

# 21 DAYS PRAYER AND FASTING

DEVOTIONAL

WRITTEN BY  
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# Noah Didn't Wait for his Ship to Come in - He Built One

Seize the moment! "Miracles are coming by you or to you every day" (Oral Roberts). Today was once the future you expected. Horatio Dresser said, "The ideal never comes. Today is ideal for him who makes it so." Decide what matters most right now—then take specific action. Make today count by turning intention into results. Act boldly, because today is your opportunity.

Doing your best puts you in the best place for the next moment. When can you live if not now? All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today. Seneca said, "Begin at once to live." Ellen Metcalf remarked, "Many are at the right place at the right time but don't know it." Take time to plan, but when it's time to act, go for it!

The Bible says, "Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalms 90:12). Marie Edgeworth said, "There is no moment like the present. The man who will not execute his resolutions when they are fresh on him can have no hope from them afterwards; for they will be dissipated, lost, and perished in the hurry and scurry of the world, or sunk in the slough of indolence."

John Burroughs said, "The lesson which life repeats and constantly reinforces is, 'Look under foot.' You are always nearer than you think.... The great opportunity is where you are. Do not despise your own place and hour." The most important thing in our lives is what we are doing now.

Know the real value of today. I agree with Jonathan Swift: "May you live all the days of your life." The future you long for begins today. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year."

Most regrets come from failing to act when opportunity knocks. Albert Dunning said, "Great opportunities come to all, but many do not know that they have met them. The only preparation to take advantage of them is to watch what each day brings." Heed 2 Corinthians 6:2: "Now is the accepted time." Martial said, "Tomorrow life is too late; live today." Wayne Dyer observed, "Now is all we have. Everything that ever happened, anything that is ever going to happen to you, is just a thought." Living well today prepares you for tomorrow's opportunities and obstacles.

Few know when to rise to the occasion. Most only know when to sit down. Many spend too much time dreaming of the future, never realizing that a little of it arrives every day. I agree with Ruth Schabacker when she said, "Every day comes bearing its own gifts. Untie the ribbons." As each day unfolds, embrace its unique opportunities—and remember that even as we act with intention, we're still human, and life can be unexpectedly humorous.

# Thou Shalt Not Take Thyself Too Seriously

If you've been walking with Jesus for more than 15 minutes, you've probably done something silly in the name of faith. Like praying out loud in a group and accidentally thanking God for "this pizza and the resurrection" in the same breath. Or calling someone "brother" and immediately forgetting their name. Or saying "bless you" in a public restroom and then pretending it was a sneeze.

The thing is, life with God is holy, but it's also hilarious because God made humans, and humans are hilarious.

We're the only species that can confidently quote Scripture one minute and then lose the phone we were texting from the next. God made us from dust, and sometimes it really shows.

Okay, theologians love to point out that the Bible never technically says "Jesus laughed." But let's be real—He had to. He turned water into wine at a wedding. He told stories about specks in eyes, healed someone with spit, and talked about camels squeezing through needles. He hung out with loud fishermen, skeptical siblings, and at least one tax collector named Matthew, who definitely looked like he didn't get invited to stuff.

Jesus laughed because laughter is part of love.

And God didn't just create laughter as a human reflex. He made it as a divine relief. A release. A reminder that even when we don't have it all together, we can still be held together by joy. Laughter is a weapon.

Have you ever laughed so hard that you forgot what you were worrying about? That's what laughter does. It disarms stress. It dismantles fear. It tickles your soul until your anxiety forgets why it showed up.

The enemy wants you to live seriously, stiffly, and scared. But God says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10). In other words, your laughter is a sign of spiritual strength.

When the devil comes whispering lies like: "You're not good enough, or "You're too broken," or "God can't use someone like you," I recommend hitting back with a belly laugh and a Scripture. Something like, "Haha! Joke's on you, Satan. God used a talking donkey, and I'm at least smarter than a donkey, most of the time."

You don't have to be perfect to be joyful. Just be present in the moment, with people, and with God, even when you're a hot mess with coffee stains and mismatched socks.

So, stop trying to curate your life like a Pinterest board. God's not impressed with your filter game. He's not looking for picture-perfect saints. He's looking for laughing, limping, joy-chasing believers who know how to fall and say, "Well, that was awkward. Thank You, Lord, for loving me anyway."

If you want a lighter life, start laughing sooner. Laugh at yourself before someone else does. Laugh with people, not at them. Laugh with God like you're a child again and He's the best Dad in the world, because He is.

# None of the Secrets of Success Will Work Unless You Do

Let's be honest: you can't fulfill your destiny on a theory—it takes work. If theories worked, I'd be thin from thinking about dieting. But just as the Lord reminded Joshua, "Arise, go over this Jordan..." (Joshua 1:2), God expects us to get up, put on the shoes, and start walking.

You were made for action. Sitting still is so unnatural that even toddlers rebel—and many adults, if Sunday sermons are any indication. Success is good ideas dressed in work clothes. James 2:17 says, "Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." As I've heard, "Prayers are good—but don't expect God to vacuum your living room."

Shakespeare nailed it: "Nothing can come of nothing." And Paul echoed him centuries earlier with, "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

David Bly observed, "Striving for success without hard work is like trying to harvest where you haven't planted." Even the Bible agrees, "A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds nothing" (Proverbs 20:4). In modern terms: you can't binge-watch your way into greatness.

Talking about success without acting on it is like me discussing how I could run a marathon—if only the marathon were several feet shorter, downhill, and equipped with snack stations every three minutes. Words are cheap. Action is priceless.

