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GRACE AWAITS

Have you heard about the wild-haired man who was matted in dirt and smelled like death? He would stalk around, ranting out obscenities and cutting himself with rocks 'til he bled. He was a demon man, to the extent that the men in his town finally banded together to forcibly chain him to a post inside a graveyard on the outskirts of town. Talk about hiding the “shameful” things in dark places. This way, they wouldn't have to think about him, or worry about him hurting their children. But with inhuman-like strength, he broke free and continued to torment others. Their remedy didn't work. The wailing, bleeding man still put a damper on visiting the resting places of loved ones.

We can read about this man in Mark 5, where we find him living among the tombs. Night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones. As terrible as he was to others, he himself endured untold misery, which sought relief in tears and self-inflicted torture.

But before we judge too harshly, maybe we can actually relate to this wild-haired man, because he is a picture of Satan's plan for all of us. It's the dead things that try to rise up from the places we seek to forget, those rotting places where we cut ourselves too. We often gnaw at ourselves, or others, in the areas that haven't lived up to our expectations or where we feel we don't measure up. “Woulda, shoulda, coulda” are the burden we carry.

So we carve away at souls—ours and others'—like a dog chewing on a meat carcass, until we're bleeding, wailing and wounded. We're down for the count at our own hand, and the enemy smiles.

We may not use literal rocks to erase the inner pain caused by addictions, depression, controlling behaviors or rage. Perhaps our rocks look more like pornography, legalism, alcohol, drugs, manipulation, obsessive shopping or even binge eating. A look at this wild man actually shows us a glimpse of Satan's prison plan lurking beneath the surface for us all.

Thankfully, Christ has a better plan in mind. After preaching to multitudes, Jesus steps out of the boat when the man, undone, comes to him out of the graveyard. This isolated man uses every ounce of strength to bow before the one called Teacher. It is, perhaps, the one and only thing he ever does right. But it's the right response at the right time. By crawling out of the ashes in search of mercy, this cave dweller becomes an example to all Christians to come.

The man throws his stones to the ground and manages to beg for mercy before the demons take over to talk for him. The word used for stone in this story is *lithos*, the same word used to describe stone tablets that were inscribed with the Law on Mount Sinai. Ah yes, we cut ourselves with the sharp edges of the law, of right and wrong, and burdensome shame. Only in the presence of Jesus may we find grace. When Jesus sees this filthy man, he

doesn't change course. He isn't repelled. He doesn't shrink back in fear. No, Jesus is the velvet steel that calmly casts the legion of demons out of the man and into a herd of swine. He shows grace to the outcast and brings light to the darkness in His mission to restore life and freedom. When Jesus is done, the man is clothed and in his right mind, causing fear in all who see him.

The crazed man becomes a picture of new beginnings, life resurrected, stones cast away and grace received. You see, the same grace is afforded us because of another stone that was cast away. The big, heavy stone in front of the tomb after Jesus was crucified. *Lithos*. There it is again. They thought all hope was lost that day too. But the ground began to shake. The stone was moved away. Grace would forever have its place. No more darkness in that tomb as the light flooded dark and fresh air replaced the dank. No more cutting for the demoniac. No more shame or bondage for us.

Won't you come with every bit of strength you possess to bow at the feet of Jesus and receive His grace today too? Let Him heal the wounds, unshackle your feet and erase the scars. You can throw down your dirty, bloody stone of the law that cuts, and find that the tomb is empty. He has overcome. Your grace awaits. Receive it today! For in Christ we've been set free from the law of sin and death! 🕊

In Him,
Kelly Head, Editor

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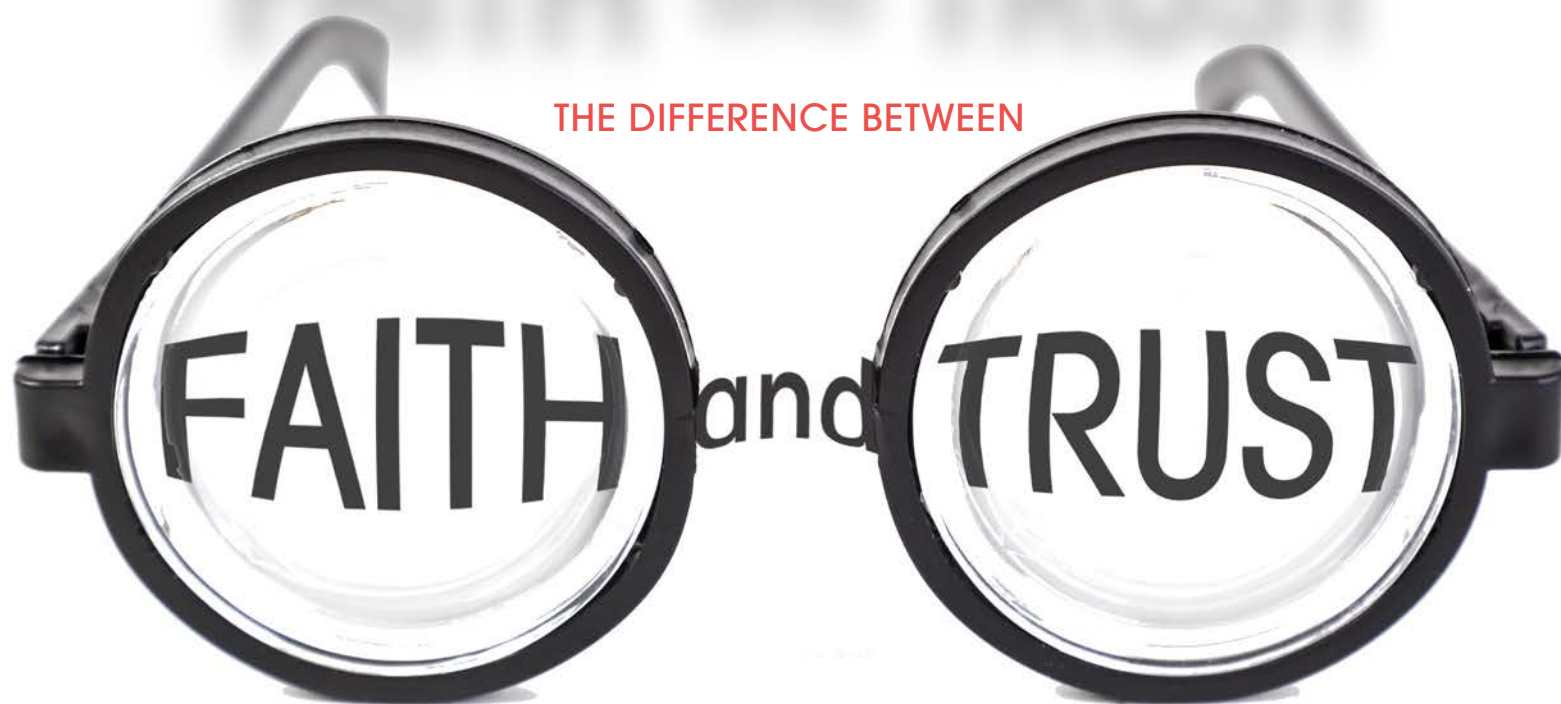
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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

People do not do good works to earn salvation;
they do good works because they are saved.

• By Dennis Lindsay

■ PILLAR OF FAITH

One of the foundational pillars the ministry of Christ For The Nations is built upon is faith in God's Word. In Habakkuk 2:4 we read, "The just shall live by faith." Paul echoed this in Romans 1:17. We are made right with God, not by any works of our own righteousness, but strictly by faith in the righteous act of our Lord Christ Jesus. This biblical pillar sets Christianity apart from other religions, yet it is difficult for many to understand God's wonderful salvation. There is nothing we can do to earn it. We just receive it by God's grace, through faith. People do not do good works to earn salvation; they do good works because they are saved.

