



TWENTY ONE
DAYS OF PRAYER AND FASTING

DEVOTIONAL

WRITTEN BY
JOHN MASON



A Diamond is a Hunk of Coal that Stuck to Its Job and Made Good Under Pressure.

Our daily prayer should be, "Lord, give me the determination and tenacity of a weed." I don't like weeds, but I have to admire their resolve. A great oak is only a little nut that held its ground. "Somebody is sitting in the shade today because someone long ago planted a tree (Warren Buffett). "These troubles and sufferings of ours are, after all, quite small and won't last very long. Yet this short time of distress will result in God's richest blessing upon us forever and ever" (2 Cor. 4:17). Most of us take hold of opportunity, but we let go of it too soon.

"Many people fail in life because they believe in the adage: 'If you don't succeed at one thing right away, try something else.' But success eludes those who follow such advice. The dreams they have come true did so because people stuck to their ambitions. They refused to be discouraged. They never let disappointment get the upper hand. Challenges only spurred them on to greater efforts" (Don B. Owens, Jr.). You'll be judged by what you finish, not by what you start. If you don't see results right away, don't worry. God doesn't pay by the week, He pays at the end.

All great achievements require time and tenacity. "The reward for those who persevere far exceeds the pain that must precede the victory" (Ted Engstrom). It is not success that God rewards, but faithfulness of doing His will. Be persevering—it may be the last key on the ring that opens the door. Hanging on one second longer than your competition makes you a winner. Become famous for finishing important, difficult tasks.

If you're tempted to stop, just think of Brahms, who took seven long years to compose his famous lullaby because he kept falling asleep at the piano—just kidding, but it did take him that long to finish. I agree with Woodrow Wilson when he said, "I would rather fail in a cause that will ultimately succeed than succeed in a cause that will ultimately fail." Nearly all failures result from people quitting too soon. "And let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up" (Gal. 6:9, LB). It takes the hammer of persistence to drive the nail of success.

Many of life's failures were people who didn't realize how close they were to success when they gave up. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote, "When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, until it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the time and place that the tide will turn". The lowest ebb is the turn of the tide.

You uncover opportunity by applying persistence to possibilities. When you get right down to the root meaning of the word succeed, you find it simply means to persevere and follow through. Any diamond will tell you it was just a hunk of coal that stuck to its job and made good under pressure.

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The road to success runs uphill so don't expect to break any speed records. Impatience is costly. Your greatest mistakes will happen because of impatience. Most people fail simply because they're impatient and they cannot join the beginning with the end. Keep patiently doing God's will if you want Him to do for you all He has promised.

"The determined soul will do more with a rusty monkey wrench than a loafer will accomplish with all the tools in a mechanic's shop" (Rupert Hughes). The power to hold on in spite of everything, to endure—this is the winner's quality. To endure is greater than to dare. The difference between the impossible and the possible lies simply in your determination.



Don't Live Within Your Means.

It doesn't happen often, but one time in the middle of the night I believe the Lord awakened me. I felt Him leading me to write a nugget titled, "Don't live within your means." He began to speak to me about this idea. Even though it was 4:50 a.m., I was so excited about this; I awoke my wife and began to "preach" to her about it for several minutes. (She said the idea was great, but she really needed her sleep!).

What do I believe God meant when he showed me, "Don't live within your means"? I believe He wants us to act bigger, believe larger, associate higher, and (with God's help) do more than we can ask or think. Your outlook determines your outcome. If God is your partner...make your plans BIG.

I'm not encouraging you to go wild, have no boundaries or to be reckless. Certainly we should spend within our means—but not live there. Talk with people smarter than you. Listen to those more spiritual than you. Ask questions of those more successful than you. Lend a hand to those less fortunate than you. Don't stay where you are.

I sincerely believe many people who think they're frugal aren't really frugal. Rather, they're full of fear. The label of frugality, balance of conservativeness is often a mask to cover up a deep-rooted fear in their lives. Don't make such thorough plans for rainy days you don't enjoy today's sunshine.

When you only live with your means, you can't live by faith. If you aren't living by faith, you can't please God for "without faith, it is impossible to please him" (Heb 11:6). Abandon altogether the search for security. "Only the insecure strive for security" (Wayne Dyer). If you're just trying to earn a living, you'll forget how to live.

I've heard this saying most of my life..."Who God calls; He equips. Who he equips, He anoints to do the job." Not matter what level of your ability; God has equipped you with more potential than you can possibly use in your lifetime. Don't let the future be a time when you wish you'd done what you aren't doing now.

If the shoe fits...don't wear it. If you do, you're not allowing room for growth. Webster knew all about the ineffectiveness of "living within your means." When you look up the "means" in his dictionary, it tells you to see the word "average". So, when you decide to "live within your means", you're deciding to live an average life.



If You're Not Failing, You're Not Growing.

An inspirational speaker began his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?"

Hands started going up.

He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up.

He then asked, "Who still wants it?"

Still the hands were up in the air.

"Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe.

He picked it up, now all crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" Still the hands went into the air.

"My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20.

Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value.

We all make mistakes—especially those who do things. Failure is often the first necessary step towards success. If we don't take the risk of failing, we won't get the chance to succeed. When we're trying, we're winning. To fail is the natural consequence of trying. Babe Ruth one of the great home run hitters but also the all-time strikeout leader said, "Never let the fear of striking out get in your way".

Stop trying to be perfect. When you have a serious decision to make, tell yourself firmly you are going to make it. Don't expect it will be a perfect one. I love the wisdom of Winston Churchill: "The maxim, 'nothing avails but perfection,' may be spelled paralysis." "I don't like these cold, precise, perfect people who, in order not to speak wrong, never speak at all, and in order not to do wrong, never do anything" (Henry Ward Beecher). The pursuit of excellence is gratifying and healthy; the pursuit of perfection is frustrating, neurotic, and a terrible waste of time.



The fact is, you're like a tea bag. You won't know your own strength until you've been through some hot water. Failure is something we can only avoid by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing. "Remember, there are two benefits of failure. First, if you do fail, you learn what doesn't work; and second, the failure gives you an opportunity to try a new approach" (Roger Von Oech).

Some defeats are only installments to victory. "Even a mistake may turn out to be the one thing necessary to a worthwhile achievement" (Henry Ford). Some people learn from their mistakes; some never recover from them. Learn how to fail intelligently. Develop success from failure.