The truth is, laziness doesn't just slow you down; it races you straight into poverty. Proverbs says it plainly: "A little sleep, a little slumber... and poverty will come on you like a bandit" (Proverbs 6:10-11).

Some people do things. Others make endless charts, diagrams, and calendars. The world is divided into these two groups. Be the one who acts, not just the one who plans. There's less competition.

God didn't burden us with work; He blessed us with it. Adam was put in the Garden "to work it and keep it" (Genesis 2:15) even before sin entered the world. Work is not punishment.

Molière said, "All men are alike in their promises; it is only in their deeds that they differ." Proverbs agrees: "In all toil there is profit, but mere talk tends only to poverty" (Proverbs 14:23). Wishing has never made a poor man wealthy, though a few have tried wishing until noon.

Robert Half put it perfectly: "Laziness is the secret ingredient that goes into failure, but it's only kept a secret from the person who fails." Proverbs 13:4 gives the biblical version: "The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the soul of the diligent is richly supplied."

Tell yourself—preferably out loud: "Inspiration never goes in for long engagements; it demands immediate marriage to action." James would agree again: "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). If the truth were known, most of our troubles come from loafing when we should be lifting, waiting when we should be working, and talking when we should be listening.

Get to work. Do it faithfully, cheerfully if you can, and with caffeine if you need it. Set aside talk and start doing. Remember, none of the secrets of success will work unless you are willing to work, so act now and commit. Only action turns potential into achievement.

## Imitation is Limitation

"If God had wanted you otherwise, He would have created you otherwise" (Goethe). Dare to embrace your true self. Resolve to be who you genuinely are. A Congolese proverb states, "Wood may remain ten years in the water, but it will never become a crocodile." The Bible asks, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" (Jeremiah 13:23). Julius Hare advises, "Be what you are. This is the first step towards becoming better than you are."

"My mother said to me, 'If you become a soldier, you'll become a general, if you become a monk, you end up as the pope.' Instead, I became a painter and wound up as Picasso," said the great painter. No one ever became great by imitation. Don't be a copy of something. Make your own impression.

"The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change" (Carl Rogers). Worn-out paths are for worn-out men. Friedrich Klopstock remarked, "He who has no opinion of his own, but depends on the opinions of others, is a slave. To only dream of the person you are supposed to be is to waste the person you are." Nobody is so disappointed and so unhappy as the person who longs all of life to be somebody other than who he really is.

The person who trims himself to suit everybody will soon whittle himself away. All people are created equal and endowed by their Creator with a mighty urge to become otherwise. If you don't have a plan for your own life, you'll only become a part of someone else's. You can't carry two faces under one hat. Never wish to be anything but what you are. "It is better to be hated for what you are, than loved for what you are not" (Andre Gide).

"All the discontented people I know are trying to be something they are not, to do something they cannot do" (David Grayson). When you dare not be yourself, you will lack confidence and continually crave admiration. You will live on the reflection of yourself in the eyes of others.

"Man is more interesting than men. It's him, not them, whom God made in his image. Each is more precious than all" (Andre Gide). "All good things which exist are the fruit of originality" (John Mills). There is only one life for each of us—our own. The person who walks in another's tracks never leaves his own footprints. Doris Mortman observed, "Until you make peace with who you are, you will never be content with what you have." Most of our challenges in life come from not knowing ourselves and ignoring our true virtues.

Most people live their entire lives as strangers to themselves. Don't let that happen to you. The Bible says in 1 Kings, "Why feignest thou thyself to be another?" (14:5). Leo Buscaglia counseled, "The easiest thing to be in the world is you. The most difficult thing to be is what other people want you to be. Don't let them put you in that position." The opposite of courage is not fear. It is conformity. The most exhausting and frustrating thing in life is living it while trying to be someone else.

# There's Nothing in the Middle of the Road but Yellow Stripes and Dead Armadillos. - James Hightower

"My decision is maybe — and that's final." Is this you? Being decisive is essential for a successful life. If you deny yourself commitment, what will you do with your life? Every accomplishment, great or small, starts with a decision.

Choice, not chance, determines destiny. You can't get a hit with the bat on your shoulder. Nothing great was ever done without an act of decision. Too many people go through life not knowing what they want, but feeling sure they don't have it. Herbert Prochnow said, "There is a time when we must firmly choose the course which we will follow, or the relentless drift of events will make the decision for us."

Too many people are like wheelbarrows, trailers, or canoes. They need to be pushed, pulled, or paddled. You're either moving people to decisions, or they're moving you. Decide to do something now to improve your life. The choice is yours.

David Ambrose remarked, "If you have the will to win, you have achieved half your success; if you don't, you have achieved half your failure." Lou Holtz said, "If you don't make a total commitment to whatever you are doing, then you start looking to bail out the first time the boat starts leaking. It's tough enough getting the boat to shore with everybody rowing, let alone when a guy stands up and starts putting his life jacket on."

The moment you definitely commit yourself, God moves too. All sorts of things happen to help you that never would have otherwise occurred. Edgar Roberts said, "Every human mind is a great slumbering power until awakened by a keen desire and a definite resolution to do." Kenneth Blanchard observed, "There is a difference between interests and commitment. When you are interested in doing something, you only do it when it is convenient. When you are committed to something, you accept no excuses, only results." Lack of decisiveness has caused more failures than lack of intelligence or ability.

