

BE STRONG
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**APRIL
DAILY
DEVOTIONALS**

BY MIKE KEYES, SR



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

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APRIL 01 DAILY DEVOTIONAL 1 Timothy 5:22 - KEEP YOURSELF PURE!

There is power in purity, and it's a power no man knows apart from a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Why? Because without Him in your heart, purity is not possible. There is only one standard for purity, and His Name is God! And according to 2 Corinthians 6:6, one of the things that is supposed to commend us as ministers of God is our purity. Think about that for a moment. In this day and age, purity is something that's laughed and scorned at - as both old fashioned and out of touch. But never forget this fact: God is pure! He's always been pure, and He always will be. Times may change, but His purity will never change. He's as pure as pure can be, and He DEMANDS the same from us. Purity is not an option for a Christian, it's an integral part of the lifestyle we're commanded to live.

Paul told Timothy more than once to set an example of purity to those he was put in charge of. In 1 Timothy 4:12, he gave a list of areas to shine forth as a godly example, and purity was on the list. Are you setting an example with purity in your life? Many believers are leaving a lot to be desired in the area of personal purity, but now more than ever, we need to be pure people of God. It's one of the ways we represent God, and witness for Him accurately and effectively. And this doesn't just refer to outward manifestations either. Don't just think we're talking about somebody's conservative dress code here. We're talking about much more than just that. Modest dress is of course of part of the bigger picture here, but it's certainly not the sum of all parts on the subject of purity. How about purity of motive? Purity of speech? Purity of thought? Purity of purpose? On all fronts, we're told to live pure before God. And to do this, you're going to have to monitor yourself very carefully, as we all must do. Our flesh is dead to sin, and will never willingly cooperate when we decide to get pure and stay pure for God. That's why Paul told Timothy to keep himself pure. It was his responsibility, and ours as well today. No one will do this for you, you must do it for yourself. So, take an objective look at your life, and if you see areas that could be made purer for God, do it!



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APRIL 02 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Psalms 47:1 - THE VOICE OF TRIUMPH!

What is the Voice of Triumph? It's your voice, standing strong in faith against the attacks of the devil. It's the sound of your declaration that as far as you're concerned, God's word is final authority in your life. Not the word of the doctor, or the word of the banker, or the word of the President, or some economist, or your employer. God's word is it for you! You declare it without apology to anyone anywhere, regardless of the situation or circumstances. As far as you're concerned, God said it, and that's it. That's the voice of triumph! Do you have that kind of voice today? That's the only voice which glorifies God, so don't hesitate to give voice to your faith! Be like Joshua, who commanded his men to shout the victory BEFORE the walls of Jericho came down. That's the kind of voice I'm talking about here, and it's the only voice that pleases God.

Some years ago, there was a popular phrase that made the rounds in Christian circles, and here it is: God said it! I believe it! That settles it! I can remember I myself had that phrase up in magnet form on my refrigerator in my early days in Christ. Yet, when you realize the finality of God's word, you come to understand the change which needs to be made with that statement I quoted for you. It should more accurately say this: God said it! That settles it, whether I believe it or not! Of course, the fight of faith will be to choose to believe God's word daily, but once we do that, and protect that decision, we come to a place where our voice becomes the voice of triumph! No matter what the devil says, or no matter what men say who are being used by the devil, God's word is what we believe, and God's word is what we declare boldly, without shame, embarrassment or hesitation. Do this, and you've already won the fight! First John 5:4 says our faith IS THE VICTORY that overcomes the world. Not what your faith produces, because that's a forgone conclusion as far as God's concerned. No, the victory comes when you chose to stand your ground in faith, that's the victory, and that's the voice of triumph! Is that your voice today, with what you're facing and standing for from God? If not, make the decision right now to repent of unbelief, and chose to agree with God, period! That's your victory! That's your triumph!



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APRIL 03 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Psalms 50:23 - ORDER YOUR FLESH TO OBEY!

I like the phraseology of this verse. Whoever (that would include you) **ORDERS** his conduct aright will see the salvation of God. That means when you order your flesh to obey God and His Word, you're positioning yourself to receive and enjoy all the blessings that come with being a Christian. Health. Healing. Prosperity. Dominion. Authority. Favor. Protection. Angelic escort. On and on I could go, but you get the point. When you order your flesh to come into line with God's Word and perfect will, you are taking authority in your own heart, and demanding that your flesh yield to the wishes of your born-again spirit, and the indwelling Spirit of God. So, start barking out the orders! And when you do, demand that your orders be obeyed! No exceptions! No excuses! Remember, we have 3 basic enemies to contend with while here on earth. James 4:1-7 gives us the list. The devil is first, followed by the world system which he is the god thereof, and lastly, our own dead-to-sin flesh. So, quit trying to pamper your flesh, and start disciplining it the way we're told to in the Word of God. First Corinthians 9:27 tells us to keep our body **UNDER**, lest that after we minister to others, we ourselves would become castaways.

If Paul had to keep his flesh under, that means it didn't want to obey him. It means that every chance it got, his flesh would rise up and create problems. Read Romans chapters 6,7 and 8, and you can see what I'm talking about. Paul struggled with his flesh the same as we do today. He had to control it, subdue it, and order it to obey God. Do the same with your own body, because if you don't, no one else will! It's your responsibility. If you've given place to the flesh in any area, shut that expression down **TODAY!** Demand that your flesh obeys, and order it to come into line with God's Word. And once you order your conduct rightly, be ruthless with the enforcement of your orders. Don't give your flesh **ANY ROOM** for expression or compromise, because tomorrow it will always want more of what you gave it today! Remember this about your enemy: **IT IS NEVER SATISFIED!** Give your flesh a Krispy Kreme donut today, it will want 2 tomorrow. Give it 2 tomorrow, and 3 the next day, and 4 the day after, until it leads you to the point one day where you're wolfing down dozens daily! Treat your flesh like a POW, a prisoner of war! Keep it locked up and behind bars, and never turn your back on it for even a day! If you desire to see God's salvation in your life, you must order your flesh to submit, today, and every day!



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APRIL 04 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

1 Timothy 4:12 - BE AN EXAMPLE!

People are always watching us, that's why we must always set a good example. Just before Jesus was arrested at the end of His public ministry, He sat down and had His last supper with His staff and disciples. During this discourse, He made one absolutely profound statement in John 14:9: He that has seen Me has seen the Father. Wow! What a statement! In other words, Jesus was telling His disciples that if they wanted to see God, all they had to do was look at Him. His lifestyle. His words. His motives. His actions. He was a mirrored reflection of God the Father, and as such, was the perfect example for us to follow. Now today, with Jesus in Heaven as the Head of the Body of Christ, the responsibility falls upon us to accurately reflect the person, power and character of Jesus. How are you doing with this?

I know in my own life, there have many times when I knew that he who had just heard me didn't hear Jesus! Or, he who had just watched me do what I did didn't see Jesus! That's what this is all about. You and I must come to the place where we can tell people that if they want to see and understand Jesus, all they have to do is watch us! As Jesus told Philip that if he saw Him then He was looking at God, can you say that whoever sees you today is seeing Jesus in you? When people look at you, listen to you or observe you, what do they see? Do they see Jesus, or something less than that? Something a bit more carnal perhaps? I don't think we can ever come to the place where we're 100% dead-on accurate with our life's reflection of Jesus, but by the grace, mercy and constant help from the Holy Spirit, we can embark on the journey. We can (and should) get better and better at reflecting Jesus as the days, months and years go by. If you're setting a better example this year of what it means to be a Christian than last year at this time, you're on the right track. If not, you've got to re-group and get back on track. People are always looking at you, you can't change that fact. So, that being said, do your best to conform your life to the Word of God in such a way that he that sees you really does see Jesus! Nothing could glorify God more than that!