Mistakes and failure are two of the surest stepping-stones to success. No other element can do so much for a man if he is willing to study them and to make the most out of them. "Most people think of success and failure as opposites, but they are actually both products of the same process" (Roger Von Oech). Your season of failure is the best time for sowing your seeds of success. Successful people are not afraid to fail. They go from failure to failure...until at last success is theirs. The best way to accelerate your success is to double your failure rate. The law of failure is one of the most powerful of all success laws.

"No matter what mistakes you have made—no matter how you've messed things up—you can still make a new beginning. The person who fully realizes this suffers less from the shock and pain of failure and sooner gets off to a new beginning" (Norman Vincent Peale).

"When you stumble today, pick yourself up tomorrow. That's what tomorrows are for" (Janet Collins). Often just before the big success...comes apparent failure and discouragement. "I hope someday to have so much of what the world calls success, that people will ask me, 'What's your secret?' And I will tell them, 'I just get up again when I fall down'" (Paul Harvey).

The greatest mistake you can make in life is to continually fear you will make one. "Don't be afraid to fail. Don't waste energy trying to cover up failure. If you're not failing, you're not growing" (H. Stanley Judd). When successful people stop growing and learning it's usually because they became less and less willing to risk failure. "Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay, not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead-end street" (William A. Ward).

If you are made of the right stuff, a hard fall results in sky-high bounce. A life spent in making mistakes is not only more honorable but more useful than a life spent in doing nothing. It's better to be a flawed diamond than a perfect brick.



Get Out of the Middle of the Road.

Your destiny is not a matter of chance; it's a matter of choice. Many people have the right aims in life—they just never get around to pulling the trigger. When you determine what you want, you have made the most important decision in your life. You must know what you want in order to attain it.

"Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it" (Ps. 37:5, NAS). If we are faithful, God will take care of our successes. Peace is the result of a deliberate decision, an adjustment of your life to the will of God. Guidance means I can count on God. Commitment means God can count on me.

"Not to decide is to decide" (Harvey Cox). Weeds grow lushly in the soil of indecision. Get out of the middle of the road. Standing in the middle of the road is very dangerous; you can get knocked down by traffic going both directions. The train of failure usually runs on the track of indecision.

Because of indecision, one can die before one actually is dead. "Indecision is debilitating; it feeds upon itself; it is, one might say, habit forming. Not only that, but it is contagious; it transmits itself to others" (H. A. Hopf).

"There is a fine difference of perspective between getting involved and being committed. In ham and eggs, the chicken is involved, but the pig is committed" (John Alan Price). Until you're committed, there's hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. "I will," is a slogan for an exciting, productive life.

You must choose between boredom and decisions. Don't be like a wheelbarrow—going no further than others push you. The weak are always forced to decide between alternatives others have set before them, which they have not chosen themselves. "Never complain about what you permit" (Mike Murdock).

You're where you are today because you've chosen to be there. Reality forms around a commitment, and one person with commitment always accomplishes more than a hundred with just an interest. Commitment is what transforms an idea into a reality.

Be decisive even if it means you'll sometimes be wrong. The key to your future is you can still choose. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). What you commit yourself to be will change you from what you are into what you can be.



What You See Depends Mainly on What You Look For.

The reason many people don't get answers from God is the same reason a thief doesn't find a policeman: he's running away. How we position ourselves in life makes all the difference. To one person the world is desolate, dull, and empty; to another the same world looks rich, interesting, and full of meaning. The choice is up to you. It's like how a twenty-dollar bill looks so big when it goes to church and so little when it goes out for groceries.

If you look at life the wrong way there's always cause for alarm. Most people complain because roses have thorns. Instead be thankful thorns have roses. What you see depends mainly on what you look for.

A young man was getting ready to graduate college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted.

As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautiful, wrapped gift box.

Curious, but somewhat disappointed the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible. Angrily, he raised his voice at his father and said, "With all your money you give me a Bible?" and stormed out of the house, leaving the holy book.

Many years passed, and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go to him. He had not seen him since that graduation day. Before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away and willed all his possessions to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care of things. When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart.

He began to search his father's important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago. With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. As he read those words, a car key dropped from an envelope taped behind the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words...PAID IN FULL.

How many times do we miss God's blessings because they are not packaged as we expected or located where we want them to be?



Position yourself to receive, not resist. How you see things on the outside depends on how things are on the inside of you. "Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure" (Norman Vincent Peale). "You and I do not see things as they are. We see things as we are" (Herb Cohen). Develop the hunter's approach, the outlook wherever you go there are ideas waiting to be discovered. When you are positioned right, opportunity presents itself.

Opportunity can be missed if you're broadcasting when you should be tuning in. When opportunity knocks, some people object to the interruption. "One of the greatest and most comforting truths is that when one door opens, another closes, but often we look so long and regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one that is open for us" (Anonymous).

See success where others see only failure. Expect something good to happen. That expectation will energize your dreams and give them momentum. You'll often find life responds to your outlook. We go where our vision is. Life is mostly a matter of expectation.

You'll gain the advantage by doing things before they need to be done—positioning yourself ahead of time. Enduring success is found when you travel in advance of the crowd. I believe one of the major benefits of reading the Bible is how it teaches us how to respond in advance to many of life's challenges and opportunities.

Dig a well before you're thirsty. Plant a seed before you're hungry. The trouble with the future for most people is it arrives before they are ready for it. Positioning yourself to receive causes you to be ready. The most important question is: Are you ready?



Bite Off More Than You Can Chew.

Don't do anything that doesn't require faith. The key to momentum is always having something in faith to look forward to. We live by faith, or we don't really live at all. Either we venture or we vegetate. What's needed is more people who specialize in the impossible. This year's success was last year's impossibility. "Faith is not trying to believe something regardless of the evidence. Faith is daring to do something regardless of the consequence" (Sherwood Eddy).

Phillip Brooks, suggested we pray this way, "Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your power. Pray for power equal to your tasks." Jesus said to you and me, "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Never be afraid to do what God tells you to do. "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it, you will land among the stars" (Les Brown). You're like a rubber band. You must be stretched in order to be effective.