Maurice Witter said, "You seldom get what you go after unless you know in advance what you want." Indecision often gives the other person an advantage because they have already done their thinking. Helen Keller said, "Science may have found a cure for most evil, but it has found no remedy for the worst of them all — the apathy of human beings." Joshua encourages, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...." (Joshua 24:15). Don't leave a decision for tomorrow that needs to be made today.

Bertrand Russel said, "Nothing is so exhausting as indecision, and nothing is so futile." Joseph Newton discerned, "Not what we have, but what we use, not what we see, but what we choose — these are things that mar or bless human happiness." Remember, don't be a "middle-of-the-roader" because the middle of the road is the worst place to try to go forward. You can do everything you ought to do once you make a decision. Today, decide on your dream.

# Even Postage Stamps Become Useless When They Get Stuck to Themselves

If you are only looking out for yourself, look out! Wesley Huber said, "There is nothing quite so dead as a self-centered man — a man who holds himself up as a self-made success, and measures himself by himself and is pleased with the result." Is your favorite letter "I"? Listen: "The core of sin is 'I' no matter how you spell it" (Ed Cole). The only reason pride lifts you up is to let you down.

Norman Vincent Peale observed, "The man who lives for himself is a failure. Even if he gains much wealth, power, or position, he is still a failure." Conceit makes us fools: "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Proverbs 26:12 NIV). The man who believes in nothing but himself lives in a tiny world. The best way to be happy is to forget yourself and focus on other people. Henry Courtney said, "The bigger a man's head gets, the easier it is to fill his shoes." A swelled head always proves there is plenty of room for improvement.

"The greatest magnifying glasses in the world are a man's own eyes when they look upon his own person" (Alexander Pope). Egotism is the only disease in which the patient feels well while making everyone around him feel sick. Egotism blossoms but bears no fruit. Those who sing their own praises seldom receive an encore. Charles Elliot intones, "Don't think too much of yourself. Try cultivating the habit of thinking of others; it will reward you. Selfishness always brings its own revenge."

While gazing upon selfish accomplishments, the arrogant often miss God by failing to see what He is doing. Rick Renner said, "Don't miss the plan of God by self-consumption."

When you are on a high horse, the best thing to do is to dismount at once. You can't push yourself forward by patting yourself on the back. Burton Hillis remarked, "It's fine to believe in ourselves, but we mustn't be too easily convinced." An egotist is his own best friend. The fellow who is deeply in love with himself should get a divorce.

Folks who boast of being self-made usually have a few parts missing. You can recognize a self-made man; his head is oversized, and he has arms long enough to pat himself on the back. A conceited person never gets anywhere because he thinks he is already there. Change your favorite word from "I" to "You".

# If Envy Had a Shape, it Would be a Boomerang

If envy ever took on a form, surely it would be a boomerang, crafted by our own hands, thrown with our own jealousy, and yet always circling back to strike the heart that launched it. We hurl it at the success of another, but it returns and bruises the soul of the thrower.

Envy promises gain but delivers grief. It whispers, "Look at what they have... and look at what you don't." Yet Scripture gently redirects our gaze: "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones." (Proverbs 14:30) A wise saying puts it this way: When we compare what we want with what we have, frustration grows. Instead, compare what we deserve with what we have, and we'll be thankful. Isn't that the upside-down math of grace? God owes us nothing, yet lavishes us with more than we dare ask.

"When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

Trying to outrun the Joneses is a sprint toward exhaustion. Trying to outshine them is a marathon with no finish line. Nothing slows your steps like chasing those who were never meant to set your pace.

If envy were an illness, the whole world would be quarantined. Francis Bacon wrote, "Envy has no holidays. It has no rest." Scripture nods in agreement: "Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice" (James 3:16).

Jesus gives us the cure in a single sentence:

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged" (Matthew 7:1).

Envy, after all, is judgment in disguise. It is the silent verdict that God has been better to someone else than He has been to you. Yet He invites us to trust His craftsmanship: "We are God's masterpiece" (Ephesians 2:10).

Envy consumes nothing but the heart that hosts it. St. Chrysostom said, "As a moth gnaws a garment, so envy consumes a man." It is self-inflicted erosion—slow, quiet, devastating. An Irish proverb reminds us, "You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall your grandfather was." True. And you must walk your own story, no matter how polished someone else's looks online. Happiness becomes impossible when we believe others possess more of it than they actually do.

Envy throws mud at success, but only dirties the hands of the thrower. It promises a shortcut to satisfaction but leads straight toward disappointment. Many roads wind their way toward an unsuccessful life, but envy is surely the shortest. So what do we do? We trade comparison for contentment. We swap envy for gratitude. We lift our eyes from what others have and fix them on the God who gives every good thing in its season. And when we do, the boomerang drops harmlessly to the ground and is forgotten, while peace, that long-awaited guest, steps back into the home of the heart.

# Expect Something from Nothing

I believe that the primary cause of unhappiness in the world today is a lack of faith. Corrie ten Boom says, "Faith is like a radar that sees through the fog the reality of things at a distance that a human eye cannot see." Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible. The Bible challenges us in 2 Corinthians 5:7 to walk by faith and not by sight.

Jim Stovall once said, "Don't wait for all the lights to turn green before we leave the house." He's right. If Noah had waited for perfect conditions, we'd all be aquatic by now. Instead, he built an ark before rain was even a thing. Hebrews reminds us why:

"It is impossible to please God without faith" (Hebrews 11:6).

So, what is faith? John Spaulding said, "Your faith is what you believe, not what you know." Dr. Alexis Carrel says, "It is faith, and not reason, which impels men to action...intelligence is content to point out the road, but never drives along it." I agree with Blaise Pascal: "Faith is a sounder guide than reason. Reason can only go so far, but faith has no limits."