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APRIL 05 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

1 Timothy 4:12 - THE FIRST WAY TO BE AN EXAMPLE FOR JESUS

Notice the first item on Paul's list to Timothy dealt with his words. Why? Because the task of learning how to use our mouth FOR God and AGAINST the devil is the most important task we'll ever have on earth. Whether you know it or not, death and life, and everything in between, is in the power of your tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Jesus said that by our words we'll be justified, and by our words we'll be condemned (Matthew 12:37). He also said that every idle word spoken will be accounted for on the day of judgment (Matthew 12:36). As ministers of God, we MUST get control of our tongue, and use it for the advancement of the kingdom of God. Unfortunately, most believers do the opposite. Through ignorance and a lack of verbal discipline, they end up using their tongue for the enemy's cause, which is to steal, kill and destroy. Where is your mouth in all of this?

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is a book of words about words. Psalms 8:4 and Hebrews 2:6 says that when created originally, man was made just a little lower than God. The word translated "angels" in those two verses is the Hebrew and Greek words for the Godhead, or the Trinity. In other words, when man was created, he was created just a little lower than God in terms of ability! And what is the one feature of our creation that makes us so close to God in terms of ability? It's the fact that we can speak words that create. Our words, like God's words, can create! As ambassadors for Christ today, we MUST live in light of that truth. That's why the Bible, in many places in many ways, instructs us to be careful about what we say. In fact, in Mark 11:22-24, Jesus said if we believed that what we say will come to pass, we'll have exactly what we say! So, if you're to be an example of the believers, it must start with developing a disciplined, spiritual and mature mouth! This isn't easy - it requires intense effort and singleness of purpose. But it must be done, and no one can do this in your life except you! Listen to what's coming out of your mouth, and you'll be able to understand why things are happening in your life the way they are. Why? Because we have today what we said yesterday. And, we'll have tomorrow what we're saying today. Your words are containers, containing spiritual forces that are released when spoken. Learn this, and set an example with your words that others can be proud to follow after!



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1 Timothy 4:12 - THE SECOND WAY TO BE AN EXAMPLE FOR JESUS

The second way Paul tells Timothy to be an example is with his conduct. How we live our lives is very important because people are always watching us. You may not be aware of that all of the time, but trust me, it's going on all the time nonetheless. Our conduct and our lifestyle must be an living example of what it means to be Christian. And no, that doesn't mean we run around judging everybody else for the clothes they wear, the amount of make-up they use, or other external things like that. As an example of the believers, Timothy's conduct was to be that of a front-line fighter in the army of the Lord. Focused. Prioritized. Single-minded on God's cause and purpose. A lifestyle that stays vigilant, ever watching and waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. A Christian who is always looking for the return of the Lord sets a very different lifestyle and code of conduct than that of someone who is unaware of the times in which we live. How about you? Are you at your spiritual post, alert and watching for the return of our Lord? Are you constantly ready to defend yourself from surprise attacks of the enemy? Are you prepared to welcome back the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

If we're to lead others effectively, they must see in us a code of conduct that encourages them to put off the old man, renew the mind, and put on the new man (see Ephesians 4:22-24). Your conduct must reflect the fact that Jesus could come TODAY, and you want to be found ready when He does. This is what people must see in you if you're to lead by example. This has nothing to do with warped, religious ideas about Christian conduct or lifestyle. The length of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the clothing you have, the amount of make-up you prefer - none of this has anything to do with what Paul is telling Timothy here. God has made us all different and unique creatures, so what is personal preference for one may not be personal preference for another. What is important is that no matter what, we're to stay sharp in spirit, walking in love, sound in faith, disciplined with our words and maintaining our hope in our Lord's return every day. Is this your conduct? Your lifestyle? It should be.



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1 Timothy 4:12 - THE THIRD WAY TO BE AN EXAMPLE FOR JESUS

The third way Timothy was told to set an example was with his love walk. If we're to lead anyone into a closer walk with the Lord, they're going to have to see His love dominating our lives from the inside out. Spirit, soul and body – our lives are commanded to be living extensions of God's very essence, which is love. To really get a detailed perspective on how important love is in our daily lives, all you have to do is go read any of the writings of the Apostle John and the Apostle Paul. The passage that really sticks out to me is the one found in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. From that passage, we read that without love, we're "sounding brass and clanging cymbals", "nothing", and "profiting nothing". In other words, if God's love does not control our lives, we're just a lot of hot air and irritating noise to the people around us! If love doesn't dominate and control us, our faith is basically worthless, and whatever we try to do for God is pretty much a waste of our time.

So, to really be an example to other believers, you **MUST** allow God's love to dominate in your life! It's already inside you by virtue of the indwelling presence of God's Holy Spirit, so now it just becomes a matter of **EXERCISING** that love so that it will grow and develop. The love of God inside you is much like the muscles of your body. Everybody has the same set of muscles, but only those who go to the gym and exercise will see those muscles develop and grow stronger. Spiritually it's the same. Every Christian has the love of God shed abroad within them (Romans 5:5), but only those who exercise that love will ever come to the place where that love controls them and dominates their thinking, words and actions. It's never too late to start, so start today! Meditate in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8, and also in the Epistles of John. When you do, you'll not only see how important it is to walk in love, but you'll also see how to actually do it. And when that begins to happen consistently, you'll find yourself in a place where not only are your needs being met, but those around you are being encouraged to raise the bar in their own lives as well.



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APRIL 08 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

1 Timothy 4:12 - THE FOURTH WAY TO BE AN EXAMPLE FOR JESUS

The fourth way to set an example for other believers is with what the translators call your "spirit". Now, in the original Greek, this word isn't in the text, but the translators added it for emphasis. I'm including it here simply because I like their reasoning for adding the word. When we talk about being an example to others "in spirit", I believe we're talking about a demonstration of spiritual passion, intensity and dedication to the "cause of Christ". It's your "fire", your "fervor" and your "devotion" to the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-20). We need to have an intensity about ourselves that other people will admire – even if they don't necessarily agree with us or believe in Jesus the way the Word says they must. This is the kind of "spirit" that makes God proud of you. Remember Caleb in the Old Testament? God was so very pleased with him because, for one thing, he had "another spirit" about him (Numbers 14:24). What kind of "other spirit" did Caleb have? The same kind you're supposed to have today!

Do you know what the word "Caleb" means? It means RAGING CANINE MADNESS! His attitude in serving God was just like what you would see in a rabid, crazed dog, and it's important to note that God wasn't upset with this – in fact, He was well-pleased with that kind of attitude! In like manner today, we must have that sort of fire in our lives, a certain intensity that is easily seen by those around us. We, of all people on earth, should be known for our intensity, our drive, our passion, our zeal, and our total commitment to seeing the Gospel spread worldwide at all costs. Our life's motto should be this: REACHING THE LOST NO MATTER THE COST! This is, I believe, what the translators had in mind when they added this word to the verse in 1 Timothy. It may not be in the original text, but it certainly appears throughout Scripture in many places, in many lives and in many ways. What about you? Are you setting any kind of fiery example of undying love, dedication and devotion to the work of ministry? Do those around you step back in utter amazement at your fire and zealotry for God and His work? In a Christian world full of lethargy, laziness and apathy towards the things of God, this is no doubt one of the greatest ways to be an example to the believers!