You can only accomplish in proportion to what you attempt. The reason why so little is accomplished is because so little is attempted. Never say never. You must think big to be big. "It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that things are difficult" (Seneca). The impossible: what nobody can do until somebody does. The fact is it's fun to do the impossible. It's when we play it safe, we create a world of utmost insecurity. So, look at things...as they can be.

You don't tap the resources of God until you attempt the impossible. Risk is part of God's plan for you. "I can do everything God asks me to do with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and the power" (Phil. 4:13, LB). "Mediocre minds usually dismiss anything which reaches beyond their own understanding" (Rochefoucauld). Even a coward can praise Christ, but it takes a man of courage to follow him.

Progress always involves risk. You can't steal second base and keep your foot on first. "We do not need more intellectual power; we need more spiritual power. We do not need more things that are seen, we need more of the things that are unseen" (Calvin Coolidge). He who does not dare will not get his share. Unless you enter the beehive, you can't take the honey.

Look for ways to flex your risk muscle. Everyone has a risk muscle; and you keep it in the proper shape by experimenting and trying new things. "People who take risks are the people you'll lose against" (John Scully). "The people who are really failures are the people who set their standards so low, keep the bar at such a safe level, that they never run the risk of failure" (Robert Schuller).

A great ship always asks for deep water. When you dare for nothing, you should hope for nothing. God wants us to bite off more than we can chew, to live by faith and not by sight.



Questions.

In the first four books of the New Testament, Jesus asked over 150 questions! Here's a man who's known as "The Answer."—He's asking all the questions. Why?

I've always observed this characteristic of productive and successful people—they ask good questions. I saw that whether or not these people acted was greatly influenced by the questions they asked. I observed as they asked more outstanding questions, their focus in life changed and improved. They automatically became more productive!

Life's most important answers can be found in asking the right questions. So, consider these:

Both enthusiasm and pessimism are contagious. How much of each do you spread?

If someone were to pay you a hundred dollars for each kind word you spoke and collect fifty dollars for each unkind word, would you be rich or poor?

Are you ready for your opportunity when it comes?

Do you make others feel bigger or smaller when they're around you?

Are you spending your life answering questions nobody is asking?

Ten years from today, what will you wish you had done now?

If you have God's promise for something, isn't that enough?

Why worry when you can pray?

How old is your attitude?

Are you ready?

Do you acquire the doubts of others?

Are you willing to follow the truth no matter where it leads?

How much has fear and worry about things that never happened cost you?

Do you go through a problem—or try to go around it and never get past it?

Do you say, "There ought to be a better way to do it or do you say, that's the way it's always been done?"

Are you deliberately planning to be less than you're capable of being?

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If not you, then who? If not now, then when? (Hillel)

Are you willing to give up what you have to become what you can be?

What do you believe in the depth of your being?

What is the first, small step you can take to get moving?

Do you look at the horizon and see an opportunity, or look into the distance and fear a problem?

Do you put off until tomorrow the things you've already put off until today?

Has failure gone to your head?

Does your reach exceed your grasp?

"Do you spend the first six days of each week sowing wild oats, then go to church on Sunday and pray for a crop failure?" (Fred Allen)

Are you traveling or going somewhere?

Are you always ready to live but never living?

Do you see difficulties in every opportunity, or see opportunities in every difficulty?

Are you content with failure?

"What progress are you standing in the way of?" (Tim Redmond)

Does God seem far away? If so, guess who moved. He's never more than a prayer or praise away.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? (Gen 18:14)



You Cannot Find Until You Define.

Opportunity is all around you. What matters is where you put your focus. Ask yourself this question every day: "Where should my focus be?" Where you focus your attention, you create strength and momentum.

These are the characteristics of momentum: 1) it is single-minded; 2) it is unwavering in the pursuit of a goal; 3) it has passion which knows no limits; 4) it demands a concentrated intensity and a definite sense of destiny; and, most of all, 5) it has a boundless vision and commitment to excellence.

Concentration is the key that opens the door to accomplishment. "The first law of success is concentration—to bend all your energies to one point and go directly to that point, looking neither to the right nor to the left" (William Mathews). The most successful people have always been people with concentration. They struck their blows in one place until they accomplish their purpose. They're of one specific idea, one steady aim, and one single concentrated purpose.

What a great abyss between some people's dreams and the results they achieve! It's due to the difference in their commitment to bring together all the options of their ability and to focus them upon one point.

There are two quick ways to disaster: taking nobody's advice and taking everybody's advice. Learn to say no to the good so you can say yes to the best. A.P. Goethe said there are three qualifications for success:

- 1) A big waste basket—you must know what to eliminate;
- 2) It is important to know what to preserve;
- 3) It is important to know when to say no, for developing the power to say no gives us the capacity to say yes".

We accomplish things by directing our desires, not by ignoring them. What an immense power you have over your life when you possess distinct aims. Your words, the tone of your voice, your dress, and your very motions change and improve when you begin to live for a reason.

Don't be a person who is uncertain about the future and hazy about the present. Stay in the groove without making it a rut. Make something your specialty. Even God, who is God, cannot please everyone, so don't you try. You cannot find until you define. To finish the race, stay on the track.

I'm astonished at the aimlessness of most people's lives and how easily they delegate the direction of their lives to others. "Learn to define yourself, to content yourself with some specific thing and some definite work; dare to be what you really are, and to learn to accept with good grace all that you are not" (Anonymous).



Stay Out of Your Own Way.

Pastor David M. Blunt

Here's the first rule of winning: don't defeat yourself. Your biggest enemy is you. Don't build a case against yourself. When you find yourself getting in your own way, you're like a refrigerator—slowly gathering ice, which, if allowed to accumulate unchecked, will reduce its effectiveness to nothing. God wisely designed the human body so we could neither pat our own backs nor kick ourselves too easily.

"I have never met a man who has given me as much trouble as myself" (Dwight L. Moody). The first and best victory is to conquer you. All significant battles are waged within oneself. Don't build a case against yourself.

When you find yourself standing in your own way, you'll always hope vaguely and dread precisely. Talk back to your internal critic. "If you want to move your greatest obstacle, realize that your obstacle is yourself—and that the time to act is now" (Nido Qubein).

Very often a change of self is needed more than a change of scene. Only you can hold yourself back...only you can stand in your own way...only you can help yourself. There's no one to stop you but yourself.

