advisor’s instruction no matter what his advice would be.

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**...it is very important we  
look to God for guidance  
and direction in our  
decision-making process.**

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He also told me to finish up my undergraduate work in counseling and then apply for Graduate School. I finished my schoolwork and graduated with a degree in Counseling. Unfortunately, I was still a little hardheaded. After graduation



I tried to apply for several different Graduate Schools to get a Master's Degree in History. You'll never guess what happened? No one accepted me. Duh! I couldn't get in anywhere, let alone get the time of day from some of these schools. It finally dawned on me that maybe I should follow the advice that was given me. I applied for a Graduate School to get a Master's Degree in Counseling, and I was immediately accepted.

For the life of me, I could not picture myself as a Counselor. Lo and behold, I started taking classes and I graduated with honors after only two years. The great news is I love being a Counselor and I have been able to assist people in turning their lives over to Jesus Christ. I see it clearly now, and I see all of the fruit that has been produced from my efforts and, above all, from God giving me the guidance and direction. I have been able to accomplish far more as a Counselor than I would have as a Historian.

I have experienced that great feeling of being able to look at my life overall and see the many blessings that have come from following and submitting to God. Plus, I know many have been blessed by the work I have done with them as their counselor. Of course, God gets all of the glory. Had it been up to me, I would have gone my way and missed out and yet God knew where He could work with me and He knew the fruit that could be produced. God knows that with you too.

This Great God we call Father knows you and knows your abilities and what you are capable of doing. With Him along side of you what can you not accomplish? The challenge is in knowing what He desires for you. We have to put aside our desires at times and seek Him out. It wasn't easy for me, but that was because I happened to be more stubborn than most. I am so very grateful that He allowed me that time and worked with me bringing me to where I am today.

Solomon was inspired to write to us and tell us to, "get understanding, and to get wisdom" (Proverbs

4:5). He also told us to seek after these things that it may go well with us and we will walk in the way of goodness and we will keep to the paths of righteousness (Proverbs 2:1-20). Whatever decision we need to make, if we turn to God first the answers will come. "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

Deciding what to do with your life is a major decision, one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Having God with you and looking to Christ for guidance is a blessing you will always be grateful for and you will be able to share with others what an awesome God He truly is. He knows you by name and that is truly a wonderful and comforting feeling. **i**



*continued from page 14*

things, we must be watchful of the evil thoughts and ways that will try to bring us down and compromise our faith. We cannot for  
 God with more passion and energy than you have for earthly things.

The parable of the Unforgiving Debtor in Matthew 18:23-35 shows us how quickly our attitude can change, even after receiving a blessing from God. The next time you see a homeless person begging for money, share some of your wealth. Thank God for the blessings you have and remember we are all "poor" in spirit. Then, beg God for more! **i**

# SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS

By Loren M. Chamberlain

“He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope (wait) in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will walk and not be faint.”

Isaiah 40:29-31

**T**hese are inspiring words. Even the strongest will at times become weary but God’s power and strength never diminishes. God is only a prayer away. He is never too tired, weary or so busy He can’t help us and listen to us when we pour out our hearts to Him in prayer. A key principle in these verses is “*hope, or waiting upon the Lord.*” To hope or wait upon the Lord is to be expecting His promised strength to help us rise above life’s difficulties. Listening to God helps us be prepared for when He speaks to us, be patient when He asks us to wait, and expect Him to fulfill the promises found in His word.

Because of our human limits we can’t climb Mount Everest by ourselves. To perform such a task would take a dedicated team backing us up. It is doubtful any one person will ever swim the Atlantic Ocean or be able to run at the speed of sixty miles an hour. We must accept the fact of human limits. But because of so-called-progress, that seems to give us more of everything at an ever-increasing speed, we attempt to exceed our human limitations in every area of our life. The plain truth is, people are collapsing in exhaustion, and do not have the faintest idea of what happened to them. It is possible for us to overload ourselves to the point of *burnout*, and when that happens we can lose our effectiveness.

## PUSHING THE LIMITS

It has become the American way to push the limits as far as possible. Constantly spending more time, energy or money than we have and never taking time out to rest. It is an interesting fact that Jesus never seemed to be in a hurry. There is no indication He worked 24 hours a day. When Jesus went to sleep at night, He still hadn’t healed all the disease in Israel. He followed God’s plan and so He was perfectly effective.

Jesus accepted the fact He was human and had human limitations. He was aware of what it meant to prioritize and balance in light of these limits and how to focus on the most important things. Jesus is very concerned with the quality of our lives. He calls us to be fruitful but He also realizes that busyness is not always godliness. Most certainly He wants us to be fruitful but He is also concerned that our fruit remain and not burn out.