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1 Timothy 4:12 - THE FIFTH WAY TO BE AN EXAMPLE FOR JESUS

The fifth way to set an example for believers is with your faith. Faith in God, and faith in His Word. In Hebrews 11:6, it says that without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God. Let that statement sink in! It didn't say it would be difficult to please the Lord without faith, it said it would be impossible. There's no way to please Almighty God apart from faith – that's it – period – end of discussion! Romans 14:23 says that WHATEVER is not of faith is SIN! Hebrews 3:12 speaks about an EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF. Do you know many believers commit this sin daily, and don't even know they're doing it? Their heart is evil in the eyes of God, but they have no idea it is! Yet as one called to lead others into a closer walk with Jesus, we must set the example when it comes to believing God, and exercising our faith. There is no substitute for this, and no excuse that can be given to justify doubt, fear, double-mindedness or unbelief before the Lord. So just save all the excuses about why you're not walking in faith – because God will have none of it! He made us in His image and likeness, and so because He's a faith being, He DEMANDS that we be faith beings as well. Not just using faith once in a while, or every so often, but daily – all the time. In several places in the New Testament, we're told that the just (that's us in Christ) shall LIVE by faith (Romans 1:17/Hebrews 10:38)

To live by faith is to do exactly that – LIVE by faith. In the same way you live by breathing air 24/7, you're supposed to be doing the same with your faith. Are you setting such an example that other believers can follow after? One pastor told me once that in his opinion, living by faith was something like a parachute – to be used only when we absolutely have to! What a bunch of baloney – and this from a Pentecostal Pastor no less! If you want to be found pleasing to God, you must learn how to live by faith. Read Hebrews chapters 3 and 4, and see why the Old Testament Jews failed to walk in the fullness of the blessings that were promised to them. In Hebrews 4:2, it says they didn't "mix faith" with the promises given to them by God. How about you? Are you on the outside looking in when it comes to enjoying the promises of God? Perhaps it's because you're not mixing faith with the promises that cover your situations today. And if you're going to lead others into a higher level of faith in God, they're going to have to see it operating in you first. Be an example to others with your faith. Let them see your faith in what you think, say and do!



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APRIL 10 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Colossians 1:29 - LET GOD BE GOD!

When it comes to evangelism and fulfilling the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-20), this is one of my all-time favorite verses. Why? Because it declares the “secret” for our success in whatever we do for God in the Name of Jesus. Too many times people end up doing things for God apart from the anointing needed to get the job done successfully. But in our verse today, Paul tells us that the power, effectiveness and secrets for his success as a minister is in the fact that he lets God be God! Notice how he words this: I’M WORKING ACCORDING TO HIS WORKING..... In other words, he’s taking his hands off the wheel, so-to-speak, and letting God drive the car! This is what each of us needs to be doing everyday. If we fail to do this, we’ll end up out in front of God, working according to OUR working, and not according to HIS working. There is a world of difference between those two! I would think that we want to succeed at whatever it is that we’re doing for the Lord, right? I mean, if we don’t care if we succeed or fail, why bother in the first place? I know in my own life and ministry, I want very badly to be successful at anything I’m doing in the Name of Jesus, but to get there, I must discipline myself to yield my will and zealousness to God’s Holy Spirit, and let Him set the pace, chart the course, and make things happen in His time and in His way. When I allow Him to operate that way in me and through me, good things happen! For starters, the pressure is off of me to perform and make things happen! When God is in control, I don’t have to worry about whether things will turn out okay or not, because He’s in charge, not me. I just have to be available and obedient, and everything else takes care of itself. When I’m working according to His working, I can just relax in Christ, KNOWING the end-result will be glorious for God! Why? Because God can’t fail, that’s why! I can fail, and so can you, but if we put our work in the hands of God, and let Him be God, the results are guaranteed! So, take a look today at what you’re doing for the Lord, and if there’s too much of YOU in the picture, its time to step back and let God be God!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

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APRIL 11 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Hebrews 4:11-13 - LABORING TO ENTER HIS REST

Without faith, its impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). But when working to develop the faith life, never forget that our main task is not to try and impress God with many religious works. Rather, strive to please God by making the decision to enter into His rest. That is the labor spoken of here in this verse from Hebrews. The hardest part of faith is coming to a place in your mind where you've completely surrendered your cares to Him, knowing He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). Entering into that kind of spiritual rest, even when your world is swirling out of control all around you in the natural, is the labor that we must engage and excel in. Its hard work to keep your eyes focused on God and His Word – and nothing else! The devil always comes along to try and convince you to worry, to be afraid and to be double-minded about your situation or circumstances. Don't listen to him, or to those he is using to do his bidding! No matter what he says, what other people say, how you feel or what things look like in the natural, labor to enter into God's rest – and labor to stay there!

In know in my own life, this is a very hard thing to do at times. I'm so "results-oriented", and so eager to be busy about my Father's business, that if I'm not careful, I'll end up doing what I'm doing in the arm of the flesh, trying to make things happen in the strength of my own zealousness. When that happens, the result is always FRUSTRATION! Things don't go right when we step out from under the umbrella of faith, no matter how sincere we may be. And faith is not just about saying the right things and quoting the right verses. That's important of course, but more than that, faith is about you coming to a place where you really TRUST God, even if you don't have all the answers, or can see the end of the road you're presently on in life. Proverbs 3:5-6 says to trust in the Lord with ALL OF YOUR HEART, and don't lean to your OWN UNDERSTANDING! It goes on to say that if you acknowledge Him, He will direct your path. That's what it means to labor to enter His rest. Trust in God and don't lean on your own understanding of the problem or situation. Let God be God. Our job is to stay in faith. His job is to respond to our faith and do what we can't do for ourselves. That's partnership the way God intended for it to be!



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APRIL 12 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Isaiah 40:31 - EXCHANGING YOUR STRENGTH FOR GOD'S

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ears ago, in my morning devotions, God quickened this verse to me. He reminded me of what I'm reminding you about today. When you spend time waiting upon God, a spiritual exchange actually takes place. In the NKJV translation, it says that when waiting upon God we RENEW our strength. Actually, in the Hebrew, that word "renew" could also be translated "exchange". In fact, my KJV Bible has that very word listed in the center cross reference column next to this verse. To wait upon God is to come to a place where you exchange your strength for His! Imagine that! I think if more Christians understood this, they'd be spending much more time in prayer – waiting upon God. How about you? When you go to prayer, how much time do you spend in silence, just waiting upon God?

This is one of the best ways to tap into God's strength. When I was meditating on these things, the Lord said this to me: "The longer you wait the stronger you get". Wow! Let the truth of that statement sink in! Waiting upon God is not wasted time – its wise time! People have a tendency to think that if they're not saying something in prayer, nothing is happening. But really, isn't prayer a two-way conversation? And doesn't God have more to offer us than we do to Him in prayer? He already knows you, and knows exactly what's happening in your life from the inside out, so why not just open yourself up to Him, and develop the discipline of waiting! This is not downtime! Rather, its smart time – and the more you do it the stronger you'll get because the more you wait, the more of an exchange takes place. His strength becomes our strength, and that's what we need to overcome the devil, the world system or our own dead-to-sin flesh. In our own strength, we're no match for our enemies – no matter how much we love God. We need God's strength, and when you wait upon the Lord, that is what He gives to you. The more you wait, the stronger you get! Find time today to wait upon God, and watch as His strength flows in your life like never before!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

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APRIL 13 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Isaiah 30:1-3 - WHERE DO YOU PUT YOUR TRUST?