Learn five lessons from the pencil:

One: You will be able to do many great things, but only if you allow yourself to work hand-in-hand with others.

Two: You will experience a painful sharpening from time to time, but you'll need it to become better.

Three: You're equipped to correct any mistakes you might make.

Four: The most important part of you will always be what's inside.

And Five: On every surface you are used on, you must leave your mark. No matter what the condition, you must continue to write.

You must begin to think of yourself as becoming the person you want to be. "Give the man you'd like to be a look at the man you are" (Edgar Guest). Change what you tell yourself. The Bible tells us, "For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21NLT).

"No one really knows enough to be a pessimist" (Norman Cousins). Remember, "One of the nice things about problems is that a good many of them do not exist except in our imaginations" (Steve Allan). The fear you fear is only in yourself and nowhere else.

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There are two forces warring against each other within us. One says you can't, the other says with God you can. "It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves" (Sir Edmond Hillary). The basic problem most people have is they're doing nothing to solve their basic problem. This problem is, don't build a case against yourself.

Paths Without Obstacles Don't Lead Anywhere.

To get to the Promised Land, you'll have to navigate your way through the wilderness. All of us encounter obstacles, problems, and challenges across our path and how we respond to them and view them is one of the most important decisions we make. "Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems. For when your patience is finally in full-bloom, then you'll be ready for anything, strong in character, full and complete" (James 1:2-4, LB).

A man with twenty difficulties is twice as alive as a man with ten. If you haven't got any challenges, you should get down on your knees and ask, "Lord, don't you trust me anymore?" So, what if you've got problems? That's good! Why? Consistent victories over your problems are like steps on your stairway to success. Be thankful for your obstacles, for if they were less difficult, someone with less ability would have your job.

"A successful man will never see the day that does not bring a fresh quota of problems, and the mark of success is to deal with them effectively" (Lauris Norstad). James Bilkey observed, "You will never be the person you can be if pressure, tension and discipline are taken out of your life." Refuse to let yourself become discouraged by temporary setbacks. If you are beginning to encounter some hard bumps, don't worry. At least you're out of a rut. Circumstances are not your master.

Two women were talking and the one asks the other how many times she's been married, and the reply was 4. 'Four times!' exclaimed the first woman, why so many? So the other woman said: 'Well, I first got married when I was very young, and I married this wonderful man who was a banker. However, one day just a few weeks after we were married, his bank was robbed, and he was shot and killed.'

'Oh my gosh, that's terrible' the first woman said.

'Well, it wasn't that tragic. Soon after that, I started seeing another man who performed in the circus. He was really a great guy, but he lived dangerously because he performed his high-wire act without a net. Well, a few weeks after we got married, he was performing a show and suddenly a gust of wind came by and knocked him off his wire and he was killed.'

'Your second husband was killed too?! That's horrible!'

'Yes, it was terrible, but at the funeral I fell in love with the minister, and we got married soon after that. Unfortunately, one Sunday while he was walking to church, he was hit by a car and killed.'

'Three??? Three husbands of yours were killed? How could you live through all that?'

'It was tough, but then I met my present husband. And he's a wonderful man. I think we'll live a long happy life together.'

'And what does your present husband do for a living?'

'He's a mortician.'

'A mortician? I don't understand something here. First you marry a banker, then a circus performer, then a minister, and now a mortician? Why such a diverse group of husbands?'

'Well, if you think about it, it's not too hard to understand...

One for the money...

Two for the show...

Three to get ready...

And four to go!

You can always tell a lot about a woman or man by the number of challenges it takes to discourage them. When the water starts to rise, you can too! You can go over, not under. "Obstacles across our path can be spiritual flat tires—disruptions in our lives seem to be disastrous at the time, but end by redirecting our lives in a meaningful way" (Bernie Siegel, M.D.).

The truth is, if you find a path with no obstacles—it's probably a path that doesn't lead to anywhere important. Adversity is the mother of invention. And man's adversity is always God's opportunity. Adversity gives birth to opportunity. "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NIV).

"What is the difference between an obstacle and an opportunity? Our attitude towards it. Every opportunity has a difficulty, and every difficulty has an opportunity" (J. Sidlo Baxter). "Show me someone who has done something worthwhile, and I'll show you someone who has overcome adversity" (Lou Holtz). Many people have good intentions, but something bad happens and they simply stop. Every path has a puddle, but those puddles can be God telling us where to step.

The travel is worthy of the travail when you're on the right road. Just recognize life is challenging...then things will be much easier for you. "Every problem has in it the seeds of its own solution. If you don't have any problems, you don't get any seeds" (Norman Vincent Peale). Live your life so you can say, "I've had a life full of challenges, thank God!"



Don't Let Things Stick to You.

As I've had the privilege of meeting hundreds of people over the past several years, one thing that always stands out to me is how many people have things attached to them. For example, people allow a critical statement made by a third-grade teacher, a failure or mistake they made 10-15 years ago, or the comments of a noisy negative neighbor last week hold them back from their destiny.

It's a foolish man that adheres to all he hears. Not everyone has a right to speak into your life...one of the most powerful principles you can apply to acquire momentum.

I really believe one of the major benefits of asking forgiveness from God is that things no longer "stick to us." He says if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins. But incredibly, God doesn't stop there (and that would be great enough), but He also promises to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (see 2 Peter 2:13). When He cleanses us, we have a right standing before the Father. Why? He doesn't want things to stick to us. Because of our right standing before the Father, we're now free of the failures and mistakes, wrong words, and attitudes of the past and released to accomplish things for the future.

I've found successful people have a way of not letting things stick to them. One Sunday morning before the services began, people were sitting in their pews and talking about their lives, their families, etc.... Suddenly the Devil appeared at the front of the church. Everyone started screaming and running for the front entrance, trampling each other in a frantic effort to get away from him.

Soon everyone was evacuated from the church, except for one elderly gentleman who sat calmly in his pew, not moving...seemingly oblivious to the fact God's ultimate enemy was in his presence.

Now this confused Satan a bit, so he walked up to the man and said,

"Don't you know who I am?"

The man replied, "Yep, sure do".

Satan asked, "Aren't you afraid of me?"

"Nope, sure ain't," said the man.

Satan was a little perturbed at this and queried, "Why aren't you afraid of me?"

The man calmly replied, "Been married to your sister for over 48 years."

Like this elderly man, don't let stuff stick to you.