However, our faith in God and His Word is not a blind faith. It comes through learning to trust God's Word. Faith

and trust are two different components. One's faith has to be strengthened through a learning process, which occurs over time. It is not enough to have faith in Jesus Christ; you also have to trust and obey Him.

"... Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples'" (John 8:31, NIV).

It is easy for individuals to place their faith and hope in Jesus, believing that He paid the price for all their sins, and He wants a relationship with them. Trust is different. Although one's faith in Christ is a one-time decision, trust requires an ongoing decision process. Unfortunately, our old nature often rules our decision-making process. As a result, trust lacks and our faith is unstable, especially in believing God to do the impossible.

■ FAITH FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

The ability to believe that God can accomplish the impossible doesn't happen automatically. When there are no visible or natural signs showing how God has, will or can accomplish a miraculous undertaking, it requires a learning process. It is during these times of testing that our faith becomes strong and firm. Steadfast faith is the result of a continual trust in God, belief in His love and goodness for us. Most believers are familiar with verses on faith, especially the one from Hebrews.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1, NIV).

In other words, faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. How does one acquire this assurance for what looks impossible? The answer is trust. God states in His Word that in the beginning He created the heavens and earth (Genesis 1:1) out of absolutely nothing. Since there is no scientific method to validate this as truth, one has to accept the Word by faith. This is the first test for trusting God in the Bible.

God simply wants His children to learn to trust Him and His Word, even though they may not fully understand it. In time, He will reveal His love and faithfulness to anyone who may have fear and doubt, and replace their unbelief with a firm and solid faith.

■ FAITH GAUGE

The Bible says even demons believe in God (James 2:19). In other words, there are individuals who may believe in God, but they do not trust Him because they don't know Him. They have not acquired a personal understanding that comes from trusting God. Understand that faith is a noun and trust is a verb.

■ FAITH REQUIRES ACTION

Belief is an element of faith, but it's not the whole picture. When faith becomes a "substance" that is solid as a rock, then it is connected with absolute confidence—trust. They are then willing to step out of their comfort level and trust God at His Word, even if they do not understand what is happening.

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24, NIV).

Faith must be coupled with works. Scripture states, "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17, NIV). Acts of faith

strengthen and develop our faith so that trust becomes instinctive—second nature. Works or acts of faith (no matter how small) gather evidence that strengthens one's faith. In time, faith becomes a solid substance.

Solid faith will cause one to resist the "tyranny of the enemy," who generally doesn't attempt to seduce us when life is wonderful. He comes in the darkness and the insecurity of life's storms—when the unexpected happens and when life does not go as anticipated. When a temptation comes to doubt God's Word or goodness, God gives us an opportunity to build our faith by trusting Him. Faith is strengthened when one walks in obedience to God's Word, and is compounded when one takes steps of faith by stepping out of the comfort zone to trust and serve the Lord.

■ 50 YEARS OF SURPRISES FROM HEAVEN

When we pass the tests of trust, in time, we will see the truth and reap some incredible surprises that God has waiting for those who trust Him. I have worked at Christ For The Nations for some 50 plus years and have seen the hand of the Lord bring surprises that no one thought of or orchestrated. We have had to go to God daily to meet our financial needs. This is exactly what God wants His children to do.

When the challenges of life come, God wants us to pause, ponder and pray. He will often surprise us if we will continue to trust Him. The key is to be patient, trust and remain unified. Without the unity we read about in John, I don't believe we will see all the surprises God has for us.

"I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me" (John 17:21, NKJV).

I remember a time when CFN was in the worst financial shape ever. Mom and I made a decision that divided the leadership of Christ For The Nations. We gave a piece of property worth 5 million dollars to another ministry, instead of selling it commercially. The staff's morale was really low. However, we continued to trust God and pray. Those who didn't agree with the decision left the ministry and unity was restored. Then, approximately 10 million dollars arrived over a six-month period. Surprises happen when there is trust and unity.

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity" (Psalm 133:1, NIV).

Today, my faith is strong, because I have learned to trust God through it all. 🙏



GENERATIONAL SYNERGY

Principles for Expanding the Kingdom of God

• By Jim Hodges

About 15 years ago, I heard someone ask, "Where is the next generation?" His question hit me like a ton of bricks! Our leadership team believed in the importance of raising Kingdom leaders from the upcoming generation. We had reasonably good theology on the subject. However, I realized that from a practical point of view, we were doing very little to implement our theology. From that moment on, we began to pursue the task of purposefully joining leaders from different generations, which is a necessary key to bring about the fulfillment of God's plans on the Earth.

While I was experiencing some generational synergy with my spiritual sons, our leaders and I intentionally started to pursue the enlistment of third generation

leaders who were mainly in their late 20s and early 30s. I eventually labeled them as spiritual grandchildren. As every grandparent knows, grandchildren are grand!

The biblical reference we emphasized was Psalm 105:8-10. It reads: "He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He had with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant." This continuity of three generations brings forth a world changer in the fourth generation: Joseph, who saved his people and all of Egypt from famine.

Generational continuity and synergy extends the Kingdom of God in history, while generational breakdowns and gaps greatly hinder the progress of the Kingdom in the Earth.



SYNERGY AND SUCCESSION

Generational succession is pictured clearly in the relationship between Moses and Joshua. Joshua was mentored by Moses and experienced the Exodus with him. He lingered in the tent of meeting in the wilderness where Moses met the Lord God (Exodus 33:11). Moses selected Joshua, laid his hands on him, and commissioned him as his successor (Deuteronomy 31:23; 34:9). Clearly there was some synergy working between Moses and Joshua as well. This could be illustrated in the desert war with Amalek (Exodus 17:8-15). Moses and Joshua teamed up, or synergized, in this way: Moses, on the mountain overlooking the battle, held up his arms, while Joshua, in the valley, won the battle over their enemies.

Another Old Testament example of generational succession is found in the familiar story of the prophets,

Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2). After Elijah had confronted and defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, he moved toward his next assignment. He found Elisha plowing in a field and cast his mantle over him. This was Elijah's way of identifying his successor. From there, Elijah mentored Elisha while Elisha ministered to Elijah. We assume Elijah took his own mantle back, because it was not transferred to Elisha until he went up in the chariot. Elisha succeeded Elijah as the major prophetic voice in Israel after Elijah's departure.

THE SHIFT TO GENERATIONAL SYNERGY

In the Old Testament, generational succession was primary; generational synergy was secondary. In the New Testament, synergy became primary and succession became secondary. The classic example is the synergy at work in the lives and ministries of Paul and Timothy.



Their generational connection is obvious. Paul recruits Timothy in his hometown of Derbe. Paul mentors and trains him in ministry. He guides him through the complicated issue of Gentile status in the Church. He relates to Timothy as a spiritual father. Some are hesitant to use the term spiritual father or spiritual sons, but in 1 Corinthians 4:15, Paul writes that in Christ Jesus he became a spiritual father. Spiritual fathers bring wisdom and guidance to their spiritual sons. Some call this discipleship or mentoring. Timothy, however, did not have to wait until Paul died before he operated in the mantle of Paul. In other words, Paul did not pass the mantle of Kingdom leadership to Timothy just before his death in prison. Timothy, after a period of time, *shared* Kingdom leadership with his spiritual father. There was not a "passing of the torch;" there was a sharing of the torch!

This is what the younger generation of leaders is yearning to experience. Let me quote one of them. Eric Reeder writes in his book, *Generational Synergy*: "Generational synergy is the combined action of generations. Their synergistic effort for a cause gives a fuller, enhanced result than what a generation could provide individually. Generational succession brings forth what an individual generation can provide and waits for that one to end before a subsequent generation can bring forth what they have to offer. It's like starting over with each generation. Succession has the opportunity to be focused on the predecessor more than the successor. Succession seems more about extending what a predecessor has done, versus bringing forward what another generation has to offer. Synergy is not an either or, but a both and. I like to say that we must move beyond the mentality of passing the baton, and move into a mindset of running as one."

SYNERGISTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Practical application is not a quick push-button approach. In the Great Commission, Jesus admonishes the disciples to disciple the nations (Matthew 28). This is a long-term commission and requires long-term investment. The primary ingredient is building relationships. All methods of discipleship do not appear the same way. There are many types. As I look back on my life and ministry, I see the fruit of my investment into the upcoming generation. We are now in relationship with spiritual grandchildren all over the globe, and we often do ministry together.

A FEW IDEAS FOR CREATING GENERATIONAL SYNERGY:

- 1 Purposefully build relationships with second and third generation leaders. Let them get to know you and learn from your successes, as well as the learning opportunities you've been through.
- 2 Look for the greatness that God has placed inside of them and help pull it forth and provide encouragement on a regular basis.
- 3 When possible, provide connections or opportunities to allow them to move forward into the ministry you see the Lord has placed inside of them.
- 4 Understand that the bulk of promises the Lord has promised to you may actually come forth through your spiritual descendents. We must be happy when others go beyond us to do greater things—this is the correct Kingdom mindset and what Jesus displayed.
- 5 The covenant of the Lord is from generation to generation. The Kingdom of God is from generation to generation. The Kingdom is ever increasing, and it has no end.

May the power of generational synergy be increasingly expressed and experienced in the Body of Christ! 🙏

Jim Hodges is a beloved alumnus instructor of Christ For The Nations Institute, Dallas, TX. He is a graduate of Wheaton College and Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas.

and I will punish anyone who hurts them.²¹ They will have their own ruler again.²² He will not be a foreigner. And I will invite him to be a priest at my altars, and he shall approach me, for who would dare to come unless invited.²³ And you shall be my people and I will be your God.

²⁴ Suddenly the devastating whirlwind of the Lord roars with fury; it shall burst upon the heads of the wicked.²⁵ The Lord will not call off the fierceness of his wrath until it has finished all the terrible destruction he has planned. Later on^a you will understand what I am telling you.

31 AT THAT TIME, says the Lord, all the families of Israel shall recognize me as the Lord; they shall act like my people.¹ I will care for them as I did those who escaped from Egypt, to whom I showed my mercies in the wilderness, when I sought for rest.² For long ago the Lord had said to me: I have loved you, O my people, with an everlasting love; with loving-kindness I have drawn you to me.³ I will rebuild your nation, O virgin of [blank]. You will again be happy and dance merrily with the timbrels.⁴ Again you will plant your vineyards upon the mountains of Samaria and eat from your own gardens there.

⁵ The day shall come when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim will call out and say, "Arise, and let us go up to [blank] to the Lord our God."⁶ For the Lord says, Sing with joy for all that I will do for [blank] the greatest of the nations! Shout out with praise and joy: "The Lord has saved his people, the remnant of [blank]."⁷ For I will bring them from the north and from earth's farthest ends, not forgetting their blind and lame, young mothers with their little ones, those ready to give birth. It will be a great company who comes.⁸ Tears of joy shall stream down their faces, and I will lead them home with great care. They shall walk beside the quiet streams and not stumble. For I am a Father to [blank] and Ephraim is my oldest child.

⁹ Listen to this message from the Lord,

^a This verse probably refers to the restoration after the Babylonian captivity (the rulers of the Maccabean period were priests as well as kings) as well as to the final restoration under Christ. ^c Literally, "in the last days." ^{31a} Symbolic mother of the northern tribes, who were taken away by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. ^b Literally, "for your work shall be rewarded."

"I will rebuild your nation."

you nations of the world, and publish it abroad: The Lord who scattered his people will gather them back together again and watch over them as a shepherd does his flock.¹⁰ He will save [blank] from those who are too strong for them!¹¹ They shall come home and sing songs of joy upon the hills of [blank] and shall be radiant over the goodness of the Lord—the good crops, the wheat and the wine and the oil, and the healthy flocks and herds. Their life shall be like a watered garden, and all their sorrows shall be gone.¹² The young girls will dance for joy, and men folk—old and young—will take their part in all the fun; for I will turn their mourning into joy and I will comfort them and make them rejoice, for their captivity with all its sorrows will be behind them.¹³ I will feast the priests with the abundance of offerings brought to them at the Temple; I will satisfy my people with my bounty, says the Lord.

¹⁴ The Lord spoke to me again, saying: In Ramah there is bitter weeping. Rachel^b is weeping for her children and she cannot be comforted, for they are gone.¹⁵ But the Lord says: Don't cry any longer, for I have heard your prayers^c and you will see them again; they will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy.¹⁶ There is hope for your future, says the Lord, and your children will come again to their own land.

¹⁷ I have heard Ephraim's groans: "You have punished me greatly; but I needed it all, as a calf must be trained for the yoke. Turn me again to you and restore me, for you alone are the Lord, my God."¹⁸ I turned away from God but I was sorry afterwards. I kicked myself for my stupidity; I was thoroughly ashamed of all I did in my young days.¹⁹

²⁰ And the Lord replies: Ephraim is still my son, my darling child. I had to punish him, but I still love him. I long for him and surely will have mercy on him.

²¹ As you travel into exile, set up road signs pointing back to [blank]. Mark your pathway well. For you shall return again,

"I will make a new covenant."

O virgin [blank] to your cities here.²² How long will you vacillate, O wayward daughter? For the Lord will cause something new and different to happen—[blank] shall seek him.²³

²⁴ The Lord of Hosts, the God of [blank] says: When I bring them back again they shall say in Judah and her cities, "The Lord bless you, O center of righteousness, O holy hill!"²⁵ And city dwellers and farmers and shepherds alike shall live together in peace and happiness.²⁶ For I have given rest to the weary and joy to all the sorrowing.

²⁷ (Then Jeremiah awakened: "Such sleep is very sweet!" he said.)

²⁸ The Lord says: The time will come when I will greatly increase the population and multiply the number of cattle here in [blank].

²⁹ In the past I painstakingly destroyed the nation but now I will carefully build it up.³⁰ The people shall no longer quote this proverb—"Children pay for their fathers' sins."³¹ For everyone shall die for his own sins—the person eating sour grapes is the one whose teeth are set on edge.

³² The day will come, says the Lord, when I will make a new contract with the people of [blank] and [blank].³³ It won't be like the one I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a contract they broke, forcing me to reject them.³⁴ says the Lord. But this is the new contract I will make with them: I will inscribe my laws upon their hearts³⁵ so that they shall want to honor me³⁶ then they shall truly be my people and I will be their God.³⁷ At that time I will no longer be necessary to admonish one another to know the Lord. For everyone, both great and small, shall really know me then, says the Lord, and I will forgive and forget their sins.

³⁸ The Lord who gives us sunlight in the daytime and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea to make the waves—his name is Lord of

^{32a} Literally, "I will make a new covenant." ³³ Literally, "The Lord who gives us sunlight in the daytime and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea to make the waves—his name is Lord of Hosts." ³⁴ Literally, "The Lord who gives us sunlight in the daytime and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea to make the waves—his name is Lord of Hosts." ³⁵ Literally, "The Lord who gives us sunlight in the daytime and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea to make the waves—his name is Lord of Hosts." ³⁶ Literally, "The Lord who gives us sunlight in the daytime and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea to make the waves—his name is Lord of Hosts." ³⁷ Literally, "The Lord who gives us sunlight in the daytime and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea to make the waves—his name is Lord of Hosts." ³⁸ Literally, "The Lord who gives us sunlight in the daytime and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea to make the waves—his name is Lord of Hosts."