In this passage from Isaiah, God is rebuking His people because they've come to rely upon and trust in other men for their strength and security. Many Christians today are doing the very same thing. Are you? So many times, we take as much time as necessary to solicit the opinions and advice of other men, but spend very little time asking God for His counsel and advice. When we do this, we set ourselves up for disaster because sooner or later, men's counsel will fail us. Psalms 118:8 says it's better to put our trust in the Lord, rather than in other men. Why? Because men can't predict the future, and men can't empower you to overcome when adversity strikes against you. Satan is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), and as such, has the ability to manipulate people, societies, cultures and economies any way he wants. The only people whom he doesn't have authority over are born-again Christians – if (and it's a big "if" here) they walk in the light of their authority in Christ, and take dominion over their lives in Jesus' Name.

As an example, Wall Street investments are not your future financial security. Jesus is. To put your trust in your stocks, bonds, IRA's, CD's 401 K's and all the other financial instruments out there is just plain foolish. Sure, we should set some funds aside if we're able to and if God leads – but never are we to put our trust in them. Why? Because those things are run by men, and behind the scenes, they're ultimately controlled by the devil. And the bottom line is this: the devil is trying to do one thing with money – keep it out of the hands of generous Christians! He could care less if you spend all your money on boats, homes, time-share properties, clothes, cars, electronic devices or whatever. What he doesn't want is for you to begin putting your trust in God's promises - that when you give to the work of the Gospel, it will be returned to you in this life, AND the next! (see Mark 10:29,30/ Luke 6:38). So, don't be like the Jews back in the time of Isaiah. Don't be guilty of putting all your trust in men, or the systems they set up. You can participate in secular programs to earn income and make money if God's says its okay for you to do so, but never let other men become your source of trust, confidence, security or protection. They can't provide it, so don't be deceived into thinking they can! Only God can do those things for you, because only He has the power and the ability to do so.



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

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APRIL 14 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Colossians 1:29 - WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER!

This statement by Paul to the Colossian church is one of the most profound in all the New Testament. In one sentence, he reveals the “secret” of success – in this life and the next. We would be well to meditate on this verse until the truth of it gets deep down on the inside of us. We’re to be laboring for God, but not according to our own abilities or even our own zeal for the cause of Christ. Instead, we’re to be laboring and working according to His working, knowing that He is working in us mightily through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. I tell you honestly, I’ve stared at that verse for years, meditating on it and trying to understand all that it is saying. I’m still gleaning truth from what the Holy Spirit reveals to us here. If we want to be successful for the Lord in life and ministry, we must get to the place where we work smarter, not harder! Let the Holy Spirit take us where He wants us to go – instead of trying to force something that is not of God, and not part of His perfect will for our lives.

I know in my own life, it’s a constant challenge to live and labor in ministry according to the truth of this verse. If I’m not careful, I’ll find myself out ahead of God, doing things in the name of Jesus that He never told me to get involved with! It’s like the difference between the Mary-mentality and the Martha-mentality in Luke 10:38-42. Many of us are like Martha, running around like chickens with our heads cut off, doing all kinds of things for Jesus – but failing to realize the importance of letting Him be God through us. There’s a big difference between working for God – and letting God work for you! Mary understood that – that’s why she left the kitchen and her sister, and went out to sit at Jesus’ feet to hear Him teach. This is the discipline we all must develop if we’re to find and stay within a divine “flow” in our lives. Don’t be a Martha anymore! Be a Mary instead! Smart work is work done in line with God’s will, God’s word and God’s Holy Spirit. Taking time to wait upon the Lord to get His counsel, strength, guidance and input will save you so much time, money and energy! I know that by experience! I’ve been a Martha, and I’ve been a Mary, and I can tell you being a Mary is much better! God wants to work big inside of you – but only if you honor Him and present yourself to Him daily. It’s much easier going with the flow of the river – than trying to swim upstream! Go with God, and let Him be God in your life. Take your hands off the wheel, and let Him drive the car!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 15 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Philippians 4:8 - WHAT SHOULD YOUR FINAL THOUGHTS BE?

When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he told them to get control of their thinking. Why is that important? Because your faith will never rise above the level of your thinking. Proverbs 23:7 says that as a man thinks in his heart, SO HE IS. If you want to be a giant in faith for God, you're going to have to monitor and control your thoughts. The devil knows this, that's why he works so hard to get a foothold in your mind. You can't let that happen! You must "gird up the loins of your mind", as it says in 1 Peter 1:13. That means you must protect your thinking, and make sure your thoughts are always pleasing to the Lord (Psalms 19:14).

The key word in our verse today is the word "finally". In other words, this is the final thought on the matter of disciplined, scriptural thinking. The thoughts listed in this verse should be the **ONLY** thoughts you allow, and the **ONLY** thoughts you work with. What are they? Thoughts that are **TRUE, NOBLE, JUST, PURE, LOVELY, OF GOOD REPORT, VIRTUOUS, and WORTHY OF PRAISE.** This is the list of what God wants us to be thinking about. If you've got thoughts that are otherwise, you need to get rid of them now, and keep them out from now on! This is where the battle rages – right here! Satan wants to fill your mind with all kinds of thoughts that aren't on God's list here, because he knows that if he can get you to that place in your mind, he's well on his way towards defeating you! So, guard your mind! Protect your thoughts. Monitor your thinking, and as soon as you recognize thoughts that aren't on the Lord's list in Philippians 4:8, cast them down! And as often as they pop back into your head, rebuke them, resist them, and replace those thoughts with other thoughts that agree with God and His Word. You may have to do this **THOUSANDS OF TIMES** when you first start applying yourself to this task, because the enemy will do everything he can to maintain control of your thinking - but it's well worth the effort! So, start now! Start today!"



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 16 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Philippians 4:13 - MISSION POSSIBLE!

From the A.S. Worrell translation, Philippians 4:13 reads this way: "I am strong enough for all things in Him Who strengthens me". I love that statement! In Christ, you are strong enough for ALL things. No matter what the devil throws at you, you have the strength in Christ to defeat him every time. That means every mission is "Mission Possible", never "Mission Impossible!" Do you have problems that seem to chronically beset you? Addictions? Vices? Bad habits? Well, once you get serious about victory, you'll be amazed at how strong you really are to rid yourself of those things in your life. Judges 8:21 says that as a man IS, so is HIS STRENGTH! The strength YOU HAVE NOW was always there, but you have to spend time with the Lord to tap into the power reserve that's already inside you.

First John 4:4 says that GREATER is He in you than he who is in the world. Let that truth become your anthem! Wherever you are, whatever you do, you can do it victoriously because once you're in Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit becomes totally available to you – anytime, anywhere! Over the years, God has reminded me of this in my prayer closet – during those times when I'm feeling sorry for myself, or complaining about whatever it is in my life that I'm struggling with. God has told me the same thing He'll be telling you, which is this: **AS SOON AS YOU GET SERIOUS ABOUT WALKING IN VICTORY, THE STRENGTH WITHIN YOU WILL PRODUCE THE VICTORY YOU LONG FOR!** We must always remember – it's never a matter of whether we've got the strength to gain the victory in our lives. Rather, it's a matter of us finally realizing that in Christ, we **ALREADY HAVE** all the strength we'll ever need to overcome the enemy's attacks. So, quit feeling sorry for yourself! Get up, grow up and move out of your foxhole of depression and self-pity. You are strong enough in Christ for **ANYTHING** the devil brings against you, or that the flesh tries to dominate you with. Get serious! Victory is never a matter of strength, just a matter of commitment **TO APPLY** the strength you already have in Christ!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 17 DAILY DEVOTIONAL 1 John 5:4 - YOUR FAITH IS THE VICTORY!