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Don't worry if you don't get what you think you should. What seems so necessary today might not even be desirable tomorrow. "In times like these, it helps to recall that there have always been times like these" (Paul Harvey). If we can forget our troubles as easily as we forget our blessings, how different things would be.

One way to be free of things that want to stick to you is to take your mind off the things that seem to be against you. Thinking about these negative factors simply builds them into a power they truly don't possess. Talking about your grievances merely adds to those grievances. Attach yourself to God's forgiveness, plan, and Word. Then watch yourself become loosed from former "sticky" situations.

Nothing Great is Created Suddenly.

One of the most common prayers I pray for others (and myself) is this: "Lord, please send small opportunities across their paths to do what you've called them to do". When we're faithful in those small opportunities God says, "You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Begin the joyous tasks I have assigned to you" (Matt. 25:21 LB).

People who think they're too big to do little things are perhaps too little to be asked to do big things. Small opportunities are often the beginning of great enterprises.

Nothing great is created suddenly. Nothing can be done except little by little. Never decide to do nothing just because you can only do a little. Within that little thing lies a big opportunity. Small things make a big difference; therefore, do all it takes to be successful in little things.

You'll never do great things if you can't do small things in a great way. All difficult things have their beginning in that which is easy, and great things in that which is small. One of the major factors between people who have momentum and those who don't is they pay attention to small ideas and opportunities.

The courage to begin is the same courage it takes to succeed. The courage to begin separates dreamers from achievers. The beginning is the most important part of any endeavor. Worse than a quitter is the man who's afraid to begin. "Winning starts with beginning" (Robert Schuller).

Ninety percent of success is showing up and starting. You may be disappointed if you fail, but you're doomed if you don't try. Don't be deceived: Knowledge of a path can never be a substitute for diligently putting one foot in front of the other.

Discover step-by-step excitement. The first step is the hardest. "That's why many fail—because they don't get started—they don't go. They don't overcome inertia. They don't begin" (W. Clement Stone). Everything big started with something small.

Dare to begin. No endeavor is worse than that which is not attempted. You don't know what you can do until you have tried. People, like trees, must grow or wither. There's no standing still. Do what you can. The next move is yours!

Live Truly and You Will Truly Live.

You can't make wrong work. Never chase a lie. Left alone, it will run itself to death. Everything you add to the truth, you inevitably subtract from it. It's discouraging to think how people nowadays are more shocked by honesty than by deceit. But truth is essential to society. Thomas Jefferson said, "Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom."

"Those that think it is permissible to tell "white lies" soon grow colorblind" (Austin O'Malley). We punish ourselves with every lie and reward ourselves with every right action. A lie adds to your troubles, subtracts from your energy, multiplies your difficulties and divides your effectiveness.

"Truth is always strong, no matter how weak it looks, and falsehood is always weak no matter how strong it looks" (Marcus Antoninus). Never view anything as an advantage to you that will make you break your word. In the war between falsehood and truth, falsehood wins the first battle, truth the war. "If we live truly, we shall truly live" (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

"Never forget to be truthful and kind. Hold these virtues tightly. Write them deep within your heart" (Prov. 3:3-4, LB). The truth needs no crutches. If it limps, it's a lie. A lie stands on one leg and a truth on two. Proverbs 11:3 (LB) says: "A good man is guided by his honesty; the evil man is destroyed by his dishonesty." "Truth is such a valuable possession that you have to guard over it carefully and you'll find that life is an uphill battle for the person who's not on the level" (Joan Welsh).

Liars are never free. The Bible says, "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32). I'm sure the reverse is true. If you lie, a lie will make you bound. "The darkest hour of any man's life is when he sits down to plan how to get money without earning it" (Horace Greeley). Instead, "refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Is. 7:15). "Dishonest gain will never last, so why take the risk" (Prov. 21:6, LB). The fact is ill gotten gain is always scattered by the devil.

When you stretch the truth, others can see through it. When you stretch the truth, watch out for the snap-back. Make your word your bond. Broken promises are the world's greatest accidents. Honesty always lasts longest. A lie never lives to be old.

Truth exists. Only lies are invented. Truth shines in the darkness. "There is never an instant's truce between virtue and vice. Goodness is the only investment that never fails" (Henry David Thoreau).

"It makes all the difference in the world whether we put truth in the first place or in the second place" (John Morley). As scarce as the truth is, the supply has always been more than the demand. Wrong is wrong no matter who does it or says it. Truth doesn't cease to exist because it's ignored, and it doesn't change because it's not believed by a majority of people. It's always the strongest argument.



Count God's Blessings, Don't Discount Them.

Be aggressively thankful. When it comes to living your life, an important issue is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude. Thanksgiving is an attitude of a productive life. No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks. The person who isn't thankful for what he's got isn't likely to be thankful for what he's going to get. Ingratitude never finishes.

"Attitudes sour in the life that is closed to thankfulness. Soon selfish attitudes take over, closing life to better things" (C. Neil Strait). The person who forgets the language of gratitude will never find himself on speaking terms with happiness. Thanksgiving, you will find, creates power in your life because it opens the generators of your heart to respond gratefully, to receive joyfully and to react creatively. "There are three enemies of personal peace: regret over yesterday's mistakes, anxiety over tomorrow's problems and ingratitude for today's blessing" (William Ward).

Know you are blessed. If you can't be satisfied with what you've reached...at least be thankful for what you've escaped. I remember several years ago driving to dinner, completely absorbed in thought about my latest book. So focused I drove right through a red light at a major intersection in the city I live.

After being greeted by several horns and one man who wanted to let me know with his finger that "I was number one". I pulled into a parking lot and gave thanks to God for His protection...even when I'm stupid.

We all have a lot to be thankful for. We all have a lot to be thankful for!!!

Thank God and count your blessings at every opportunity. The words "think" and "thank" come from the same Latin root. If we take time to think more, we will undoubtedly thank more. When you start to find fault with all you see, it is time to start looking for what's wrong with you.

I like what Dwight L. Moody said, he said: "Be humble or you'll stumble." There's a connection between pride and ingratitude. Henry Ward Beecher pointed out: "A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves." Don't be a person who has a highly developed instinct for being unhappy. Instead, "be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble and prayerful always" (Rom. 12:12, LB). The best rule is, whatever God gives, gratefully receive. If we spend our time thanking God for the good things, there won't be any time left to complain over the bad.