Too many people expect little from God, ask little, and therefore receive little and are content with little. Sherwood Eddie said, "Faith is not trying to believe something regardless of the evidence; faith is daring to do something regardless of the consequences." I sincerely believe that we would accomplish many more things if we did not so automatically view them as impossible.

Faith releases the miraculous. It is the way to God's divine influence. I agree with Pastor Tommy Barnett: "Faith is simply when you bring God into the picture." And where do we meet God? "God meets us at the level we expect, not the level we hope" (Gordon Robinson). At times, faith is believing what you see isn't so. That's why the Bible says in Hebrews, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (11:1).

Put faith to work when doubting would be easier. Faith is the anchor of the soul, the stimulus to action, and the incentive to achievement. Faith will never abandon you; only you can abandon it. Nothing but faith can accurately guide your life. Faith gives us the courage to face the present with confidence and the future with expectancy. It is usually not so much the greatness of our troubles as the littleness of our faith that causes us to stop or complain.

Faith is necessary to succeed. George Spaulding said, "Life without faith in something is too narrow a space in which to live." You'll feel cramped your whole life when you don't live by faith. As your faith grows, you will find you no longer need to cling to a sense of control. Things will flow as God wills, and you will be able to flow with them to your great happiness and benefit. Colin Hightower said, "Faith is building on what you know is here, so you can reach what you know is there." Listen to Franklin Roosevelt: "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubt of today." Let us move forward with strong and active faith.

# Never Take the Advice of Your Fears

Worry seems to be the sin that most people are not afraid to commit. We used to fear God. Now we fear everything else. Nicholas Berdyaev says, "Victory over fear is the first spiritual duty of man." Fears, like babies, grow larger by nursing them. Fear wants to grow faster than teenagers. Disraeli says, "Nothing in life is more remarkable than the unnecessary anxiety which we endure, and generally create ourselves." We must act despite fear, not because of it. If you are afraid to step up to the plate, you will never hit a home run. Sister Mary Tricky said, "Fear is faith that it won't work out." The Bible says in Psalms, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear." Don't fear, for the Lord is with you. He will never leave you to face your challenges alone.

Lucy Montgomery said, "It only seems as if you are doing something when you are worrying." Worry doesn't help tomorrow's troubles, but it does ruin today's happiness. "A day of worry is more exhausting than a day of work." (John Lubbock). When you worry about the future, there will soon be no future for you to worry about. No matter how much a person dreads the future, he usually wants to be around to see it. The truth is, more people worry about the future than prepare for it.

Never trouble trouble, until trouble troubles you. Arthur Roche said, "Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained." Instead, do what Dr. Rob Gilbert advised: "It's all right to have butterflies in your stomach. Just get them to fly in formation."

Only your mind can produce fear. Jesus said, "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?" We choose our joys and our worries long before we experience them. So I agree with Helen Keller: "It gives me a deep, comforting sense that things seen are temporal and things unseen are eternal." George Porter said, "Always be on guard against your imagination. How many lions it creates in our paths, and so easily! And we suffer so much if we do not turn a deaf ear to its tales and suggestions."

Worry never fixes anything. Shakespeare wrote, "Our doubts are traitors, and they make us lose what we oft might win, by fearing to attempt." Emanuel Celler says, "Don't roll up your pant legs before you get to the stream."

"If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but to your estimate of it, and this you have the power to revoke at any moment" (Marcus Aurelius). Fears lie and keep us from going where we might have won. There are always two voices sounding in our ears — the voice of fear and the voice of faith. One is the clamor of the senses; the other is the whispering of God. Never let your fears hold you back from pursuing your dream.

# The Heaviest Thing a Person Can Carry is a Grudge

Forgiveness is the key to personal peace. Forgiveness releases action and creates freedom. We all need to say the right thing after doing the wrong thing. Lawrence Sterne said, "Only the brave know how to forgive...a coward never forgave; it is not in his nature." Josiah Bailey adds, "It is the truth that those who forgive most shall be most forgiven."

One of the secrets of a long and fruitful life is to forgive everybody everything every night before you go to bed. Peter Von Winter said, "It is manlike to punish, but Godlike to forgive." When you have a massive chip on your shoulder, you lose your balance. If you would quit nursing a grudge, it would die. You don't need a doctor to tell you it's better to remove a grudge than to nurse it. Forgiveness is a funny thing. It warms the heart and cools the sting.

It is far better to forgive and forget than to hate and remember. Josh Billings says, "There is no revenge so complete as forgiveness." Richard Nixon said, "Those who hate you don't win unless you hate them, and then you destroy yourself." Unforgiveness blocks blessings; forgiveness releases blessings. Why aren't some prayers answered? Dwight L. Moody replied, "I firmly believe that a great many prayers are not answered because we are not willing to forgive someone." Who do you need to forgive today?

Do you want to release the past and claim the future? Get a hold of what Paul Boese said, "Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future." Harry Fosdick said, "No one can be wrong with man and right with God." You can be wrong in the middle of being right when you don't forgive someone. "Protest long enough that you are right and you will be wrong" (Yiddish proverb).

The Bible says in Ephesians, "Let all bitterness, wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice; and be ye kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (4:31). Ask yourself this question, "If God is willing to forgive, then who am I to hold out?"

# What You Give Lives

A good way to judge a man is by what he says. A better way is by what he does. The best way is by what he gives. Elizabeth Bibesco said, "Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting." The big problem is not the haves and have-nots — it's the give-nots. The Lord loves a cheerful giver, and so does everyone else.

