



As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

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Some Things all Christians Should Know

- The 10 Commandments
- The Three Points of the Gospel
 - Christ died for our sins
 - He was buried
 - He rose again after three days with all power
- The Three Points of the Great Commission
 - Evangelism
 - Baptism
 - Discipleship
- Persons Who make up the Triune of God
 - Father
 - Son
 - Holy Spirit
- Sin first entered the world when man decided to disobey God in the Garden of Eden
- If you confess your sin to God, He will forgive you and cleanse you

“Words to Grow By”

LINDA LEWIS, GMI DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Get Your Fire Back!

No matter what it looks like
right now,
No matter what it feels like
right now,
It's not the end of your
story!

It's not over until
GOD says it's over!
Start believing again.
Start dreaming again.
Start pursuing what
God has put in your heart!

And remember...
If you still have a pulse,
God still has a purpose.
Never say Never
When it comes to what
GOD CAN DO!

Mark 10:27

David – Part 2 BY PASTOR MIKE HERNANDEZ, CHURCH OF THE HARVEST



Last month we covered David's life from shepherd to Giant Slayer. This month we will examine his life from Giant Slayer to king. Again, we will take a deeper dive into a couple stories of his life and see what we can learn from it.

After David killed the giant, he was brought into Saul's house to serve him. David served Saul faithfully and the Lord gave him great success (1 Samuel 18:5). One time when David returned home, the women came out to greet him.

"So the women sang as they danced, and said, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?'" - 1 Samuel 18:7-8

From that moment on, David became the enemy of Saul. He eventually had to flee Jerusalem for Saul wanted to take his life. David became a man on the run, a vagabond. David didn't deserve this kind of treatment from Saul, he had only served him faithfully. Saul is the one who had the issue with David. But because Saul was the one in authority, David is the one whose life turned upside down.

He eventually found refuge in a place called the Cave of Adullam.

"And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him." - 1 Samuel 22:2

Let's examine the people who joined up with David. First, it was people who were in distress - great pain, anxious or misfortune. Second, people who were in debt - people who had no money. Finally, people who were discontent - restless or desire for something one does not have. You want to talk about a hard group of people to lead...and he had 400 of these kinds of people!

Sometimes God surrounds us with people who we would not choose. But if we are faithful to them, they can become a great support to us. David was a great leader to these people and they followed him loyally. I'm sure David had to do his share of being the peacemaker and breaking up fights. I am sure there were times the people were complaining and he had to encourage and motivate them. And if some of them had no money...David had to provide for them. But these are all things leaders do. God was using these men to prepare David to be a great king!

David – Part 2 Cont.

God was also building David's character in this season. One time, David was hiding from Saul in a cave. Saul came into that same cave to "relieve himself".

"Then the men of David said to him, 'This is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.' 'And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe.'" - 1 Samuel 24:5

What an opportunity for David! He had the prophetic word from Samuel that he was going to be king. The man who was hunting and trying to kill him was unaware of his presence and vulnerable to whatever David would like to do to him. David's own men are telling him that the Lord is delivering his enemy into his hands. In one moment, David can seize the kingdom and his troubles would be over. He could move from the cave to the palace. He can stop running and hiding. He can reward all the men who stood by him. All it takes is one moment!

We may encounter moments like this, where we can change our future and destiny. But to do so, we would have to compromise a part of our integrity. David understood that killing in battle is one thing, but taking the king's life is quite another. He would move from soldier to murderer. He would take the kingdom from Saul, not receive the kingdom from the Lord. He also understood that Saul was anointed by the Lord and even though Saul wasn't walking in his anointing, he was still anointed.

"And he said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him seeing he is the anointed of the Lord'" - 1 Samuel 24:6

So David stayed on the run. He continued to hide out in the wilderness, leading his men in a vagabond lifestyle. Saul continued to hunt David. And can you believe it, David has the exact same opportunity as before. David and his armor bearer sneak into Saul's camp and they are standing over a sleeping Saul.

"Then Abishai said to David, 'God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not have to strike a second time.'" - 1 Samuel 26:8

Abishai was one of David's Mighty Men (2 Samuel 23:18) so he was one of those closest to David. His opinion would have mattered to David and now he is pleading with David to allow him to have the honor to kill the man who was hunting him. David, again, held fast to his integrity and did not kill Saul or allow Abishai to kill Saul.

David – Part 2 Cont.

This was David's life for years. Hiding from King Saul, wandering in the wilderness, living in caves. David and his men finally settled in the land of the Philistines. The Philistines were going to war with Israel and David was going to fight on the side of the Philistines. So David and his men went to the battle lines. However, many leaders of the Philistines were uncomfortable with this arrangement, so they sent David and his men back to Ziklag.