Take some time today and sincerely consider how many things you have to be thankful for. Consider writing them down and keeping that list easily available to you. As you do, I guarantee you'll find creative ideas spring forth from the discussion you are



having with yourself. One of the most creative ways to generate momentum and opportunities is to sit down and write a thank you note, place a call, or send a text or e-mail to people who have influenced your life. Try and do this to as many people as you genuinely can.

There's nothing worse the earth produces than an ungrateful man. Our real prosperity lies in being thankful. Appreciative words are the most powerful force for good on the earth. Kind words don't cost much yet they accomplish much.

Count God's blessings, don't discount them. Pray this, "God, you've given so much to me, give me one more thing—a grateful heart.



You Can Never Trust God Too Much.

Many people believe in God, but not many believe God. One of the most incredible places we can live our lives is in a continual position of believing God. "God made us, and God is able to empower us to do whatever He calls us to do. Denying we can accomplish God's work is not humility; it is the worst kind of pride" (Warren Wiersbe).

The man who puts God first will find God with him right up to the last. "In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success" (Prov. 3:6, LB). Unless it includes trusting God, it's not worthy of being called His direction. Every divine direction we receive from God includes Him.

"God never made a promise that was too good to be true" (D. L. Moody). One of the great things about believing God is found in Luke 18:27: "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." When you join together with Him in His plan, things that were impossible now become possible. The superior man seeks success in God. The small man seeks success in himself. You've never tapped God's resources until you have attempted the impossible.

You may trust the Lord too little, but you can never trust Him too much. With His strength behind you, His love with you, and His arms underneath you, you are more than sufficient for the days ahead of you. "I trust that God is on our side. But it is more important to know that we are on God's side" (Abraham Lincoln).

The fact is anyone who doesn't believe in miracles is not a realist. Look around; nothing is more real than miracles. When you leave God out, you'll find yourself without any invisible means of support. Nothing great has been achieved except by those who dared believe God inside them was superior to any circumstance.

To say "impossible" always puts you on the losing side. If you dream big, believe big and pray big, do you know what happens? Big things! Most of the things worth doing in history have been declared impossible before they were done. What's possible is our highest responsibility.

If you put a buzzard in a pen six or eight feet square and entirely open at the top, the bird, despite his ability to fly, will be an absolute prisoner. The reason is that a buzzard always begins a flight from the ground with a run of ten or twelve feet. Without space to run, as is his habit, he will not even attempt to fly, but will remain a prisoner for life in a small jail with no top.

A bumblebee if dropped into an open tumbler will be there until it dies unless it is taken out. It never sees the means of escape at the top but persists in trying to find some way out through the sides near the bottom. It will seek a way where none exists, until it completely destroys itself.

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Don't be like the buzzard and the bee. Struggling with problems and frustrations, not realizing your answer is right there above you.

The way each day will look to you all starts with whom you're looking to. Look to God. Believe God. When you believe God you will see an opportunity in every problem, not problems in the middle of every opportunity. Proverbs 16:3 is true when it says, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." Joshua 1:9 also says, "Yes, be bold and strong! Banish fear and doubt! For remember, the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (LB).

All great things have God involved in them. Dare to go with God farther than you can see right now. If something is beneficial for you, God will put it within your reach. One psalm in the Bible says, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalms 84:11). Never undertake anything for which you wouldn't have the conviction to ask the blessing of heaven. A small man stands on others. A great man stands with God.



Measure Your Life by Its Donation, Not Duration.

You can succeed best and quickest by helping others succeed. "Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care" (John Cassis). Life is a lot like the game of tennis. Those who don't serve well end up losing. We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give. A man asked renown author and psychiatrist Dr. Carl Menninger, "What would you advise a person to do, if he felt a nervous breakdown coming on?" Most people expected him to reply, "Consult a psychiatrist." To their astonishment he replied, "Lock up your house, go across the railroad tracks, find someone in need and do something to help that person."

"Never forget to be truthful and kind. Hold these virtues tightly. Write them deep within your heart" (Prov. 3:3-4, LB). "Unless life is lived for others, it is not worthwhile" (Mother Teresa). "A self-centered life is totally empty, while an empty life allows room for God" (Tom Haggai). If you're dissatisfied with your lot in life, build a service station on it. A good way to forget your troubles is to help others out of theirs.

Serving others is never entirely unselfish because the giver never fails to receive. "Your own soul is nourished when you are kind; it is destroyed when you are cruel" (Prov. 11:17). "At the close of life the question will not be, "How much have you got?" but, "How much have you given?" Not, "How much have you won" but "How much have you done?" Not, "How much have you saved" but "How much have you sacrificed?" It will be, "How much have you loved and served?" not, "How much were you honored?" (Nathen Schaeffer).

"Selfishness is the greatest curse of the human race" (W. E. Gladstone). Self-interest is a fire which consumes others and then self. Since nine-tenths of our unhappiness is selfishness, think instead in terms of what the other person wants. You can succeed best and quickest by helping others succeed.

"The measure of life is not in its duration, but in its donation. Everyone can be great because everyone can serve" (Peter Marshall). When you're serving others, life is no longer meaningless. "One thing I know; the only ones among you who will really be happy are those who have sought and found how to serve" (Albert Schweitzer). You can't help another without helping yourself. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, watereth also himself" (Prov. 11:25).

A genuine servant seeks the success of others. The true purpose of a leader is to help others get from where they are to where they haven't been. We increase whatever we praise and the deepest need in human nature is the need to be appreciated and praised. "Few things in the world are more powerful than a positive push. A smile. A word of optimism and hope. A "you can do it" when things are tough" (Richard De Vos). Look for ways to help others by praising them.

No one achieves greatness without being of service. Never reach out your hand unless you're willing to extend an arm. The roots of happiness grow deepest in the soil of service. Happiness is like potato salad—when shared with others, it's a picnic. From now on, any definition of a successful life must include serving others.

Do Today What You Want to Postpone Until Tomorrow.

The devil's favorite strategy to get you to fail is procrastination. Realize now is the best time to be alive and productive. If you want to make an easy job seem difficult, just keep putting off doing it. "We're all fugitives, and the things we didn't do yesterday are the bloodhounds" (Prism). "A duty dodged is like a debt unpaid; it is only deferred, and we must come back and settle the account at last" (Joseph Newton). Work is the best thing ever invented for killing time.