The secret to living is giving. Charles Spurgeon said, "Feel for others — in your wallet." An Indian proverb says, "Good people, like clouds, receive only to give away." In fact, the best generosity is quick. When you give quickly, it is like giving twice. R. Browne says, "Whatever God does in your life is not so you can keep it to yourself. He wants you to give to others." When you give only after being asked, you have waited too long.

The Bible says in Acts, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (20:35). Giving is always the thermometer of our love. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "When you cease to contribute, you begin to die."

Getters don't get happiness. Givers get it. When you live for another, it's the best way to live for yourself. John Wesley advised, "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can." That's a good formula for a successful life.

The Swiss say, "A greedy person and a pauper are practically one and the same." When it comes to giving, some people stop at nothing. Greed always diminishes what has been gained. Mike Murdock says, "Giving is proof that you have conquered greed."

A lot of people are willing to give God the credit, but not too many are willing to give Him the cash. Don't cheat the Lord and call it savings. The trouble with too many people who give until it hurts is that they are so sensitive to pain.

If you have, give. If you lack, give. G. D. Bordmen said, "The law of the harvest is to reap more than you sow." It is true: people who give always receive.

Henry Drummond said, "There is no happiness in having or in getting, but only in giving." The test of generosity is not necessarily how much you give but how much you have left. Henry Thoreau said, "If you give money, spend yourself with it." The secret to living is giving.

# Know Your Limits, Then Ignore Them

Life is too short to think small. Instead, do as Pastor Joel Budd encourages us to do, "March off the map." Most people could do more than they think they can, but they usually do less than they think they can. You never know what you cannot do until you try. I agree with Oscar Wilde when he said, "Moderation is a fatal thing. Nothing succeeds like excess." Everything is possible, so never use the word never. Charles Schwab said, "When a man has put a limit on what he will do, he has put a limit on what he can do."

Dr. J.A. Holmes said, "Never tell a young person that something cannot be done. God may have been waiting for centuries for somebody ignorant enough of the impossible to do that thing." If you devalue your dreams, rest assured, the world won't raise the price. You will find that great leaders are rarely "realistic" by other people's standards.

The answer to your future lies outside the confines that you have right now. If you want to see if you can really swim, don't frustrate yourself by sticking to shallow water. Cavett Robert said, "Any man who selects a goal in life which can be fully achieved has already defined his own limitations." Instead, as Art Sepulveda said, "Be a history maker and a world shaker." Go where you have never gone before.

Ronald McNair says, "You only become a winner if you are willing to walk over the edge." Capture Randy Loescher's perspective: "God says, 'Ask me for the mountain.' The Bible says, 'Things which are impossible with men are possible with God' (Luke 18:27). Take the lid off. When you climb the tallest tree, you win the right to the best fruit. Dag Hammarskjold said, "Is life so wretched? Is it rather your hands that are too small, your vision that is muddled? You are the one who must grow up." Gloria Swanson said, "Never say never. Never is a long, undependable thing, and life is too full of rich possibilities to have restrictions placed upon it."

To believe an idea impossible is to make it so. Consider how many fantastic projects have miscarried because of small thinking or have been strangled in their birth by a cowardly imagination. I like what Marabeau said. When he heard the word "impossible," he responded, "Never let me hear that foolish word again."

Pearl Buck said, "All things are possible until they are proved impossible — even the impossible may only be so as of now." John Ruskin said, "Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so you shall become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall at last unveil." Somebody is always doing what somebody else said couldn't be done. Dare to think unthinkable thoughts.

Develop an infinite capacity to ignore what others think can't be done. Don't just grow where you are planted. Bloom where you are planted and bear fruit. Daniel Webster said, "There is always room at the top." No one can predict how high you can soar. Even you will not know until you spread your wings.

## Pray Until You Pray

Amazing things start happening when we start praying. Prayer time is never wasted time. Charles Spurgeon taught, "Sometimes we think we are too busy to pray. That is a great mistake, for praying is a saving of time." A. J. Gordon added, "You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."

"The best prayers have often more groans than words" (John Bunyan). I experienced this when I had many pressing needs. Honestly, I reached a point where I could hardly pray about my needs because there were so many. The only prayer I could manage was, "Help!" and I remember passionately praying it to God over 30 times until I experienced a breakthrough. Psalms declares, "O Lord, attend to my cry" (17:1). One of the smartest things I ever prayed was, "Help!" When you take one step toward God, God will take more steps toward you than you could ever count. He moved to meet my needs.

Prayer alone proves that you trust God. Oswald Chambers said, "We look upon prayer as a means of getting things for ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself." Follow Dwight L. Moody's advice: "Spread out your petition before God and then say, 'Thy will, not mine, be done.' The sweetest lesson I have learned in God's school is to let the Lord choose for me." Do deep praying before you find yourself in a deep hole.

Prayers can't be answered until they are prayed. Nothing significant happens until you fervently pray; pray until you pray! F. B. Myer said, "The great tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer." Byron Edwards said, "True prayer always receives what it asks for — or something better." God's answers are wiser than your answers. Ann Lewis said, "There are four ways God answers prayer: no, not yet; no, I love you too much; yes, I thought you'd never ask; yes, and here's more."