Hosts—says this:

"I am as likely to reject my people [blank] as I am to do away with these laws of nature!"¹ Not until the heavens can be measured and the foundations of the earth explored, will I consider casting them away forever for their sins!

² For the time is coming, says the Lord, when all [blank] shall be rebuilt for the Lord, from the Tower of Hananel at the northeast corner,³ to the Corner Gate at the northwest,⁴ and from the Hill of Gareb at the southwest,⁵ across to Goah on the southeast.⁶ And the entire city including the graveyard and ash dump in the valley shall be holy to the Lord, and so shall all the fields out to the brook of Kidron, and from there to the Horse Gate on the east side of the city; it shall never again be captured or destroyed.

32 THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah (which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign).¹ At this time Jeremiah was imprisoned in the dungeon beneath² the palace, while the Babylonian army was besieging [blank]. King Zedekiah had put him there for continuing to prophesy that the city would be conquered by the king of Babylon,³ and that King Zedekiah would be caught and taken as a prisoner before the king of Babylon for trial and sentencing.

⁴ "He shall take you to Babylon and imprison you there for many years until you die. Why fight the facts? You can't win! Surrender now!" Jeremiah had told him again and again.

⁵ Then this message from the Lord came to Jeremiah: Your cousin Hanamel (son of Shallum) will soon arrive to ask you to buy the farm he owns in Anathoth, for by law you have a chance to buy before it is offered to anyone else.⁶ So Hanamel came, as the Lord had said he would, and

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GOD'S LOVE FOR THE UKRAINIAN JEWS

—Atheist Jew to Messianic Missionary

● By Michelle Ofori-Ansah

Who would have thought that a self-proclaimed atheist and a member of the communist party would become integral to God's outreach to His people (the Jews)? The story of the conversion and ministry of Irene Friedman is incredible and inspiring, a testament to God's saving grace in our times. Irene Friedman is a Ukrainian Jew, but as a young woman, she never acknowledged her roots, declaring herself an atheist and communist. Her knowledge of her Jewish heritage was limited at best. Yet, God had a plan for her salvation and also to use her as part of His end-time agenda. That plan, however, would require the obedience and courage of a young American missionary couple.

When Daniel and Delia Hale (CFNI alumni) felt called to minister in Ukraine, they didn't realize that they would be impacting Israel and the entire Ukrainian Jewish community. It was an exciting but challenging time in the post Cold War era. The Berlin wall had been torn down and the Soviet Union had collapsed. Though great reform had begun, the ravages of communism still persisted and atheism still had a strong hold over most former Soviets. However, with the door to the east finally open, it was an opportunity for great harvest for God.



● Irene Friedman ministering in Israel.

Rivers of Living Water,
Irene and Seva's ministry,
is strategically positioned to help
new immigrants to Israel like these.





- Excited new immigrants to Israel. “God promised that He would gather the Jews in the last days from all nations to the land of Israel. We are now seeing these prophetic promises taking place,” says Irene Friedman.

God had instilled a love for Israel and the Jewish people in the Hales, and their training at CFNI gave them historical context for what God is doing with the Jewish people. While the Jewish community was not the focus of their outreach in Ukraine, God put Irene in their path and changed her future as a result.

When Irene interviewed with Delia to be her personal translator, God told Delia to hire her. Delia replied, “Lord, she is an atheist and a communist!” Delia had immediately disqualified her from working for the ministry, but God had other plans. Delia obeyed God and hired Irene, telling her why . . . God had spoken. “And God also said that you belong to Him, and He will save you shortly.” Irene replied, “That’s impossible. I don’t believe in God. I am an atheist.” Delia, unfazed, said, “It’s OK. God loves atheists.” Irene described it later, saying, “I could not forget those words. They were the first seeds of God’s love that were sown into my heart.”

Delia used Irene to translate for her personal shopping and errands. But one day, she needed a translator for a sermon she

was preaching and her only option was Irene, still a sworn atheist. Irene was terrified; she had only seen one Bible in her life, at her university library, but she wasn’t even allowed to open it! How could she possibly translate a Christian sermon? Delia prayed with her before service and in Irene’s words, “Something took over my mouth, and the words I spoke were words I didn’t even know. It wasn’t me translating.”

Irene had no idea who it was that had translated through her that day, but Delia knew—it was the Holy Spirit. Over the next few weeks, Irene continued to translate and, in the process, to hear the truth and power of God’s Word. One day, as Delia led the church in the prayer of salvation, Irene didn’t just translate it. She prayed it too!

Irene was filled with the Holy Spirit and her husband, Seva, became saved as well. Her Jewish background hadn’t meant much to her before her salvation, but Daniel and Delia explained the importance of her heritage. The Jews were waiting for the Messiah, not realizing they had already given Him to the entire world through Jesus, the Son of God.





Armed with this new knowledge of her heritage and that many Jews didn't know this good news, Irene and Seva felt God speaking to them to immigrate to Israel. So in 1993 they made *aliyah* (the immigration of Jews to Israel) and became evangelists to Russian-speaking Jews. Their congregation, Rivers of Living Water in Karmiel (Galilee), ministers through humanitarian aid centers, home group meetings and outreaches. Irene and Seva focus on immigrants because of the passion God has put in their hearts for those Jewish people facing persecution. According to Irene "Anti-Semitism has risen up in many countries, causing Jews to immigrate to their new home, Israel." To aid these immigrants fleeing with little or nothing, the Friedmans have outreaches in six cities: Karmiel, Akko, Maalot, Hatsor, Tsfat and Nazareth-Ilit.

One of the projects dearest to their hearts is "The First Home on the Motherland." This outreach specifically helps new immigrants to Israel to establish a home. It also provides community and a sense of belonging, helping immigrants not feel so lonely in a new country. Irene says, "Our ministry in Israel meets new Jewish immigrants coming directly from the airport or ship to help them get introduced to their new homeland. Many come with nothing, so we provide temporary lodging, clothing, food etc. During the process of helping meet these physical needs, we are seeing many of them come to know Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah as their Lord, Provider, Healer and Savior."

Recently, there has been an increase in pressure placed on the Jews in the former Soviet Union, especially in Ukraine. Many Jews now fear for their lives, and this has more than doubled the number of Ukrainian Jews seeking to make *aliyah*. Irene and Seva believe that the persecution many Jews are experiencing will continue to increase in the coming days, and the number that will have to flee to the land of Israel will also increase. Their ministry is strategically positioned to help meet the physical needs of incoming Jews, meaning hundreds of people are able to gain access to personal and household items they desperately need. Irene and Seva also give bags of food and invite people to outreaches where they share the love of God through testimonies, songs and dance.

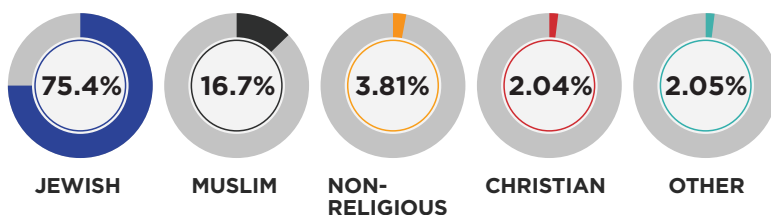
This cutting edge, end-time ministry is having success and bringing people to Jesus while meeting their physical and emotional needs. They need your prayers and support, so please prayerfully consider giving to their ministry by going to www.cfn.org/give, clicking CFN General Fund and putting Irene and Seva Friedman in the comment section. 🙏

ISRAEL: FACTS AND PRAYER CHALLENGES

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RELIGIONS



01 PRAY FOR SAFETY

The Israeli-Arab conflict in the Holy Land has recently spiked once again, with bombings causing deaths on both sides. Pray for safety of civilians and military and for true, lasting peace.