When David arrived back to Ziklag, the city was burned and all the women and children were gone. David and his men wept. This was one of the lowest points in David's life.

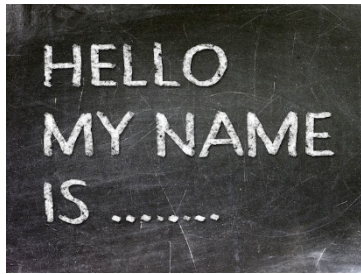
“Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.” - 1 Samuel 30:6

We will all have times in our lives where we are greatly distressed. David's life was crumbling right in front of him. He wasn't king yet, his home was burned, his family was missing and the men wanted to kill him. This was a distressing moment. But look how David handled it, he strengthened himself in the Lord.

The Hebrew word for “strengthened” is “Chazaq” which literally means “to fasten upon, to seize, be strong”. David needed help and he fastened himself to the Lord. We need to learn from David and in our moments of distress, we need to “chazaq” ourselves to the Lord...we need to fasten ourselves to the Lord.

David asked the Lord if he should pursue those who burned the city. The Lord told him to pursue them. David ultimately overtook his enemy and recovered all (1 Samuel 30:19).

Unbeknownst to David, Saul and his best friend Jonathan, were both killed in the battle between the Philistines and Israel. The Lord saved him from being part of that battle. The pathway to kingdom was now opened up for him and he would return from hiding, unite the kingdom and become Israel's greatest king.



What's in a Name? BY BEVERLY BROWN, GMI VOLUNTEER/WRITER

You have probably been known by many names throughout your lifetime. The most prominent one is the one your parents gave you when you were born – your given name. The Lord knows your name.

You might have had nicknames growing up. Some endearing and some not so

endearing.

Names can get into your spirit and effect how you feel about yourself. For example, if you grew up with a parent or teacher calling you “stupid” or “idiot” after a while, you began to believe it. It may have affected every part of your life – even the decisions you made.

The kids at school might have called you a derogatory name, making fun of a physical feature such as your eyes or ears, or teeth. This might have caused you to hate that part of your being.

I have a sister almost two years younger than I. She was so cute. From as young as I can remember, people would see us and comment on how cute or pretty she was. Then they would look at me and say, “She has such big eyes!”

As a result, I grew up hating my eyes. I thought I had freak eyes.

It was only after I was grown and out of school I realized that most people think big eyes are attractive. In fact, many people thought this was my best feature and considered my eyes pretty.

Several years ago, I ministered to the women in a correctional facility. When I was there, I saw them dressed in orange, always facing me, as the other lady ministering and I led the group.

One day, one of the women came forward to help us set up some chairs. When the woman turned around to go sit down, I was struck by what was written on the back of her top. In huge, black letters I saw the word “INMATE.”

This was the name the officials saw when they looked at her.

The Lord spoke to my spirit and said, “This is what the world sees when they look at them. But if they have accepted Me, I have new names for them. When I look at them this is what I see – ‘Redeemed,’ ‘Forgiven,’ ‘Child of God,’ ‘Sanctified,’ ‘Justified.’”

The Lord no longer saw them as unsaved sinners, but as new creations in Him.

These are the names the Lord sees when He looks at you.

Names are important. Receive what God says you are and not what the world says you are. Let the new names get down into your spirit.

This might be new to you, so you may have to remind yourself often of how the Lord sees you. Say to yourself, “I am forgiven.” I am redeemed.” “I am the child of the Most High God.”

None of this is because of anything you have done, but because of what Jesus Christ did for you when He died on the cross. He did it all.

Even though you might not feel like it, you are all these things.

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Look Out! Somebody Just Looked Up! **By Anthony J. Butler**

(Anthony Butler is a public speaker and the Founder/CEO of “Violence I Prevent: VIP” He has been featured on Lansing’s Closed Circuit TV in Partnership with Growth Ministries)

To those who have a dream...don't lose hope. Don't allow fear, doubt, offense, hurt, violence, distractions, rejection, negative people, haters, and YOU to stop your dreams from becoming a reality! Pursue and capture your dreams one thought a time, one decision at a time, and one committed action at a time. Don't give up on your dreams!