## DODGING BURNOUT

From the beginning, rest had a special significance to God. “By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day He rested from all His work” (Genesis 2:2). Our world is an action oriented one. Yet God demonstrated that “rest” is appropriate and right. If God Himself rested from His work, then it should not amaze us that we need rest as well. Jesus also demonstrated this principle when He and His disciples left in a boat to get away from the crowds. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31). This time of rest that God gave us refreshes us for times of service.

We must understand God never leads us into an intolerable scramble of over worked feverishness. We will gain more time by understanding God’s will for our lives than by using all the time saving methods ever devised.

## VITALITY FOR THE WEARY

To those who are weak and tired, God gives strength, power and vigor. As the Apostle Paul said, “That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). Boys may become tired and weary. Even vigorous young men (or chosen athletes) may become like those in a cross-country race who cannot make it and weakly totter and fall.

But we who hope, or wait for the Lord, are the ones who do not attempt to go in our own strength. Instead, we continue trusting in Him for help. Then when God moves, we move along with Him. We keep gaining new strength. We mount up on wings like eagles mounting over circumstances. We run and do not get weary; we walk and do not get tired. God is indeed our complete source of strength, both physical and spiritual. God will surely help us to soar to new heights! **i**





# Christian Ethics & Servant Leadership

## IN TODAY'S WORKPLACE & SOCIETY

By Coach Stan Lewis, R.E.A.L. Coach, [www.realcoach.org](http://www.realcoach.org)

If one wishes to be a Knightly leader in the world today, it is very difficult to do so. Why? The world makes it so hard to do what is right, what is honorable, what is Christ-like. The negative peers in our lives tell us things like, "...nice guys finish last" and that "no good deed goes unpunished." The poem Sundered Knight speaks of those who strive to do what is right in a world that sometimes has little tolerance for ethics.

So what exactly is a Knight? He or she is a servant leader and a fervent supporter or defender of the weak. They also defend and support Godly virtues like morality, honor and honesty. A Sundered Knight is someone who is sometimes ridiculed or put down for doing what is ethical—for doing what is right. They are sometimes even treated with contempt in society for their moral or ethical beliefs. Have you ever felt like a sundered Knight?

The world we live in did not become so harden overnight. This has been happening for a long time. In the time of Zephaniah (an Old Testament prophet), there was a serious lack of morals and ethics. Just like a cancer, this lack of morality and ethics ate away at every part of society in Zephaniah's time. Zephaniah's people, just like those of today, were arrogant, treacherous, profane, and did violence to the law (Zephaniah 3:1-7).

As a servant leader, a Knight, never places trust in peers who use negative peer pressure. More times than not, these negative peers will not come through for you, so don't expect

them to. This way you will not be disappointed. Look to Jesus for your example. The Lord promises over and over that He will lift us up. Hold him to His promises and let the Lord be the one you wish to lift you up.

So when you feel the negative peer pressure, at work or in public places, is getting to you, seek the Lord to lift

time of King Solomon and are so very true, even today. Those negative peers taking short cuts to get out of something or to get ahead. Such negative peers are not mentors to be looked up to or be jealous over. Never forget, that negative peer pressure is alive and well in the work place and society. There really is no lasting prospect for those who are seeking short cuts to get out of work or to get ahead at work or in today's society.

God knows your situation.

And because God does know your situation, it is with an understanding and tender heart that He says to His Knights, "Listen to me, you who know righteousness, you people in whose heart [is] my law: Do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their insults" (Isaiah 51:7).

Although the world "...diminishes morality..." in Zephaniah's time, God was there for him. "The LORD [is] righteous in [our] her midst, He will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He never fails, but the unjust knows no shame" (Zephaniah 3:5).

Always be faithful, always be encouraged, always be a servant leader, and always be a Knight, who defends the weak and holds all Godly virtues dear. **i**



### SUNDERED KNIGHT

By S. Bryant Lewis

Although the world,  
Denies the weak aid and justice,  
Scorns charity,  
Diminishes morality  
And Godly virtues daily.

Holding no places for honor  
Nor honesty  
And exiling all  
Who hold these traits dear,  
Still,  
It is better to be a sundered knight  
Than no knight at all

you up. The Lord is always true to His promises. Seek out the encouragement that God gives in His Word, "... A righteous [man] may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity. Do not fret because of evildoers, nor be envious of the wicked; for there will be no prospect for the evil man, the lamp of the wicked will be put out" (Proverbs 24:16, 19-20).

These verses were true in the

in the next issue:

# ***FORGIVENESS***

Winter 2005/2006

Who can receive forgiveness?

God's forgiveness.

How many times should I forgive someone?

Should I forgive someone if he/she hasn't  
asked me for forgiveness?

How do I  
forgive myself?



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to the next  
issue?

*See page 02 for details.*