02 PRAY FOR WORKERS TO REACH OUT TO THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY

At 16.7%, Muslims make up the second largest faith group in Israel. Pray for workers to reach them with the Gospel so they can find salvation through Jesus.

03 PRAY FOR SPIRITUAL UNITY

Pray for everyone in Israel to recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

More information available at www.operationworld.org

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Living a thankful life of

Passion



• *By* **Kelly Head**

There goes God finger painting again, daubing and swirling colorful strands of silver and pink into big puffy clouds. I imagine Him joyfully whirling and mixing colors to create today's masterpiece, signed "with Love, from Love," especially for you and I. "Let's see, I'll make a pink elephant for Suzy . . . and Tommy, have fun finding the two monkeys playing congas, my son." I can picture Him with His miracle paints and canvas of air, adding a splash of pink, a dab of blue and a perfect touch of sunny brilliance breaking through the center.

This one is for John who is breathing his final breaths . . . "Receive my welcome home card in the sky as a gift of peace in answer to your tears. Yes, I shall take care of your children while you wait for them above, for I love them even more than you possibly can."

Listen close; you will hear Him speaking to you too. *I love you*, He whispers through a cool breeze and ocean waves. He is an adoring Father who swirls mementos of beauty from up above.

The splendor of creation reveals more than God's supreme power as the Creator; it also loudly illustrates His passionate love for us. What other reason would He have to create playful puppies than to lick the face of a little girl? Why create a radiant array of colorful, fragrant flowers but to be picked with love for a mother's table? Sure, all white flowers may feed the bees, but our Creator is a wonderful passionate God who IS Life. He takes every opportunity to show His love through gifts of beauty.

His passion inspires us to overflow with life too, stirring us to daub like mad, adding color to the canvas of others' lives. As we purposefully behold His passion, we too will begin to overflow with life and beauty.

So, what does all this "living a life of passion" mean? Well, for starters, it means enjoying the trip, finding the cloud monkeys. It means helping the downtrodden, running around in a rainstorm without an umbrella, smiling at strangers and putting money where a child will find it. Passion means throwing a luau, taking your daughter on "dates" to teach her how she should expect to be treated, surprising your husband with a love letter hidden in his sock drawer even after 40 years of marriage. It means sharing the Gospel and always believing the best about people. The passionate rent a convertible car just for fun, start a garage band after retirement or visit those forgotten in nursing homes that stand in the shadow of death's door. The passionate dance salsa and meringue 'til dawn, wear silky pajamas, support missionaries, sing

badly at the top of their lungs, laugh 'til their stomachs hurt and learn to make sushi. What better way is there to show appreciation for this gift of life than to use it with relish? When you are passionate, can't you feel Him smiling down on you in pleasure?

Passion is excellence, seeing at last the accomplishment of a dream. It rushes forward like fire on dry brush, blasting forth from the heart of God to ignite people with energy and vision for His purposes. Passion gives us the "glasses" that sharpen our vision and shows us how we can leave the world and those around us better than we found them. There goes God, finger painting again!

Passion isn't bound by gossip or trends; it sees a higher purpose and isn't afraid to say so. The passionate have the courage to fail, to struggle back on their feet and keep on trying. Passion means catching a wave that could transform you, but could also embarrass you—and you won't know which until you get to shore. It means risking it all—even unto death—to see the potential of others come to fruition.

LISTEN CLOSE; YOU WILL HEAR HIM SPEAKING TO YOU TOO.

The passionate make the most of each moment, seeing any struggle as stepping-stones to character. Passion cannot be contained—it drives itself onward. The moment it starts second-guessing itself, it becomes self-conscious, a caricature of itself.

Don't expect any awards, admiration or applause from others—for your reward for passion is the way it feels to be passionate and the incredible things God pours into your life when you are. Fearful people may hate your passion, but God will chuckle and keep on painting.

Consider this from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything that is beautiful, for beauty is God's handwriting . . . Welcome it in every fair face, in every fair sky, in every flower, and thank God for it as a cup of blessing."

So, take stock in life's glory, and you will be revived. Fly with passion into those clouds that were painted just for you. Break free from the humdrum by finding the beauty and strength you can live and give—for that is the secret to making the seemingly simple things spectacular. Ask God to release His passion into your soul, living each moment in gratitude for this gift of life. It is finished. Let the fire burn! 🔥

OVERCOME FEAR AND



CHANGE THE WORLD

With **WILL HART**

• By Victoria Moore and Michelle Ofori-Ansah

"The world has never been changed by normal people; the world has never been changed by people that just sit and say, 'Maybe someday I can be used,'" declares Will Hart. Will is a minister and missionary that has seen the power of God move miraculously through his organization, Hart Ministries, and his work with evangelists like Heidi Baker, Bob Bradbury and Randy Clark. You also may have seen him in the movie *Furious Love*, a documentary about the radical nature of the love of God.

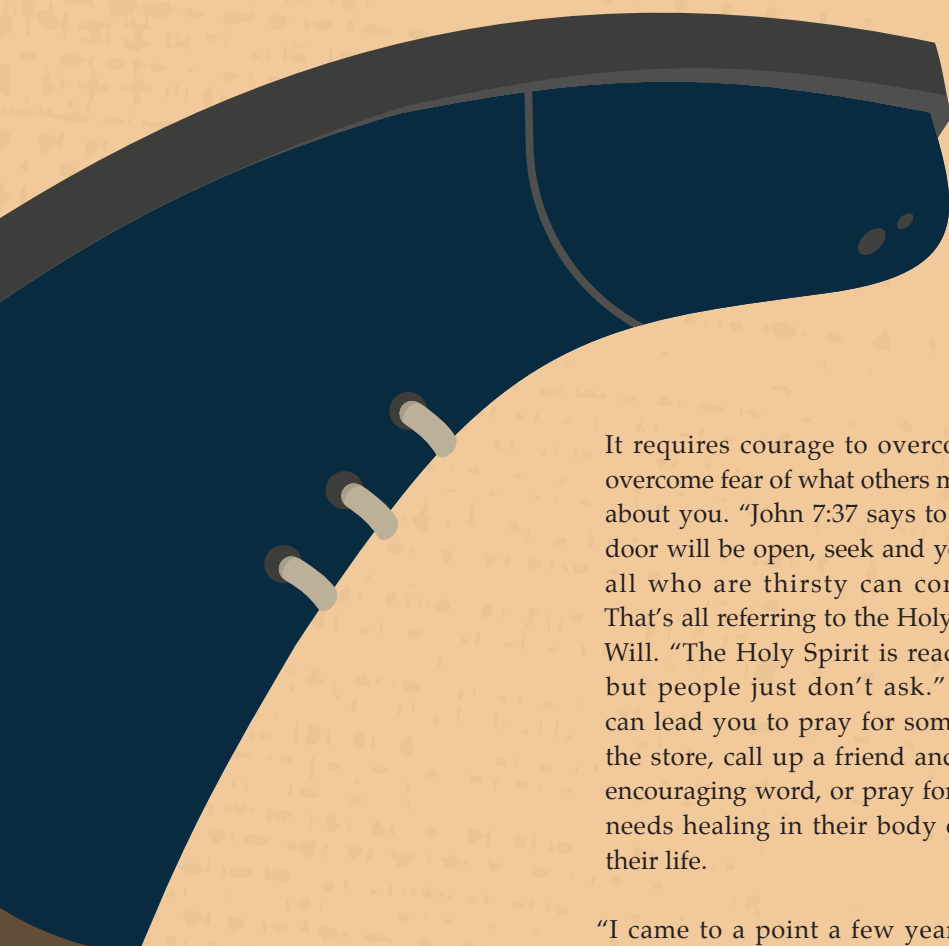
But he explains that it isn't necessary to travel around the world and host big crusades in order to let the Holy Spirit work through you. It does require you to do something—to overcome fear and not think about yourself, only God. "The major block for 99 percent of all Christians is fear," Will continues, and it comes down to one thing: "Fear is belief in a lie. And people have to let go of themselves and of their fear. Fear of man, fear of failure, fear of looking stupid. Most people don't move in the things of the Spirit because of their own fears."