"Every time we pray, our horizon is altered, our attitude to change is altered, not sometimes but every time. The amazing thing is that we don't pray more" (Oswald Chambers). Unfortunately, nothing is discussed more and practiced less than prayer. Pray with your eyes toward God, not towards your problems. Martin Luther said, "The less I pray, the harder it gets; the more I pray, the better it goes." Frequent kneeling will keep you in good standing with God. Margaret Gibb said, "We must move from asking God to take care of the things that are breaking our hearts, to praying about the things that are breaking His heart." It is impossible to be prayerful and pessimistic at the same time. E. M. Bounds said, "Prayer is our most formidable weapon; the thing which makes all else we do efficient."

Mark Litteton said, "Turn your doubts to questions; turn your questions to prayers; turn your prayers to God." When you pray for victory, God will give you a strategy. Phillips Brooks said, "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance but taking hold of God's willingness." Prayer is not a gadget we use when nothing else works. Instead, I agree with O. Hallesby when he said, "Begin to realize more and more that prayer is the most important thing you do. You can use your time to no better advantage than to pray whenever you have an opportunity to do so, either alone or with others; while at work, while at rest, or while walking down the street. Anywhere!"

# There is Something for You to Start That is Ordained for You to Finish - Myles Monroe

Are you stumbling toward an uncertain future? You can predict your future by the awareness you have of your purpose. Too many people know what they are running from, but not what they are running to. First, focus on discovering your purpose, then dedicate yourself to fulfilling it. Having a strong "why" will give you the necessary "how." Psalms 138:8 reads, "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; thy steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever."

Purpose, not money, is your true asset.

Take care of your purpose, and the end will take care of itself. When you base your life on principle, 99% of your decisions are already made. Purpose does what it must, talent does what it can. Considering an action? Listen to Marcus Aurelius: "Without a purpose nothing should be done." Robert Byrne said, "The purpose of life is a life of purpose."

"The height of your accomplishments will equal the depth of your convictions. Seek happiness for its own sake, and you will not find it; seek purpose, and happiness will follow as a shadow comes with the sunshine" (William Scolavino). As you reach for your destiny, it will pull you like a magnet, not like a brass ring that only goes around once. Destiny draws you forward.

John Foster said, "It is a poor, disgraceful thing not to be able to reply, with some degree of certainty, to the simple questions, 'what will you be? What will you do?' Dr. Charles Garfield added, "Peak performers are people who are committed to a compelling mission. It is very clear that they care deeply about what they do and their efforts, energies, and enthusiasms are traceable back to that particular mission." You're not truly free until you've been made captive by your supreme mission in life.

Don't just pray that God will do this or that, pray that God will make His purpose known to you. William Cowper said, "The only true happiness comes from squandering ourselves for a purpose." Note Proverbs 19:21: "Whatever your plan is, just know that nothing else will satisfy you." Know that God is with you and will provide what you need to accomplish your purpose. The God who made the mouth will also provide the food.

As individuals go their right way, destiny accompanies them. Don't part company with your destiny. It is an anchor in the storm. A purposeless life is an early death.

Rick Renner commented, "The only thing that will keep you from the will of God is if you look at yourself and say, 'I'm not so much among so many.' " You can't do anything about the length of your life, but you can do something about its width and depth. What you believe is the force that determines what you accomplish or fail to accomplish in life.

The average person's life consists of 20 years of having parents ask where they are going, 40 years of having a spouse ask the same question, and at the end, the mourners wondering the same thing. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." Abandon yourself to destiny.

# The Golden Rule is of No Use Unless You Realize That it is Your Move - Dr. Frank Crane

One of the best things you can do for your Heavenly Father is to be kind to His children. Serving others is one of life's greatest privileges. Albert Schweitzer said, "The only ones among you who will really be happy are those who have sought and found how to serve." Pierre de Chartin commented, "The most satisfying thing in life is to have been able to give a large part of oneself to others." Proverbs declares, "He that despises his neighbor sinneth; but he who hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" (14:21). Carl Reiland advises, "In about the same degree as you are helpful, you will be happy."

Hunt for the good points in people. Remember, they must do the same in your case. Then do something to help them. If you want to get ahead, be a bridge, not a wall. Love others more than they deserve. Each human being presents us with an opportunity to serve. Everybody needs help from everybody.

John Andrew Holmes said, "The entire population of the universe, with one trifling exception, is composed of others." Too often, we expect everyone else to practice the golden rule. The golden rule may be old, but it hasn't been used enough to show any signs of wear. We make a first-class mistake if we treat others as second-class people.

You can't help others without helping yourself. Kindness is one of the most difficult things to give away since it usually comes back to you. The person who sows seeds of kindness enjoys a perpetual harvest. I agree with Henry Drummond when he said, "I wonder why it is that we are not kinder to each other...how much the world needs it! How easily it is done!"

Do you want to get along better with others? Be a little kinder than necessary. A good way to forget your own troubles is to help others out of theirs.

Theodore Spear said, "You can never expect too much of yourself in the matter of giving yourself to others." The taller a bamboo grows, the lower it bends. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve." When you walk in the Fruit of the Spirit, others can taste it. Harry Fosdick said, "One of the most amazing things ever said on earth is Jesus' statement, 'He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.' None has one chance in a billion of being thought of as really great a century after they're gone except those who have been servants of all."

# The Journey of 10,000 Miles Begins with a Single Text. - Confucius iPhone

Small steps, what a big ideal Dale Carnegie said, "Don't be afraid to give your best to what seemingly are small jobs. Every time you conquer one, it makes you that much stronger. If you do the little jobs well, the big ones will tend to take care of themselves." Your future comes one hour at a time. Thomas Huxley observed, "The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but to enable a man to put his other foot higher."