Read this verse slowly, and meditate on what you're reading. John tells us that whenever we're under attack, our faith IS the victory! The victory isn't the end result of our faith, but instead, our faith itself. Why? Because when you put your faith in God and His Word, the results are GUARANTEED! Jeremiah 1:12 says that God watches over His word to perform it. He's ever ready to make His Word good in our lives, if only we will choose to believe Him instead of all the circumstances that seem to contradict His promises. As an example, when standing in faith for healing, the victory is not the manifestation of our healing. We talk that way all the time, but really, the victory was had back at the point where we decided to stand in faith FOR our healing! God's Word WILL produce for you – if you decide to believe it above all else, and count it as the final authority in your life and situation. That's why we're told to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). You have to fight to stay in faith – and if you do – there's where your victory is to be found.

John tells us that our faith is the victory that overcomes the world. In other words, there is nothing out there that your faith can't handle! It's just a matter of using it, exercising it, and developing it! Faith in God is like working out at the gym. The more you do it, the stronger you become. A person who works out 3 or 4 times a week looks very different from the person who works out 3 or 4 times in their life! They both have the same set of muscles, but the difference is that one is exercising those muscles, while the other one isn't. Faith in God works the same way. The more you choose to trust God, the better you'll be at staying in faith when the pressures to doubt becomes greater and greater. When the devil attacks, remember that the key to victory is staying in faith – the rest will take care of itself because God is always good for His Word. You never have to worry about that! Using healing again as our example: if 1 Peter 2:24 says that by our Lord's stripes you WERE HEALED, then the healing you need is a foregone conclusion – as long as you stand your ground in faith. The key is your faith – because the issue of healing is already settled in heaven. If you WERE healed, that means you ARE healed now! Believe that, confess it, and praise God for it, and THAT is the victory that ultimately brings you the manifestation of healing in your body.



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 18 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Revelation 21:7 - DON'T BE AFRAID TO FACE THE GIANT!

God says that he who overcomes shall inherit ALL THINGS! That's a great promise from the Lord, but remember, the inheritance won't be given until we've OVERCOME! Go back and read carefully the first 3 chapters of Revelation. Look at how many times Jesus promises things to "him who overcomes". All the promises we have for future rewards in the next life are tied to our willingness to face our "giants", and overcome them on the field of spiritual battle in this life. So, if you understand that, you'll never be afraid to face the enemy again! Why? Because in Christ, you ALREADY have the victory, so all you need to do is go out and confront your enemies to enforce and experience the fruits of victory in your life! What are the "giants" in your life? Whatever intimidates you. Whatever has you bound up in chronic sin. Whatever holds you down or hold you back from your fullness in Jesus. Whatever is preventing you from achieving your potential and realizing and experiencing your destiny in Christ. Those would be your giants. Face them! Confront them! Attack them!

The giant Goliath challenged Saul and his armies for 40 days, twice a day. That's 80 challenges that were never accepted! But for David, all it took was to hear the challenge once, and he was ready to face the giant! He knew he had a covenant with God, and the giant didn't. He knew that, so he wasn't afraid to face the giant – no matter how big he was. And what was the result of his willingness to face the giant? He turned the tide of battle that day, and single-handedly inspired an entire army to fight with valor and great courage! And truth be told – that was the day he became king in the eyes of the army and all of Israel - because of what he did that day when he faced the giant. Are you wanting to inherit all things that God has waiting for you – in this life and the next? Then don't be afraid to face your enemies to defeat them! GREATER is the Holy Spirit in you (1 John 4:4), so don't let those giants intimidate you or hold you back any longer. Face your fears! Rise up and take dominion in your life, the way God wants you to. But remember, to become an overcomer you have to come over something! God has so many wonderful rewards waiting for the overcomers, so get busy and do some overcoming in Christ today!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 19 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Zechariah 4:6,7 - NOT BY OUR MIGHT, BUT BY HIS!

This is one of those verses that Charismatics love to quote, but never walk in the light of! I know, because I've heard people refer to this verse many times from the pulpit, or in fellowship with one another. I've done the same myself. I've preached it and referred to it more than just a few times in conversation over the years. Yet, are we really walking in the light of what its telling us to do? Are you? I believe our biggest challenge in this life is finding the flow of God's anointing, grace, favor and strength, and living in it. Getting there, and staying there. Years ago, our ministry coined a phrase which exemplifies that truth. Here it is: **BE STRONG! STAY STRONG!** You see that statement in our ministry literature and product offerings. Why? Because in my opinion, it underscores the importance of spiritual strength in our lives, and reveals the source of success for all of us in Christ.

If you read verse 7 along with verse 6, the prophet Zechariah is being told what to say to the mountain in front of him. Do you have any "mountains" in front of you today? Some problem, sin, issue, set of circumstances or chronic area of disappointment before the Lord? If so, it's not going to be your strength or good intentions which produces victory over these "mountains" in your life. Rather, it's going to be the strength of God, flowing through you, that carries you through to victory. Like Zechariah, say to the mountain: **By the strength of God, I will grind you down until you are nothing more than a flat plain of dirt on the ground!** That's why it's so important to be strong, and stay strong! In our own strength, we are no match for the enemies of Christ. But in His strength - the strength of the Holy Spirit within us - we are able to do all things through Christ **WHO IS OUR STRENGTH** (Philippians 4:13). So, if you're struggling with issues that have frustrated you in your walk with God, realize today that if victory is going to come, it can only come this way. **NOT BY YOUR MIGHT, BUT BY THE MIGHT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!** How do you tap into that measure of strength within? That's easy! Just decide to spend more time with the Lord - in prayer, in Bible study and scripture meditation. Then watch and be amazed at the transformation in your life! Read Joshua 1:8, then purpose to do it!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 20 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Joshua 1:8 - GOD'S FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

Whenever I start to meditate on the subject of spiritual strength, I usually end up here at this verse. It's one of those verses that God uses to build a solid foundation in my life, and should be the same for you. In this verse, God plainly tells us how to prosper and be successful in this life – yet very few Christians follow the instructions. Of course, EVERY Christian wants to be successful – but why is it that so few do the simple instructions found in this verse? One word – discipline! It takes discipline to do what this verse says to do. You won't become a doer of this word unless you're disciplined enough to do it – because it requires a DAILY commitment to excellence, that frankly, most Christians are unwilling to commit to. How about you? Is your mouth filled with God's word – because your heart is filled with God's word? In Matthew 12:34, Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth WILL speak. The mouth has no choice! Whatever you've got in abundance within your heart – that's what will be coming out your mouth on a regular basis!