Will has personal experience with this type of fear and how to overcome it. Answering the call of God and ignoring those who said he was foolish, he moved to Paraguay as a missionary at the age of 17. He had one duffle bag, spoke no Spanish and didn't know his host family. What he did have was courage, faith in God and the boldness that comes from extreme obedience. Over the year and a half he spent in Paraguay, he experienced miracles, healings and changed lives as he did radical exploits for God.

Now he is impacting the next generation with this same audacious faith. Nine-year-old Cottie was ministered to at a Will Hart meeting. As Will describes, "Cottie got it. She realized that when the Holy Spirit comes on her, He's calling her to do something with it, to take what she has received and give it away." So when she felt the same presence of God in school the next day, she had a choice . . . to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, or the rules of her classroom.

Risking embarrassment and misunderstanding, she chose to give away what God had given to her and prayed for students and teachers in three classrooms. While they were having a divine encounter with God—falling under the power of the Spirit, crying and praying—the principal, not understanding what was going on, brought security in to stop her and then suspended her for nine days. Her bravery in following God may have seemed foolish to others and had real consequences, both good and bad. But to Cottie, radical obedience to God was the only real choice. Will states, "It doesn't matter how old you are. God is searching for hunger. Are you willing to go further, cry out harder and go after God more than anyone else?"

And while it can seem simple to talk about this type of fearlessness in walking out our faith, believers have so often remained in their comfort zones. Why is it so difficult to take a step of faith? How does a believer overcome fear? Will says, "Fear is a choice. So you die to self, and realize it's not about you. If it's not about you, it's up to Him, and if it's up to Him, you have to trust."



It requires courage to overcome inertia, to overcome fear of what others may think or say about you. "John 7:37 says to knock and the door will be open, seek and you will find . . . all who are thirsty can come and drink. That's all referring to the Holy Spirit," shares Will. "The Holy Spirit is ready and willing, but people just don't ask." This "asking" can lead you to pray for someone in line at the store, call up a friend and give them an encouraging word, or pray for someone who needs healing in their body or a miracle in their life.

"I came to a point a few years ago where I realized all my friends were believers, so I decided to go to my neighbors and introduce myself, offering my help if they needed anything. My family opened up our house so that we now have kids in our house all the time. We simply decided we were going to be a safe haven." The seemingly unimportant choice of reaching out to your neighbors takes boldness and daring in our closed-off culture.

Will continues, "I feel the church has lost its sense of how to relate to people; we need to learn how to be around darkness." We are to be the light of the world and should not put a shade over this light (Matthew 5:15). And it is fear that causes us to hide our light, to hide our relationship with God and to shy away from following the audacious leading of the Holy Spirit.

Will uses the example of the military, which takes an average American and trains him in a matter of months to run toward points of conflict. This forces the soldier to step out of his comfort zone, to move forward in spite of fear, to be brave. He points out that Jesus had to make this choice to overcome fear and run toward the darkness while He was on Earth.

"Jesus modeled a complete loss and death to self. It's the opposite of what happens in the natural. In the Kingdom, if you want to face fear, you have to run directly at that thing. We will face fear constantly. I go into deep dark places all the time. It's not that I'm not scared. I just choose not to be. In the Bible it says 'and David ran at Goliath.' I choose to run toward the darkness."

When we run toward darkness, miracles take place. Healing, deliverance and freedom manifest. The Holy Spirit invites us to participate in a lifestyle that transforms nations. Why would we not respond to such an invitation?

This lifestyle requires death to self, bravery in the face of darkness, shame and embarrassment, and allowing ourselves to be conduits of God's power. First, believe it is possible for you! And then, the hunger that belief creates results in spectacular moves of God. So as the body of Christ sets aside fear, runs toward the darkness and follows the Holy Spirit's leading, we realize that courage is always the victor. 🦖



KFN: Preteen Impact

The 2014 camp where Will Hart ministered this summer was his first experience with Kids For The Nations Preteen Impact. He was greatly encouraged by the hunger of the campers and CFNI team. "In 15 years of ministry, I can count on one hand the type of power that has come during this camp; that magnitude of power where an entire gathering is touched. You could see it in the atmosphere and in the kids how the staff and team had been fasting and praying, seeking the Lord, really crying out for months and months for these kids."

There were over 50 healings the first night alone, he said. For example, when he prophetically declared that God was healing eczema, a girl who had been covered with it from birth started crying. Her mom turned to her and realized that the eczema was gone. Chronic pain was healed, bones realigned and eyesight was improved where eyeglasses were no longer needed to see.

KFN Preteen Impact is the vision of Connie McKenzie, director of KFN. She began the camp out of a passion to see preteens from multicultural backgrounds experience encounters with God. For information about 2015 visit: KidsForTheNations.org/Preteen.

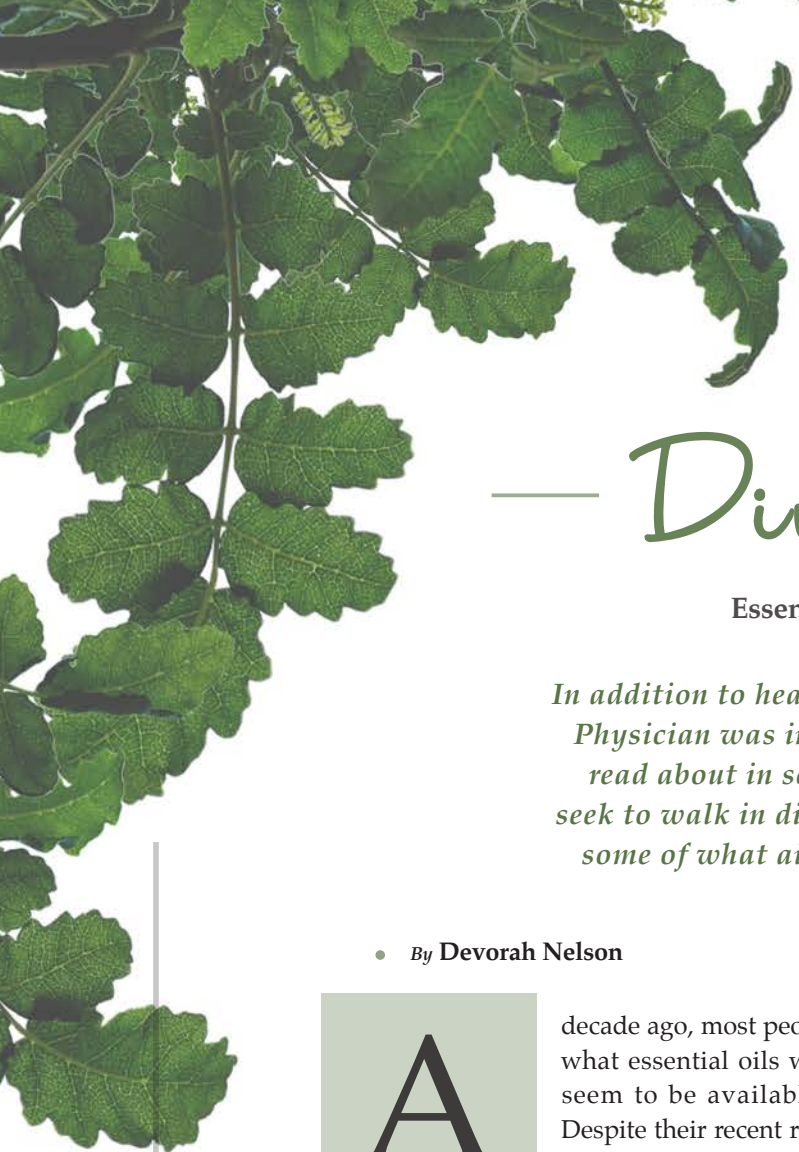


KFN Preteen Impact is a week-long sleepover camp for preteens 10-12, a pivotal age in reaching children for Christ. In 2014 KFN involved 235 campers, 30 Counselors-in-Training (teenage volunteers), 35 church leaders and 60 KFN interns from Christ For The Nations Institute.