Never be discouraged when you make progress, no matter how slow. Be only wary of standing still. A success is a person who does what they can with what they have, where they are. Helen Keller said, "I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble."

All glory comes from daring to take small steps. After being faithful in small steps, you'll look back and be able to say, "We're still not where we want to be, but we're not where we were." Julia Carney said, "Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land." Author Louis L'Amour wrote, "Victory is won not in miles but in inches. Win a little now, hold your ground, and later win a lot more." God often gives us a little to see what we will do with a lot.

"Nobody makes the greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little" (Edmond Burke). Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned. "Though thy beginning was small, yet thy later end should greatly increase" (Job 8:7). I believe that God cares just as much about the small things in your life as the big things. Why? Because He knows if you are faithful in the small things, the big things will take care of themselves.

The prize of doing one duty is the opportunity to do another. R. Smith said, "Most of the critical things in life, which become the starting points of human destiny, are little things." Do little things now, and big things will come to you asking to be done.

One thing is for sure: what isn't tried won't work. The most important thing is to begin, even though the first step is the hardest. I agree with Vince Lombardi: "Inches make champions." Take one small step right now. Don't ignore the small things. The kite flies because of its tail. It's the little things that count; sometimes a safety pin carries more responsibility than a bank president.

H. Storey remarked, "Have confidence that if you have done a little thing well, you could do a bigger thing well, too." Consider what Pat Robertson said: "Despise not the day of small beginnings because you can make all your mistakes anonymously." Value the little things. One day, you may look back and realize they were the big things. Dante said, "From a little spark may burst a mighty flame." Remember this on your way up: the biggest dog was once a pup.

# The Only Place to Start is Where You Are

Start with what you have, not with what you don't have. Opportunity is where you are, not where you were. People tend to underrate or overrate what they don't possess. Don't ignore what you can do by focusing on what you can't. God doesn't ask us to begin with abundance. He asks us to start with obedience. What's in your hand today?

Moses had a stick. David had a sling. A young boy had five loaves and two fish. None of it looked impressive—until God touched it. Scripture reminds us, "What do you have in your hand?" (Exodus 4:2). Heaven's miracles almost always start with earth's leftovers.

We are tempted to wait until we have more—more money, more time, more confidence, more clarity. But God doesn't do His best work in the land of "someday." He works in the now. "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24). Opportunity doesn't live in yesterday or tomorrow. It lives right where your feet are planted.

To move anywhere, you must first move. Faith is not a thought; it's a step. Jesus said, "Go out into the deep water and let down your nets" (Luke 5:4). He didn't say, "Wait until the water is calm," or "Wait until the boat is bigger." He said, Go. Faith launches before it fully understands. We often underestimate what we already hold because we're too busy admiring what we don't. Comparison has a way of shrinking gratitude. Yet Scripture assures us, "God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well" (1 Peter 4:10). Not someday. Not when conditions are perfect. Use them now.

God delights in using ordinary people with ordinary resources to accomplish extraordinary purposes. "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise" (1 Corinthians 1:27). Why? So no one mistakes the miracle for human effort. When God multiplies what you bring, He gets the glory.

Many of the most effective people weren't prepared—they were available. They stepped forward before they felt ready. Ecclesiastes gives this simple wisdom: "Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap" (Ecclesiastes 11:4). Waiting for perfect conditions is a subtle form of fear.

Don't despise small beginnings. God never does. "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin" (Zechariah 4:10). What feels like "almost nothing" is often God's favorite starting point. Nearly everything He does begins quietly, humbly, and unnoticed.

What you have right now—your story, your skills, your experiences, even your limitations—can become the seed for something greater. "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Not everything we want. Everything we need.

You don't need to do everything. You only need to do something. And that something done in faith can open the door to more than you imagined. "Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will succeed" (Proverbs 16:3).

So start where you are. Use what you have. Take the step you can take today. God specializes in meeting us at the starting line—and walking with us all the way to the finish line.

# Do You Count Your Blessings or Think Your Blessings Don't Count?

"If the only prayer you say in your whole life is 'Thank you,' that would suffice" (Meister Eckhart). Do you have an attitude of gratitude? If we stop to think more, we will stop to thank more. Of all the human feelings, gratitude has the shortest memory.

Cicero said, "A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues." The degree to which you are thankful is a sure index of your spiritual health. Max Lucado wrote, "The devil doesn't have to steal anything from you; all he has to do is make you take it for granted." When you count all your blessings, you will always show a profit.

Replace regret with gratitude. Be grateful for what you have, not regretful for what you have not. If you can't be thankful for what you have, be grateful for what you have escaped. Henry Ward Beecher said, "The unthankful...discovers no mercies; but the thankful heart...will find in every hour, some heavenly blessings." The more you complain, the less you'll obtain.

"If we get everything we want, we will soon want nothing that we get" (Vernon Luchies). If you don't enjoy what you have, how could you be happier with more? Francis Schaeffer said, "The beginning of men's rebellion against God was, and is, the lack of a thankful heart." The seeds of discouragement will not grow in a thankful heart. Erich Fromm remarked, "Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction."

Epicurus reflected, "Nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is too little." It's a sure sign of mediocrity to be moderate with our thanks. Don't find yourself so busy asking God for favors that you have no time to thank Him. I relate to what Joel Budd said: "I feel like I'm the one who wrote Amazing Grace."

"Happiness always looks small while you hold it in your hands, but let it go, and you learn at once how big and precious it is" (Maxim Gorky). We should have the attitude of George Hubert, when he said, "Thou O Lord has given so much to me, give me one more thing--a grateful heart." The Bible says in Psalms, "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving." Our thanks to God should always precede our requests of Him. The Bible challenges us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks."