That's why God is telling us here to meditate in His word DAY AND NIGHT, so that as we get it firmly established down inside our hearts, we program ourselves to say God's Word DAY AND NIGHT – no matter what we're facing, or how difficult things may appear in our lives. When we do what God tells us to do – success is GUARANTEED! Why? Because if we do what God says to do in this verse, we become spiritually strong – and that is the ONLY way we can enforce the victory Jesus rose from the dead to provide us. Satan doesn't move out of your way just because you love the Lord, give your tithe or attend church faithfully. Churches are full of people like that – all living lives of mediocrity, secret sin and spiritual defeat. It takes more than your "love for the Lord" to walk in constant victory in this life. It takes a measure of spiritual strength – and that comes ONLY when you decide to do what this verse says to do. That's it. It's not rocket science here – just a simple command to put God and His Word first place in your life EVERY DAY – DAY AND NIGHT! Do this – instead of watching 5 hours of TV each night after dinner. Do this – instead of wasting 2 hours reading the bad newspaper. Do this – instead of spending half your day in the kitchen eating snacks and cooking your next meal! Do this – and be amazed at the spiritual transformation that takes place in your life. Spiritual strength is not something reserved only for a select few within God's family. It's for ANYONE who decides to DO what this verse says to do. How about you?



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 21 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

2 Kings 23:15 - GRINDING YOUR ENEMIES TO POWDER!

When King Josiah chose to finally eradicate all forms of idle worship from the nation of Israel, he also made the decision to do so with an "attitude". He didn't just get rid of the altars and places of false worship; he pulverized the altars and ground them down to powder. I like that kind of mentality, because it reveals a certain kind of attitude we must have and protect always. When we go after the enemies who come into our lives to steal, kill and destroy, we must not only defeat them, but do so in such a way that we send a message about how much we love God and hate them. We won't just "deal with" our enemies; we'll grind them to powder! We won't just defeat them; we'll annihilate them! We won't just overcome them; we'll massacre them and make a show of them openly! We'll take no prisoners! Spare no one! Give no one mercy! Leave no one alive – including women and children! That is a military mentality we must cultivate when it comes to spiritual warfare. This is why in the Old Testament, God instructed the Jews to eradicate their enemies – including the women and children. People who have no clue will say that's "cruel" and "inhumane". Is it? Or is it just another example of men thinking they know more about battlefield earth than God does? The clueless ones will question God's "love" when He instructs His people to wipe out the heathen, as He did with the enemies of Israel. But, the fact that God is love is exactly the reason for why He wants us to totally eradicate the enemy in our lives. He knows what will happen to us if we don't. The enemy is ruthless against us, so we must be the same towards him. The devil is absolutely out to get you and drag you to hell, so you must have a similar commitment about walking in victory over him in every area of your life. Do you have that kind of intense hatred for your enemies? You'll never walk free from sin until you learn to hate it "perfectly". Do you know that God HATES as much as He LOVES? Absolutely! Read the Bible. In order to love, He must hate that which would destroy what He loves – and what He loves is us!

That's right: you have to learn to hate your spiritual enemies with a PERFECT hatred, because if you don't, you will suffer for it! Ask God to teach you how to do that, and he will (Psalms 139:21,22). In the Old Testament, it meant wiping out everybody – no exceptions (1 Samuel 15). In the New Testament, it means pulling down every stronghold the devil has established, or is establishing, in your life (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). Don't tolerate anything from the enemies of your soul! Don't put up with them in your life any longer, hoping someday they just decide to "go away". They'll NEVER go away until you MAKE THEM go away! Recognize them as the deadly foes that they are, and never rest until they have been totally smashed and eradicated from your life. Don't be content to just win a few minor battles here and there. Work with all your might in Christ to not only win the skirmishes and small battles, but to go after the enemy to crush, embarrass and destroy him! That is the attitude Josiah had, and that's the attitude you must have also. The moment you recognize something as an attack against you, purpose in your heart and mind to counter-attack with all all-out assault until there is not one shred of enemy presence left in your life. Jesus said the prince of this world (aka the devil) had come against Him, but HAD NOTHING IN HIM (John 14:30). If you've got a problem with temptation in a certain area, go after that weakness with a vengeance. Crush your flesh, crush the demons who come to try and entice you, and crush the thoughts Satan tries to place in your mind. Strap on your spiritual armor, rise up and soundly and thoroughly rout the enemy out of your life. Do it as often as he comes back, and sooner or later he'll start to get the message, which is this: If you try to mess with me, I'm going to make you wish you never picked me as a target in the first place! So today, it's your time to declare your victory, and to begin working to grind your enemies to powder in Jesus' Name.



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 22 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Judges 8:4 - NEVER LET FATIGUE ROB YOU OF VICTORY!

I love this story found in Judges about Gideon and his band of loyal soldiers. They were chasing a few wicked kings who had invaded to plunder and destroy them. It says they were exhausted when they crossed the river, BUT STILL IN PURSUIT! That means they had the mental toughness to complement their physical strength! Yes, they were exhausted because of the chase, but they knew the job wasn't done yet. The enemy was still out there, and needed to be caught and destroyed. So, because of their measure of spiritual toughness, they rose above their physical pain and mental exhaustion, and chose to continue the chase until their enemies were captured and killed. All of us today need that kind of intense discipline – a discipline that demands we stay strong in faith – no matter how exhausted we may be at times. That kind of mental discipline can many times be the difference between victory and defeat. What would've happened if Gideon and his men had stopped at the river and gave up the chase because of fatigue? The enemy would've gotten away, and lived to fight another day. Has that happened to you? Have you snatched victory from the jaws of defeat because you were too tired to stay strong in faith?

As men and woman who fight on the front lines of world evangelism, we must be the kind of soldiers that keep on fighting – for as long as it takes – until victory is finally won! We'll never quit. We'll never "throw in the towel", we'll never cry "uncle"! Never! We might be exhausted at times in our fight of faith, but "defeat" or "quit" will never be found coming out from our mouths. I want to encourage you today. No matter how long you've stood – continue to stand! Ephesians 6:13 says that after you've done all you know to do to stand in faith – continue to stand! For how long? Until you don't need to stand anymore! Hebrews 6:12 says that through faith AND patience we inherit the promises of God, so don't fall prey to the "microwave mentality" prevalent in the lives of so many believers today. And if ever you start to get tired standing your ground in faith, and feel like letting the enemy "off the hook" this time – get yourself into the presence of the Lord, and let His power re-charge and refresh you all over again! We all get tired from time to time, but when you see it happening to you, don't give up on the chase! Stay after the enemy until victory is won!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 23 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Matthew 11:29 - KEEPING IT NICE AND EASY!

Following Jesus is not supposed to be some kind of stressful, laborious task. Rather, it's supposed to be a glorious walk of faith, trust, fulfillment and spiritual rest. But that is hardly the way we see most believers living their lives in Christ. Too many of us are stressed out, pressured and short-tempered (and that includes me too many times!) Too many of us are acting just like those who don't know Jesus, and that's not the way it's supposed to be! Our Lord said that if we become His disciple, our yoke would be EASY, and our burdens LIGHT. Is that the way you're living your life today? Are you keeping things nice and easy? That's the way it should be, but is that the way it is for you? If not, you need to step back from yourself, take a deep breath, and let the Holy Spirit remind you about who it is living on the inside of you! Don't let the world steal your joy. Don't let the pressures of society rob you of your peace. Jesus said He left us His peace (John 14:27). Are you walking in the light of that gift?

In my opinion, one of the biggest challenges we have as Christians is to come to a place in our daily walk where we let God be God. I mean, coming to the place where we're in a Divine flow, moving in synch with the Him, allowing His strength to be our strength, His wisdom to guide us, and His Spirit to lead us step by step. When we come to that place, we're keeping it nice and easy! We don't allow the circumstances of life to rob us of peace, and rob us of our joy. When we choose to yoke ourselves with Jesus, we are letting Him "drive the car", not us. We're choosing to yield to His Lordship, and letting Him run the "show". At that point, life becomes easy, and the temptations to fear, to doubt and to become stressed out – all lose their power against us. So, make a quality decision today to lighten the load! Cast all your cares upon the Lord, knowing He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7)! Do what you can do (pray, believe, meditate in scripture, walk in love), and God will do what you can't – and rest in that truth!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 24 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Philippians 1:6 - RELAX! YOU'RE A WORK IN PROGRESS!