Will Hart ministered in July at KFN Preteen Impact. During the ministry time, he encouraged the campers, "God filled you up, now you pour out and He'll pour back in, so start praying for people." As they began to pray for one another, many later reported how they experienced encounters and healings in the presence of God.





— Divine Health —

Essential Oils: God's Healthcare Design?

In addition to healing and miracles, is it possible that the Great Physician was into preventative medicine? Could the oils we read about in scripture still be beneficial to us today as we seek to walk in divine health? It would seem that the answer to some of what ails us may be found in the plants of Creation.

• By **Devorah Nelson**

A

decade ago, most people had no clue what essential oils were. Now they seem to be available everywhere. Despite their recent rising popularity, essential oils are not new at all. Their use for healing is a practice dating back to early civilizations.

The medicinal use of essential oils was common not only during biblical times, but is also mentioned in historical writings of other cultures—Egyptians, Greeks and Romans to name a few.

So what are essential oils? They are a plant's defense mechanism—its method of healing itself. The beauty of this is that, once harvested, the plant's own medicine can be beneficial to humans as well. Not all plants are aromatic, meaning they can be used as essential oils. But there are many plants that do have this quality.

What is so amazing about essential oils as medicine is that the body sees them as food, as nutrition. Therefore, they are easily absorbed and work effectively and rapidly, without side effects. Unlike modern antibiotics, essential oils can eliminate not

only harmful bacteria, but also viruses because they are small enough to penetrate the cell wall. In fact, this is why essential oils are transdermal, and once applied can reach every area of the body within minutes. So, if you put a drop of pure peppermint oil on the bottoms of your feet, chances are you will taste it on your breath moments later.

Unlike modern medicine, which is robotic in nature, essential oils are alive. They work with the body to create balance and healing—in essence, providing the body with what it needs so it can heal itself. Essential oils are also able to pass the blood-brain barrier when inhaled, making them useful for healing the brain and for brain function. With this in mind, it's no wonder that God instructed the Israelites on the use of incense and aromatics in scripture, since the very aroma of an essential oil can cause a chemical change in the brain, thus reducing stress, depression and negativity, as well as lifting the spirit.

Essential oils (and the plants they are harvested from) are mentioned quite frequently in the Bible—more than 200 times in the Old and New Testament. These references include the mention of healing and holy



oils, incense, ointments and aromatics. For instance, a recipe for a holy oil was given to Moses by God in Exodus 30:22-24. Other examples of essential oil use and instruction can be found throughout the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Psalms and Song of Solomon to name a few. Learning about medicinal essential oils and their use in the Bible sheds light on what the biblical practice of “anointing with oil” meant in biblical times. It wasn't just a ritual. The specific oils used for anointing were significant and had powerful healing properties.

The familiar nativity story is a perfect example of priceless essential oils mentioned in scripture. Gold, frankincense and myrrh were the famous gifts bestowed upon Jesus by the three wise men. Obviously the gold was valuable and provided financially for Mary and Joseph when they fled to Egypt to avoid Herod, but what was the significance of the other two gifts?

In ancient times, the only medicinal option available was nature based. Frankincense was costly and valued for its internal healing properties, which contemporary science has come to discover include cellular and DNA repair as well as other regenerative qualities. Myrrh was also priceless at the time of Christ because of its ability to heal external ailments of the skin and tissue. Historically, myrrh has been used to treat infections, cancer and leprosy, among other things. So the frankincense and myrrh given to Jesus were actually of more value at that time than the gold, as these plants provided for His internal and external health and healing.

2 Peter 1:3 states, "He has given us all we need for life and godliness . . ." While this passage goes on to describe what godliness looks like in action, one might consider the first part of this verse from the perspective that God, through His very creation, provided from day one for our “life” or health. If He instructed the Israelites in the use of plants for aromatic, holy and medicinal use, surely this was part of His plan for human life and well-being.

The surge of interest to return to ancient studies in aromatherapy and plant-based medicine is a worthy one, especially with the biblical examples in mind. Scientific research on essential oils has increased immensely in the past 15 years, and many medical doctors are joining the movement to embrace historical medicine in the form of essential oils. According to David Stewart, Ph.D., author of *Healing Oils of the Bible*, “Much of what is called ‘alternative medicine’ in today’s terminology is actually ‘original medicine’ — that which was effective thousands of years ago but which has been forgotten (suppressed) and supplanted by the chemical/medical industry of modern times.”

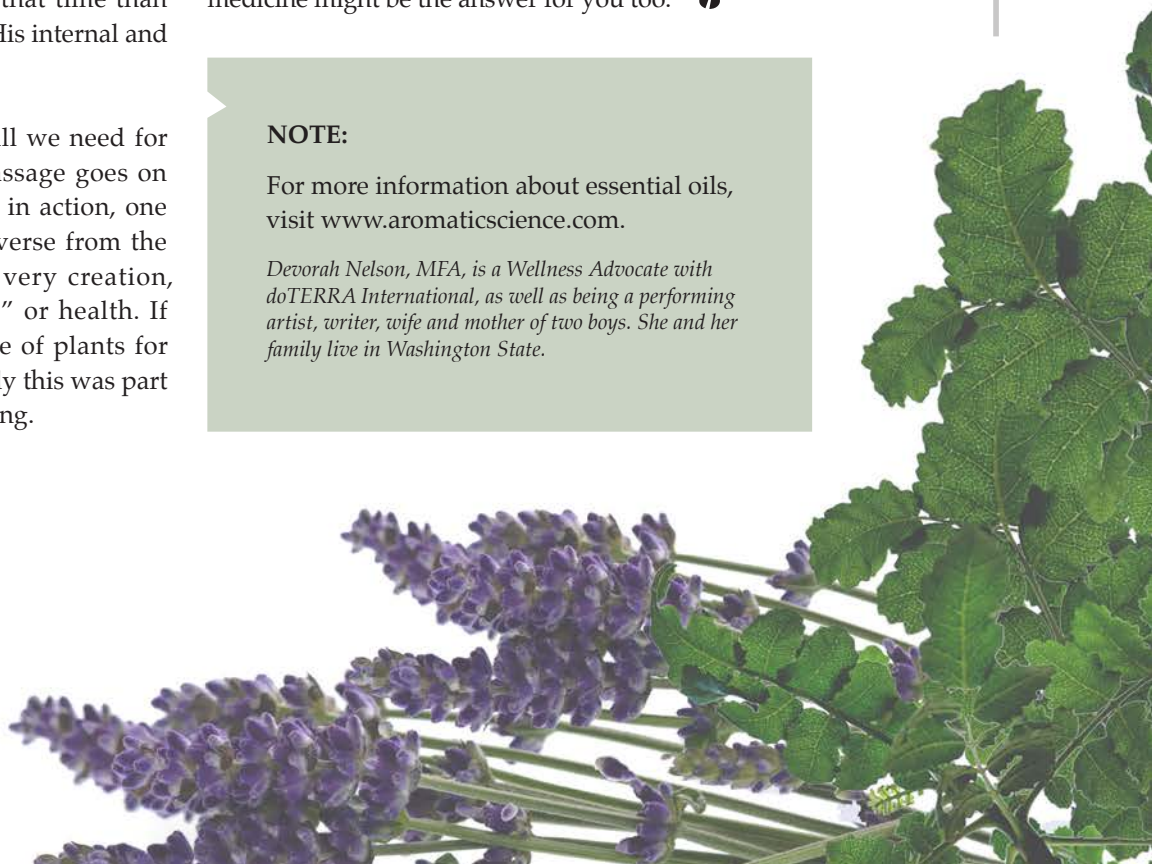
If God, through scripture, has provided everything humanity needs for spiritual transformation, could He also provide through nature for His beloved creation’s physical bodies? The answer is, yes. Challenge yourself to read through the Old Testament afresh with this new perspective, and you will might be surprised by what you find.