To the door openers and the door closers...Thank you for giving us more faith in God, more fuel, more determination, more creativity, more discernment, more favor, and more wisdom. We are grateful for you helping us to grow. Let me just set the record straight from the jump. **YOU have a call and PURPOSE on your LIFE!** The sheer boldness of me writing these words will cause all the pessimistic people to strongly disagree. God created you with great plans in mind! **(Jeremiah 29:11)**

What are your gifts? What are your dreams? How can you align your gifts with your dreams? How can you choose to put your gifts and dreams into a realistic action plan? What problems in our society would you like to solve? What social issues are you passionate about? You can't hold on to your positive dreams and embrace foolery and pettiness simultaneously. Each day when you are doing something constructive, you are not doing something destructive. In my adolescent years, I wanted to be a professional athlete and a businessman. So, as I was surrounded by violence, I played sports. As I routinely heard gunshots, I learned about how to make a profit. I learned about how important customer service is. I learned about opportunity cost. This is a life principle as well. There are times when we choose to do something in one area, we will automatically not choose to do another thing in another area. To all of you who are incarcerated I say this...God STILL has a plan and purpose for your life! Hold your head high and look up to where your help comes from. **(Psalm 121)** Ask God to direct you and He will reveal what He wants you to do.

-Anthony J. Butler



From the Yard: *Words of inspiration from your brothers and sisters who have been incarcerated. This month we are blessed with pieces from three different individuals.*

Freedom in Christ by William Hunt, Lansing Correctional Facility

Have you ever considered how truly frightening freedom can be? Especially for one that has recently been set free. Imagine being an African American slave in 1865 and you just received word that you are now free. You are free from the injustice of involuntary servitude, but you are now bound by the consequences of your own voluntary decisions. You are free to choose what you will eat, where you will live, and how you will earn a living. But with that freedom have you lost your former masters provision? The master's provision was really an illusion. The master appeared to be supporting the slave, but he was actually sucking the life out of him and using him for his own purpose. While at the same time subjecting him to a life of degradation and nothingness.

The same degradation and nothingness that is produced from a life of slavery are also produced in the life of a sinner. A life of sin may appear pleasing and even easy but in reality it produces death. Romans 6:23 says the wages or payment of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. You work and slave as a sinner for the terrible reward of death, but eternal life is given as a gift through Christ. Christ said in John 8:34 that whoever commits sin is the servant of sin. He said in verse 36 that if the Son, therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. Jesus doesn't say you may possibly be set free, but he says you are indeed free; even when it may not feel like you are. If you have absolutely put your trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you are no longer a slave to sin.

2 Corinthians 3:17 says, now the Lord is that Spirit and there the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

The Christian is no longer a slave to sin because he has been delivered from the power of darkness and has been translated into the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:13) Christ is our new Lord because we have yielded ourselves to His will, therefore, sin no longer has rule and authority over us. So if we are free from sin does that mean we are perfect and never miss the mark? Yes, because our perfection is found in the righteousness of Christ and in His sacrifice for our sins. We may still make mistakes or fall, but we strive for perfection because our heart and minds are no longer committed to a life of sin, and we now long to please God. Proverbs 24:16 tells us that a just man falleth seven times and riseth up again; but the wicked shall fall into mischief "If you fall just get back up and try again." Don't fall completely back into a life of sin.

You can walk in freedom if you trust God. You can live a life committed to God even when the times get tough. Hebrews 13:5 encourages us to live a life of contentment, and it reminds us that Jesus said he will never leave or forsake us. When it feels like he isn't there, He is.

If you ever began to feel as if living the Christian life isn't worth it or if you feel you are giving up too much in order to live the saved life, remember the words of Christ, "He will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life." If you have not received Christ in your heart and you have not accepted Him as your Lord and Savior, then you can do so today. The Apostle Paul state in Romans 10:9 "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" Accept him in our heart today and began to allow him to do the miracle of transformation in your life.

God bless you my friend.

From the Yard cont.

Peace, Hope, and Faith by Joshua Walker, Hutchinson Correctional Facility

It would be a perfect world if we all rested in the peace of The Lord. Moses said it best; The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord makes His face shine upon you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. *Numbers 6:24-26*

Entrust your hope in The Lord, and you will be sure-footed upon your path in life.

For you are my hope O Lord God (Psalm 71)

You are my trust from my youth (Psalms 71:5)

According to *Acts 26:18*; Jesus said that we are sanctified and made holy by faith in Him.

So why should we be afraid when darkness comes, when light pierces through the darkness. We have been called out of darkness and into the light. (*1 Peter 2:9*)

Therefore, if we have peace, hope, and faith we will find ourselves in perfect harmony with our Lord.

A Poem

Save Me by Joanna Fuchs

Save me from myself, Lord;
Save me from my need
To always run my life, Lord,
To control my every deed.

Save me from my pride, Lord,
My focus on just me;
Help me learn to serve, Lord;
Show me how to be.