How many times have you failed God since becoming born-again? How many sins committed? How many vows made and then broken? How many promises unkept before God? If you're like me, the answer is PLENTY! But according to our verse today, the work God began in you when you first accepted Jesus is an on-going work. We are all "works in progress". God BEGAN His work in you the day you were saved, but be encouraged to know that even though you've failed Him many times, He's not through with you! God has invested a lot in your future. He has sent Jesus to the cross, then after His resurrection, sent the Holy Spirit to live within your heart. He's not about to dump you or throw you out with the garbage – He's in love with you, and will never stop working with you towards maturity and perfection in Christ. Let that truth sink in, and don't allow the devil to come along heaping condemnation upon you for some sin or mistake you've made. If you've already taken your failures to God in prayer, and asked for His forgiveness, then receive it by faith (not feelings) and move on. If anyone knew the value of this, it was the Apostle Paul.

In Philippians 3:13, Paul makes some amazing statements which reveal this truth. If anyone had "skeletons in his closet", it would be him. At one time in his life, he was one of the chief persecutors of the church; arresting Christians, dragging them off to prison, and assisting those who stoned Stephen to death (Acts 7:58). Yet once saved, he realized that God had begun a good work in him, and therefore, he needed to move on and never look back. So, here's my advice to you today: **DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF!** God isn't, so why should you be? You may have failed God ten thousand times, but you're still His workmanship (Ephesians 2:10)! He loves you, so relax! He's not going to call it quits on you – ever – so don't give up on yourself either. Always remember, we've been washed by the blood of Jesus, and His blood is forever upon Heaven's mercy seat. That means whenever you screw up and fail God, the moment you repent and ask for forgiveness, it's granted! I find that absolutely amazing, given the truth about how holy God is, and how much He hates sin! According to 1 John 1:9, He is faithful and just to **FORGIVE US** and cleanse us from all unrighteousness when we ask for it - not because of us, but because of our Lord's blood on that mercy seat in Heaven. Forget the past - today is a new day. I tell people all the time what I'm telling you here. Forget about yesterday's mistakes or sins. You can't go back and change anything, so why live today under the condemnation of the past? You can't change the past, and you're not yet at tomorrow, so just take each day one at a time, receive it as God's gift to you, and let Him work within you to will and do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). If you mess up again today, ask the Lord for His forgiveness, and receive it by faith. Then, purpose with all your heart to get help from the Holy Spirit, so you'll do a better job the next time you're tempted to sin or fail the will of God. Take a deep breath! Relax! God loves you! He always has, and He always will!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 25 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Philippians 4:11 - ARE YOU CONTENT YET?

Paul said he had **LEARNED** how to be content no matter what. In good times or bad times, no matter how things looked or how he felt, he had **LEARNED** to be content. That is one lesson we all need to learn! Too many of us in Christ are only content when things are going well, and going the way we want. But if ever things “go south” on us, and circumstances and situations change for the worse, suddenly we’re no longer content. Instead, we become fearful, melancholic, depressed, discouraged, distracted, double-minded, and many other things that are contrary to the Word of God. Why is that? It’s because we’ve got our eyes on the wrong things. Instead of focusing our attention on God and His word, we’re spending all our time looking at the problems. But if you spend your time meditating upon God and His Word, you’ll come to the place where you learn the lesson Paul learned. If we have Jesus in our hearts – if we’re born-again – we have **EVERYTHING!** Everything else is just window dressing! Even if you are presently living under the bridge and eating dog food – so what? Of course, that’s not what God wants for any of us, but even if we’re going through a rough patch right now, keep your eyes on Jesus! As long as you do that, the bad times are subject to change! Things will get better! Things will turn around!

I have learned over the years that very little of what I am tempted to worry about ever comes to pass anyway. The devil is a master at making mountains out of ant hills, so don’t be ignorant of his tactics. If you have Jesus, you have everything. What more could you possibly need in this life? If He is the Alpha and Omega (the beginning and the end), everything in-between in our life is just optional equipment! In Christ, I should be content always. In Him, I am complete. Nothing else needs to be done. Now on the other hand, when it comes to doing the work of evangelism and fulfilling the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-18), I should **NEVER** be content! There’s always more people to reach, more sinners to witness to, more nations to visit. So, in that sense, no – I should never be content with poverty, or lack, or sickness, or anything else that would prevent me from being on the front lines of world evangelism, doing my job for God. But as an individual child of God, my circumstances will never have a negative impact on God’s love for me, or His desire to be intimate with me, so why should anything going on in my life ever be allowed to rob me of God’s peace, joy and contentment? Once again, I encourage you to do the same as what I do in my life. Be content in Christ today! You’re on your way to heaven, and you have an eternity ahead of you to spend worshipping and praising His Name. Our life on earth is described as a puff of smoke – here today and gone tomorrow (James 4:14). As long as you have Jesus, you have everything! Nothing else really matters! Not your house, car, job, career, money – nothing compares to Him! Be content in Him!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 26 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

1 Timothy 4: - GOD'S GYM: ARE YOU A LIFETIME MEMBER?

You and I must never forget that even though we're spirits, we're living in bodies bought and paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20). Therefore, our responsibility is to take care of our bodies, and make sure we don't give the devil an opportunity because of our lack of discipline in this area. We're told to exercise ourselves unto godliness, but the next verse talks to us about BODILY exercise in conjunction with godly exercise. One deals with our spirit, and the other deals with our body. This is a truth many believers have failed to recognize. You need to exercise BOTH the spirit AND the body! I can't tell you how many times in prayer lines over the years, the Lord has told me that many of the people in line for healing will never get their healing until they judge themselves in the areas of diet and exercise. That's a sobering thought, isn't it? Too many of us read these verses, and discount bodily exercise because Paul says it only profits us a "little". But to assume that posture is not only wrong, but unscriptural as well. Yes, compared to the spiritual things of God and His kingdom, bodily exercise is a distant second in terms of eternal, spiritual significance, but never forget that while we're still living down here in this life on earth - these bodies of ours contain our spirit, and if the body goes down we go down - no matter how powerful, anointed, sensitive and so forth we might be spiritually. Knowing this then, we have a RESPONSIBILITY before God to do our best to keep our human body as healthy and as physically fit as we possibly can. Does that mean we are to camp out at the gym for the rest of our lives? No, of course not! But it does mean that you owe it to God (and to your loved ones in life) to find ways to diligently exercise your body to keep it fit, trim and healthy for the work of the kingdom.