"We don't thank God for much he has given us. Our prayers are too often the beggar's prayer, the prayer that asks for something. We offer too few prayers of thanksgiving and of praise" (Robert Woods). Don't find yourself at the end of your life saying, "What a wonderful life I've had! I only wish I'd appreciated and realized it sooner."

Thank God for dirty dishes; they have a tale to tell.

While other folks go hungry, we're eating pretty well.

With home, and health, and happiness, we shouldn't want to fuss;

For by this stack of evidence, God is very good to us.

# When God is All You Have, Then He is All You Need

Pastor Billy Joe Daugherty said, "God is not hard to find! But there is a condition, we must seek Him with all our heart." You will always get into trouble when you try to handle your life without God. 2 Chronicles 32:8 reads: "With us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles." God, the ultimate warrior, lives in you. If you are a soldier for Christ, don't worry about public opinion. Only be concerned about your Commander's opinion. If you fear God, there is no need to fear anything else.

Let's follow Mary Lyons' advice: "Trust in God and do something." Satan doesn't care what we worship, as long as we don't worship God. Too many people ask the Lord to guide them, and then they grab the steering wheel. Your relationship with God will last if He is first in your life. Too many people want God's blessing, but they don't want Him.

When you lose God, it is not God who is lost. Some people talk about finding God as if He could get lost. The Bible says, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). Tommy Barnett reflected, "The deeper I dig, the deeper He digs." To increase value, get to know God. Pray to God: "I want to be in your will, not in your way." William Law added, "Nothing has separated us from God, but our own will, or rather our own will is our separation from God."

Oswald Chambers advises us: "Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless in the first waking moment of the day you learn to fling the door wide back and let God in, you will work on a wrong level all day; but swing the door wide open and pray to your Father in secret, and every public thing will be stamped with the presence of God." Don't pray by heart, but with the heart.

The Bible finds us where we are, and with our permission, will take us where we ought to go. Other books were given to us for information, but the Bible was given to us for transformation. A person who merely samples the Word of God never acquires much taste for it. Psalm 35:27 declares, "God is always a plus factor. He is never a disadvantage to you. He is always an asset. He wants you to succeed, and He has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."

Our heartfelt cry to God ought to be the same as Isaiah's cry: "Here I am, send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Consider the words of W. H. Atken when he said, "Lord take my lips and speak through them; take my mind and think through it; take my heart and set it on fire." We must not only give what we have, but we must also give what we are to God.

# Have the Courage to Live. Anyone Can Quit

"The world will always give you the opportunity to quit, but only the world would call quitting an opportunity" (Clint Brown). In trying times, too many people quit trying. One of the most powerful success principles ever preached is: Never give up!

As an author, I have the privilege of signing numerous books. I like to include encouraging messages in each one before I sign. One of my most frequent encouragements is: Never give up! Joel Budd remarked, "It isn't the final say so, unless you say so."

Nobody and nothing can keep you down unless you decide not to rise again. H.E. Jansen said, "The man who wins may have been counted out several times, but he didn't hear the referee." Find a way to, not a way not to. A lazy man is always judged by what he doesn't do. The choice to give up or go on is a defining moment in your life. You cannot turn back the clock. But you can wind it up again.

The most common trait I have found in all successful people is that they have conquered the temptation to give up." One of the best ways to give your best a chance is to rise up when you're knocked down.

Too many people stop faster than they start. Instead of stopping, follow this English proverb: "Don't fall before you are pushed." Margaret Thatcher understood the principle of not quitting when she advised, "You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it." David Zucker added, "Quit now, you'll never make it. If you disregard this advice, you'll be halfway there."

"I can't!" is the conclusion of fools. Listen to Clare Booth Luce: "There are no hopeless situations, there are only men who have grown hopeless about them." Admiral Chester Nimitz remarked, "God grant me the courage not to give up what I think is right even though I think it is hopeless." Giving up is the ultimate tragedy. The famous boxer, Archie Moore, reflected, "If I don't get off the mat, I'll lose the fight."

The choice is simple. You can either stand up and be counted, or lie down and be counted out. Defeat never comes to people until they admit it. Your success will be measured by your willingness to keep on trying.

# Miracles Always Begin in the Heart - Billy Joe Daugherty

When confronted with a new opportunity or challenging situation, I like to ask myself, "Do I have a pure heart and a right spirit?" Psalm 139:23-24 prays, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The weapon of the brave resides in their heart. Horace Rutledge said, "When you look at the world in a narrow way, how mean it is! When you look at it selfishly, how selfish it is! But when you look at it in a broad, generous, friendly spirit, how wonderful you find it!" The Bible counsels us to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

If a person's aim in this world is right, he will miss fire in the next. Too many children are afraid of the dark, while too many adults are afraid of the light. William Hazlitt remarked, "If mankind would wish for what is right, they might have had it long ago." Roger Babson added, "If things are not going well with you, begin your effort at correcting the situation by carefully examining the service you are rendering and especially the spirit in which you are rendering it."

To know what is right and not do it is as bad as doing wrong. Invite trouble, and it will show up early. Save yourself a lot of trouble by not borrowing any. Here's more insight about trouble: you don't have to get rid of old problems to make room for new ones. Nothing costs more than doing the wrong thing.

As you look toward 2026, I invite you to pray one of my favorite Bible verses from Psalm 51:10-11 NKJV: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."