What holds us back? "There are those of us who are always about to live. We're waiting until things change, until there is more time, until we are less tired, until we get a promotion, until we settle down—until, until, until. It always seems there is some major event that must occur in our lives before we begin living" (George Sheehan). One of these days is really none of these days. The by and by never comes. The person who desires, but doesn't act, breeds stagnation. And you should always expect poison from standing water.

About the only thing that comes to him who waits is old age. You can't build your reputation on what you're going to do tomorrow. Do today what you want to postpone until tomorrow. "Do not allow idleness to deceive you; for while you give him today, he steals tomorrow from you" (H. Crowquill). Nothing is so fatiguing as the eternal hanging-on of an uncompleted task. When you run in place everyone will pass you by.

When a person gets into a habit of wasting time, they are sure to waste a great deal that doesn't belong to them. "One day, today, is worth two tomorrows" (Ben Franklin). What may be done at any time...will be done at no time. "Life is like a taxi, the meter keeps-a-ticking whether you're getting somewhere or standing still" (Lou Erickson). The successful person is one who went ahead and did the thing others never got around to.

A mother repeatedly called upstairs for her son to get up, get dressed and get ready for school. It was a familiar routine, especially at exam time. "I feel sick," said the voice from the bedroom.

"You are not sick. Get up and get ready," called the mother, walking up the stairs and hovering outside the bedroom door.

"I hate school and I'm not going," said the voice from the bedroom, "I'm always getting talked about behind my back, making mistakes and getting told off. Nobody likes me, and I've got no friends. And we have too many tests. It's all just pointless, and I'm not going to school ever again."

"I'm sorry, but you are going to school," said the mother through the door, continuing encouragingly, "Really, mistakes are how we learn and develop. And please try not to take criticism so personally."

And I can't believe that nobody likes you – you have lots of friends at school. And yes, all those tests can be daunting, but we are all tested in many ways throughout our lives, so all this experience at school is useful for life in general. Besides, you have to go, you are the principle."

What the fool does in the end, the wise man does in the beginning. Prolonged idleness paralyzes initiative. "Don't stand shivering upon the banks; plunge in at once and have it over with" (Sam Slick). Tomorrow is the busiest day of the week. If there's a hill to climb, don't think waiting will make it any smaller.

A sluggard takes a hundred steps because he wouldn't take one in due time. If possible, make the decision now, even if the action is in the future. A reviewed decision is usually better than one reached at the last moment. "The fool with all his other thoughts, has this also; he is always getting ready to live" (Epicurus). He who fiddles around seldom gets to lead the orchestra. There is danger in delay. It's always better to reap two days too soon than one day too late. Pity the man who waits until the last day.

"Tomorrow, will I live," the fool does say; tomorrow itself is too late; the wise live yesterday" (Martial). "While the fool is enjoying the little he has, I will hunt for more. The way to hunt for more is to utilize your odd moments...the man who is always killing time is really killing his own chances in life" (Arthur Brisbane).



The Worst Liars in the World are Your Own Fears.

It's never safe to look into the future with eyes of fear. "Worry is the traitor in our camp that dampens our powder and weakens our aim" (William Jorden). William Ward showed the difference between faith and worry. "Worry is faith in the negative, trust in the unpleasant, assurance of disaster and belief in defeat...worry is a magnet that attracts negative conditions. Faith is a more powerful force that creates positive circumstances...worry is wasting today's time to clutter up tomorrow's opportunities with yesterday's troubles" (William A. Ward).

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything, tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers" (Phil. 4:6, LB). "Let Him have all your worries and cares, for He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you" (1 Pet. 5:7, LB).

Never make a decision based on fear and never fear to make a decision. Worry comes when human beings interfere with God's plan for their lives. Don't ever find yourself giving the "benefit of the doubt"—doubt has no benefit.

What causes most battles to be lost is the unfounded fear of the enemy's strength. Never look at your uncertain future with eyes of fear. A. Parnell Bailey says worry is like a fog. "The Bureau of Standards in Washington tells us a dense fog covering seven city blocks, one hundred feet deep, is composed of something less than one glass of water. That amount of water is divided into some 60,000,000 tiny drops. Not much there! Yet when these minute particles settle down over the city or countryside, they can blot out practically all vision. A cup full of worry does just about the same thing. We forget to trust God. The tiny drops of fretfulness close around our thoughts and we are submerged without vision" (A. Parnell Bailey).

Ron Wayne was one of the original Co-founders of Apple. Ron Wayne, along with Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, was a part of the original Apple Founding Trifecta. Wayne is actually responsible for designing the company's original logo, wrote the original Apple manual and drew up this start-up company's partnership agreement.

Wayne set himself up for financial success, and the original agreement gave him a 10 percent ownership stake in Apple, a position that would be worth \$300 billion dollars today if Wayne had held onto it. Instead of holding onto it, Wayne dropped it like it was a hot potato. Ooops, Bad Move!

According to Mercury News, Wayne was afraid that Jobs' wild spending and Wozniak's undisciplined lifestyle would cause Apple to flop. Wayne decided to step down from his role of being the "mature one" in the bunch. Wayne took a bite out of the Apple and left the company after only 11 days. Wayne was a little more worried than Jobs or Woz because he was the only one of the three founders with assets that creditors could seize; he sold back his shares for \$800. Let me repeat that last line... Wayne sold his shares for \$800.

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"An old man was asked what had robbed him of joy in his life. His reply was, 'things that never happened.' Do you remember the things you were worrying about a year ago? How did they work out? Didn't you waste a lot of fruitless energy on account of most of them? Didn't most of them turn out to be all right after all?" (Dale Carnegie).

One of the best discoveries you can make is to find you can do what you were afraid you couldn't do. Fear and self-sabotage lock men's minds against fresh ideas. When you are ruled by fear, you'll find yourself unable to make the very changes that will eliminate it.

"God never built a Christian strong enough to carry today's duties and tomorrow's anxieties piled on top of them" (Theodore Ledyard Cuyler). The Psalmist found the best way to combat fear. "But when I'm afraid, I will put my confidence in You. Yes, I will trust the promises of God. And since I am trusting Him, what can mere man do to me?" (Ps. 56:3-4, TB)

If God is Your Father, Please Call Home.