Far too many Christians are slaves to their carnal appetites (literally), and as a result, allow the devil a place of access into their lives. You need to keep your body under submission, as Paul talked about in 1 Corinthians 9:27. If you don't, the older you get the worse things will become until one day something happens, or something is diagnosed, that prevents you from fulfilling your life's work for Christ. Don't let that happen! Exercise on a regular basis - your muscles (strength training) as well as your heart and lungs (aerobics). You don't have to pound yourself into the ground, but if you become diligent with regular exercise, you'll look better, feel better, and most importantly, go a long way towards cutting off the devil and denying him this kind of access in your life. We're supposed to be good stewards of our bodies because they don't belong to us - they belong to God. One day you will have to answer to Him for how you took care of your "house", so make sure you're doing all you can now to keep yourself fit, trim and in good working order. I can't tell you how many times, when talking about these things, I've heard people say that they know they need to do something, but never do anything! Year after year, they continue on the same old course of bad choices, lack of consistent exercise and no dietary discipline. Don't tolerate this anymore! Your body is bought and paid for by God, but also remember, it's still dead-to-sin, and therefore, won't ever want to yield to spiritual submission willingly. You will have to MAKE your body obey - so get out there and do it! The gym is waiting for you!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 27 DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Joel 3:10 - SPEAKING STRENGTH INTO YOUR LIFE

Our verse today carries with it a wealth of information on the power of words, and the life of faith. Faith is the evidence of things NOT SEEN (Hebrews 11:1). Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Put these two truths together and you have Joel 3:10! Let the weak SAY they are strong! God doesn't tell the weak to say they're weak. He tells them to say they're strong. Is this lying? No, it's living by faith, and using spoken words to change weakness into strength for God's glory. Do you have any weaknesses? Short temper? Impatience? Alcohol? Drugs? Tobacco? Porn? Gossip? Spreading rumors? Cynicism? Double-mindedness? Food? Whatever it may be in your life, once you identify your weaknesses, you must begin SPEAKING TO THEM in order to change them into strengths. Of course, people who don't understand the language of faith will think you're lying when you declare your victory, but that is to be expected – and ignored. They don't know any better, so don't waste your time getting upset about what they say about you. Just concentrate on using your words to attack those areas of weakness in your life, and you will begin to see positive changes in Jesus' Name.

Say you're strong when everything else is saying you're weak! Declare your desired end-result, and it will be as you say! Jesus made this clear in Mark 11:22-23. He said WHOSOEVER (that would include you) shall SAY to this mountain (in this case – your weakness or weaknesses) be removed and cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you SAY will come to pass, you shall HAVE WHAT YOU SAY! It's your words that have the power to change weakness into strength for God. Wouldn't it be wonderful to stand before a group of people struggling with the same weaknesses you once had, and give them your testimony about how you overcame them all? That would be a moment of triumph, wouldn't it? Well, it's possible. You just have to want it badly enough, and begin declaring your victory in Jesus' Name – for as long as it takes. Things may change immediately, but if they don't, don't let that discourage you. Keep at it. It doesn't take any more effort to say something positive as it does to say something negative, so say something positive and constructive and faith-affirming. By doing that, you begin the journey from where you are with these weaknesses, to where you want to be – strong and completely set free from the struggles of the past!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 28 DAILY DEVOTIONAL 1 Corinthians 16:14 - DO ALL BECAUSE OF LOVE!

Our verse today reveals one of the most foundational commandments in the New Testament. Whatever you do or say, do it because of love. Wow! In fact, James tells us that we should SPEAK and DO, as those who will one day be judged according to the Law of Liberty (James 2:12). What is the Law of Liberty? It's the Law of Love! Love sets you free from the opinions of others. It brings you to a place where you're totally independent of people – their words or their reactions to you. Paul told the Corinthians that whatever they do or say, they must make sure everything is coming from a pure heart of love. Love for God, love for their neighbors and finally, love for themselves.

In Mark 12:28-31, Jesus gave us the three elements to the commandment to love. He told the lawyer who asked him that there were two commandments which made up the greatest commandment in all the law. But the second commandment really has two parts, so I like to think of love having 3 basic components to it: 1) Love God. 2) Love your neighbor. 3) Love yourself as you love your neighbor. In all the Word, no subject is more important than this one, and yet, so few of us ever take the time to really master the love walk. What a tragedy! It's like so many of us are running around, trying to use faith, trying to obey God, trying to live lives that are pleasing to God, and trying to walk worthy of His calling. But without love, Paul said we're nothing more than a lot of hot air and disturbing noise. Go back and read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 again carefully, and pay special attention to the first four verses. Those who even have enough faith to move mountains are called NOTHING! Without love as the driving force behind our words and actions, we are sounding brass and clanging cymbals. Without love, we are nothing, and what we do is a waste of time. So, don't waste all your time, effort and energy – trying to serve God without the love of God being the dominant force within you. Understand that without love, you can go NOWHERE in Christ because you're NOTHING in Christ!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 29 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Colossians 1:13 - YOU ARE ALREADY FREE!

According to this verse, we have already been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness, so there's no reason for the devil to have any more access into our lives. If he has a certain measure of access, its only because we've given it to him. He certainly can't come into our lives just because he wants to any more. No, when you received Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life, God moved you out of the devil's kingdom, and put you within the Kingdom of His Son Jesus! Praise God for that! Therefore, if you begin to understand that, and see yourself as already being free from the devil's authority, you will be well on your way towards living a victorious life in Christ. What would you think if an inmate was granted his unconditional release from prison, but refused to leave his cell? You'd think he'd lost his mind! Well, that's what it looks like to God when Christians choose to remain in their "cells" of sin – when all the while Jesus has paid the price for their freedom. Praise God my friend – the jail cell doors have been opened, and you're free to walk out in Jesus' Name.

As far as God is concerned, you're already released and the transfer has taken place – you're now seated in heavenly places in Christ, but YOU have to enforce that transfer! You're a Christian! You're no longer under the dominion and control of the devil – so don't live any more like a prisoner to sin, and thus a prisoner of Satan. You are free! You have been freed in Jesus, so go forth and live, move and have your being triumphantly in Christ. The jail doors are open – it's time to come out into the glorious liberty of your salvation!



APRIL DAILY DEVOTIONALS

BY MIKE KEYES, SR

APRIL 30 DAILY DEVOTIONAL Philippians 4:8 - THE ULTIMATE BATTLE GROUND!

The ultimate battle ground for every person is the mind. That's why Paul takes time to remind the Philippians about the importance of disciplining their thoughts. If you can control your thoughts, and consistently line them up with God's Word, you're in a place where the devil can't touch you. We need to get control of our thought life, and keep our minds renewed to the Word of God. That's not an easy task, but one which must be accomplished if we're to live victoriously in this life. The devil is always looking to sow his evil thoughts into our minds, hoping to gain a foothold there. Don't let him have it! The moment you recognize thoughts that don't line up with God's Word, cast them down. Replace them with thoughts that glorify God and give the Holy Spirit something to work with.

How do you cast down ungodly or unscriptural thoughts? One of the best ways is to SPEAK the Word of God over yourself at that very moment, and keep speaking it until those thoughts are vanquished. You can also lift your hands and begin to praise the Lord – out loud once again – until the thoughts go away. Remember in Ephesians 6, the Word of God is called the Sword of the spirit. It's not the sword of the Holy Spirit – it's the sword of YOUR spirit! Use it to defend yourself when Satan begins to bombard your mind with his thoughts. When thoughts of fear come to you – resist them immediately by speaking the verse or verses which cover your situation. Don't wait for even a moment – because that will allow those thoughts to gain a place in your thinking. The moment you have those thoughts brought into your mind by the enemy, do what Jesus did – SPEAK THE WORD and say "It is written". In Matthew 4, each time the devil tried to tempt Jesus, he resisted by speaking God's Word to the enemy. That's what you must do to win the fight of faith! This is where all battles are either won or lost – in the mind. So, as it says in 1 Peter 1:13, its time to "gird" up the loins of your mind.



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