Save me from the world, Lord,
When tempting things entice;
Remind me of eternity
With You, in paradise.

I give my life to you, Lord
My every need you fill;
I'm resting in my faith, Lord;
You saved me, and you always will.



Women Empowering Women

Make this your motto...
 I am an unstoppable warrior who is strong and fearless.
 I live with courage and compassion in my heart.
 I wear my confidence like a shield to deflect all negativity.
 I am powerful and proud of who I am and what I do.
 I wake up each day positive and ready to take on the day ahead
 Because I am on a mission to achieve my goals
 And NOTHING and NO ONE can stop me.

Be the kind of woman that makes other women want to up their game!

Be strong and of good courage...Deuteronomy 31:6

Lessons from a Spider Web by Pastor Royce Walker, Church of the Harvest



On a run this morning, I saw quite possibly the largest spider web I've seen right next to the trail. It was at least 10 ft. high from the tree it was attached to all the way to the ground. It made me think: who teaches a spider how to build its web?

Now spiders aren't raised by parents and they don't go to spider school, but yet their webs are extremely complex and efficient for catching their prey. The spider first spins its web to eat. HUNGER is who teaches the spider to spin its web, and FAILURE is what perfects it.

I see a lot of people "fall off the wagon" or start and stop and get nowhere. It makes me ask "what are you really hungry for?" When was the last time you were so passionately hungry that nothing on earth or in hell was going to stop you? It's not that you won't fail.... you will not accomplish a goal, you will not meet an ideal end sometimes, but failure isn't what stops a spider, it's what causes the spider to perfect its craft.

Get hungry, change your perspective in failure and live alive.

Word Search

KINGS & PROPHETS OF ISRAEL WORD SEARCH



BiblePuzzles.org.uk

AHAB
 AHAZIAH
 AHIJAH
 AMOS
 BAASHA
 ELAH
 ELIJAH
 ELISHA
 HOSEA
 HOSHEA
 IDDO

JEHOAHAZ
 JEHOASH
 JEHORAM
 JEHU
 JEROBOAM
 MENAHEM
 NADAB
 OMRI
 PEKAH
 PEKAHIAH
 ZECHARIAH

Closing Words LONNIE JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GROWTH MINISTRIES INC

Turn around...Someone is following you!

It is natural for us to not want to be responsible for others unless we have to be. As parents we **have** to be responsible for our kids. As supervisors we **have** to be responsible for our employees. But that's pretty much where the buck stops. We are not trying to be responsible for the guy down the street or that distant cousin.

But what if we were willing to be a role model for any and every one that was around us? What would that person learn from you? Would they learn how to live a Godly life? Would they learn some new cuss words? And what if they got to follow you around everywhere you went? What if they got to look at you even when you didn't know they were looking? What would they see then? What would they learn?

When we profess Christian faith people start observing us. People are looking at us even when we don't want them to. Someone once said that a Christian is the closest thing to Jesus that an unbeliever may get to see. We should be aware that our actions not only reflect who we are, but it gives unbelievers an impression of what our faith is about. If someone saw you at work or at the family picnic, what would they think about Christians?

The Apostle Paul once said, **"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1)**. Paul boldly made this statement because he wasn't worried about what people may see if they followed him around. His life was the same in the tabernacle as it was when he was cooking dinner or walking down the street.

Some of you may say, "I don't want to be a role model". Well sometimes you don't have a choice. Babes in Christ may be watching you when you don't even know it. They are looking to see what's okay to do as a Christian. As we mature in our walk with the Lord we realize that everything we do is not just about us, but those coming after us. It's like a parent who realizes they have to be more responsible with their actions when they have a child vs. when they were single.

Live your life as though someone is always looking, because they probably are.



Write Us

We would love to hear from you. If you have a testimony, a prayer request or a question about your walk with the Lord, send us a letter. We would love to pray or rejoice with you.

Maybe you are a writer and you have a spiritual word of encouragement for the readers of our newsletter. We would love to review your article to see if we can use it in our newsletter. We also like to share poems from you more artistic sisters and brothers.

Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 4375, Olathe, KS 66063

What must I do to be saved?

If you have never accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, or if you have turned away from Him living a life of unrighteousness and wish to be connected to Him, then take a moment and say this prayer:

“Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and ask for your forgiveness. I believe that your son Jesus died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected with all power. I invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life and your Holy Spirit to come into my heart to guide me for the rest of my days. Amen.”



Romans 10:9 says that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

If this is you, please write Growth Ministries and we will gladly help you start your new life in Christ.

Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 4375, Olathe, KS 66063