Prayer brings momentum. It lifts the heart above the challenges of life and gives it a view of God's resources of victory and hope. Prayer provides power, poise, peace, and purpose for a person's purpose, plans and pursuits. The most powerful energy anyone can generate is prayer energy. "The devil smiles when we make plans. He laughs when we get too busy. But he trembles when we pray" (Corrie Ten Boom).

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for his answers. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand" (Phil. 4:6-7, LB). God is never more than a prayer away from you. When you feel swept off your feet, get back to your knees. "If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me" (Robert Murry M'Cheyne). Heaven is ready to receive all those who pray.

Too many Christians don't pray; they only beg. Don't beg, talk to God. "Time spent in communion with God is never lost" (Gorden Lindsay). "I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer" (Martin Luther). When we pray, we link ourselves with God's inexhaustible power.

"Wishing will never be a substitute for prayer" (Ed Cole). Remember prayers can't be answered until they are prayed. "Whatsoever things you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them and ye shall receive them" (Mark 11:24). "A day hemmed in prayer is less likely to unravel" (Anonymous).

When we pray, we must simultaneously be willing to take the action God requires as answers to our prayer. "Prayer is not monologue but dialogue; God's voice in response to mine is its most essential part" (Andrew Murray). The prayers a person lives on his feet are no less important than those he says on his knees. "Practical prayer is harder on the soles of your shoes than on the knees of your trousers" (Austin O'Malley).

The highest purpose of faith or prayer is not to change your circumstances but to change you. Pray to do the will of God in every situation, nothing else is worth praying for. "Do not have your concert and tune your instruments afterwards. Begin the day with God" (James Hudson Taylor). Prayer may not change all things for you, but it sure changes you for all things. Prayer is the stop that keeps you going. If God is your father, please call home.



Don't Postpone Joy.

Enthusiasm makes everything different. You can't control the length of your life, but you can control its width and depth by adding fun and enthusiasm. When you have enthusiasm for life, life has enthusiasm for you. "He that is of merry heart hath a continual feast." (Prov. 15:15, KJV). William Ward said, "Enthusiasm and persistence can make an average person superior; indifference and lethargy can make a superior person average."

"Always be joyful. Always keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus" (Thess. 5:15-18, LB). Don't postpone joy. Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God. It's the echo of God's life within us. Enthusiasm is an inside job.

A little girl walked to and from school daily. Though the weather that morning was questionable, and clouds were forming, she made her daily trek to school. As the afternoon progressed, the winds whipped up, along with lightning. The mother of the little girl felt concerned that her daughter would be frightened as she walked home from school. She also feared the electrical storm might harm her child.

Full of concern, the mother got into her car and quickly drove along the route to her child's school. As she did, she saw her little girl walking along. At each flash of lightning, the child would stop, look up, and smile. More lightning followed quickly and with each, the little girl would look at the streak of light and smile. When the mother drew up beside the child, she lowered the window and called, "What are you doing?" The child answered, "I am trying to look pretty because God keeps taking my picture." Face the storms that come your way with a smile of hope.

Enthusiasm and pessimism are contagious. How much of each do you spread? You can succeed at almost anything for which you have unlimited enthusiasm. "It's difficult to remain neutral or indifferent in the presence of a positive thinker" (Denis Waitley).

One of the single most powerful things you can do to have influence over others is to smile at them. "It's difficult to remain neutral or indifferent in the presence of a positive thinker" (Denis Waitley). You're never fully dressed until you wear a smile. The best facelift is a smile. A smile is an asset; a frown a liability. Some people grin and bear it; others smile and change it. "Be like the Mona Lisa. She keeps smiling when her back's to the wall" (Shelby Friedman).

"In my experience, the best creative work is never done when one is unhappy" (Albert Einstein). Every success of genius must be the result of enthusiasm. For every opportunity you miss because you're too enthusiastic, you will miss a hundred because you're not enthusiastic enough. I prefer the foolishness of enthusiasm to the indifference of logic.



If you find yourself dog-tired at night, it may be because you growled all day. Learn to laugh at yourself. A person with a great sense of humor may bore others, but he never has had a dull moment himself. "Of all the things God created, I am often most grateful He created laughter" (Chuck Swindoll). Humor is to life what shock absorbers are to automobiles.

You will rarely succeed at anything unless you have fun doing it.

Live Life Laughing!



Everyone Needs a Faith-Lift.

Faith can rewrite your future. "The only thing that stands between a man and what he wants from life is often merely the will to try it and the faith to believe that it is possible" (Richard De Vos). Faith is like a flashlight; no matter how dark it gets; it will help you find your way. "Every tomorrow has two handles; we can take hold by the handle of anxiety or by the handle of faith" (Henry Ward Beecher).

All great leaders have one common spiritual gift—faith. "...He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb 11:6). God always holds something for the man who keeps his faith in Him. Your life will shrink or expand in proportion to your faith.

Think like a man of action, act like a man of faith. Prayer is asking for rain; faith is carrying the umbrella. You must first be a believer if you want to be an achiever. "Faith, in its very nature, demands action. Faith is action—never a passive attitude" (Paul Little).

Faith is not a pill you take but a muscle you use. Faith is when your hands and feet keep on working when your head and others say it can't be done. Active faith is necessary to victory.

By faith you can be decisive in the absence of certainty or in the presence of indecision. It is not daydreaming, it is decision-making. "Real faith is not the stuff dreams are made of; rather it is tough, practical, and altogether realistic. Faith sees the invisible, but it does not see the non-existent" (A. W. Tozer). "It is like radar that pierces through the fog, the reality of things at a distance that the human eye cannot see" (Corrie Ten Boom). The world says, "seeing is believing." Faith says, "believing is seeing."

Faith is like a toothbrush. You should have one and use it daily, but you shouldn't try to use someone else's. "All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen" (Ralph Waldo Emerson). Doubt is the great modern plague. But faith can cure it. Real faith will refuse to see anything that is contrary to the Bible. It won't look at the circumstances or conditions, but the promise.

Doubt sees the obstacle; faith sees the way;
Doubt sees the darkest night; faith sees the day;
Doubt dreads to take a step, faith soars on high;
Doubt questions, "Who believes?"
Faith answers, "I." (Anonymous)