Undoubtedly there is a place for emergency medical care in the modern world. But the sad truth is that most Americans rely daily on chemical medications of one kind or another, even for minor issues. What if there was another option? A biblical option? There is. This old-turned-new perspective and rebirth of essential oils in contemporary daily life has made a life-changing impact on many families. And, perhaps, God’s original medicine might be the answer for you too. 🌿

NOTE:

For more information about essential oils, visit www.aromaticscience.com.

Devorah Nelson, MFA, is a Wellness Advocate with doTERRA International, as well as being a performing artist, writer, wife and mother of two boys. She and her family live in Washington State.



At a Glance:

Eight Essential Oils of the Bible

Cedarwood

Properties:

antifungal, anti-infectious, antiseptic (urinary and pulmonary), astringent, diuretic, insect repellent and sedative.

Common Uses:

calming, tension, tuberculosis, urinary infection and prayer.



Cypress

Properties: antibacterial, anti-infectious, antimicrobial, antiseptic, astringent, deodorant, diuretic and vasoconstricting.

Common Uses: carpal tunnel

syndrome, concussion, flu, incontinence, chronic pain, rheumatoid arthritis and others.



Cinnamon

Properties: antibacterial, antidepressant, anti-infectious, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antiviral and immune stimulant.

Common Uses: bacterial infections, bites/stings, breathing, diabetes, diverticulitis, fungal infections and others.



Frankincense

Properties: anticancer, antidepressant, anti-infectious, anti-inflammatory, expectorant, immune stimulant, sedative and others.

Common Uses: Alzheimer's

Disease, arthritis, asthma, cancer, concussion, coughs, depression, immune support and others.



Myrrh

Properties: anti-infectious, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antitumor, astringent and tonic.

Common Uses: cancer, cracked skin, congestion, dysentery, gum disease, hyperthyroidism, infection, ulcers and others.



Juniper (Berry)

Properties:

antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, cleanser, detoxifier, diuretic, stimulant and tonic.

Common Uses:

acne, alcoholism, dermatitis/eczema, kidney stones and tinnitus.



White Fir

Properties: analgesic, antiarthritic, antiscatarrhal, antiseptic (pulmonary), expectorant and stimulant.

Common Uses: bronchitis, cartilage inflammation, frozen shoulder, muscle fatigue, muscle pain, sprains and others.



Cassia

Properties: antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral.

Common Uses: antiseptic and cooking.

This information has been taken directly from *Modern Essentials: A Contemporary Guide to the Therapeutic Use of Essential Oils*, and is for educational purposes.

40TH ALBUM RELEASED



• By Maddy Hunt

Christ for the Nations Worship released a sound this November. The latest in a significant legacy of worship, *Kingdom* marks CFNI's newest, much anticipated 40th album.

The uniqueness of this album started with the live recording. From song selection to the setting of the stage, the recording of the live worship experience captured in *Kingdom* was marked by fervor and intimacy. The stage setting, featuring exposed light bulbs, tribal rugs, and contrasting cool and warm tones, generated a closeness and anticipation in the audience.

No laser shows in sight, the lilting sounds of a violin gave expression to stirring hearts in a packed auditorium. The focus remained on the Lord during songs such as "Love Has Come," written by Jonathan Lewis, a moving proclamation of the reality of Jesus' relentless and present affection for us. As if answering the heart cry of the audience, there were tangible

experiences of God's power. "During the recording, my Campus Days guest worshipping in the balcony was spontaneously baptized in the Holy Spirit and received his prayer language," shared CFNI alumnus Brad Snyder.

The album recording captures the flavor and heart of the live worship experience and also the power and presence of God felt by attendees at the recording itself. "God's presence filled the room. And that same anointing is captured on the live recording," said Jacob McConnaughy, CFNI student and live recording attendee. The organic tone of the worship experience complemented the songs chosen for the album roster, some of the best yet to emerge out of CFN music.

Some highlights of the songs on the recording include former CFNI worship leader Klaus Kuehn, who made a surprise guest appearance on "The Whole Earth." Also, student-featured songs included a gritty, declarative rendition of "Spirit Burn" led by Michael Goude, and the powerful, anointed vocals of Johnni Pitscheneder on "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." Worship leaders around the country will enjoy adding songs from *Kingdom* to their Sunday morning repertoire, especially "Let Us See," a fantastic upbeat song for corporate praise originally written and performed by CFNI's Youth for the Nations band.

A milestone in CFN Music and of particular note to fans of CFNI worship, *Kingdom* marks the end of one era and the start of a new one. Longtime CFNI worship leader Gabriel Allred said goodbye after six years, leaving behind a legacy of faithfulness and excellence. His songs "I Give Myself Away" and "When the Lamb Appears," a spontaneous song marked by Spirit-led intensity, can be heard on the new album. 🎧



— BENEFITS OF —

THE WORD OF GOD

• By Dr. John Hollar

THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS TO THE WORD OF GOD.

Three of them are found in John 8:31-32:
“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed
Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My
disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall make you free.’”

The three benefits Jesus describes in these
scriptures are Discipleship, Discernment
and Deliverance.



.....

In this verse, Jesus first said, “You are my disciples.” This is the first benefit, **Discipleship**, which is born of staying in the precepts of the Word of God.

Next, Jesus said, “You shall know the truth.” The second benefit is **Discernment**. This doesn’t mean you will always have all the facts; it refers to truth residing inside of you.

This resident truth will enable you to discern good from bad and vice versa.

Finally, Jesus declared, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” This describes the truth you know that brings **Deliverance**, freedom from the plans and purposes of the enemy.

.....

1 THE FIRST BENEFIT, **discipleship**, is developed. No one is born again a disciple. But after awhile, something inside connects with His goodness, His stalwartness and His faithfulness. The more you get to know Him, the more you stay in the Word and hear the Word preached, and the more you worship Him, something in your heart responds, “I want to be like Jesus.”

And then, you move forward, deeper into discipleship, deciding to be different from other, nominal Christians. It’s one thing to be separate from the world, but it’s another thing to keep yourself separate from the unbelieving believers. They are supposed to be on your side, yet often times they are not.

Don’t forget that Jesus had 12 disciples ranging from Judas and Thomas (the betrayer and the doubter) to the ‘middle disciples’ ... the ones that were nearby but not in the inner circle. And then there were the three close disciples who had Jesus’ heart. The good news is that it’s your decision which kind of disciple you’re going to be. Are you going to be just a “regular” Christian, or are you going to be a close disciple, in the inner circle?

The ultimate goal isn’t merely discipleship. We have the opportunity to move beyond discipleship into the fulfillment of Romans 8:14-23, which describes sonship, in which we live as manifested sons of God! This is the true benefit of discipleship, leading to sonship.

A creative force happens on the inside of you when truth gets through to you, and you change, embracing the freedom that the Truth of God's Word brings.

.....

2 THE SECOND BENEFIT is discernment. Jesus described discernment in John 8 when He said, "You shall know the truth." If you'll stay in the Word, Jesus promises that you won't have to wonder what is truth any longer. The reason that many Christians have so many problems and question so many things is that they read *about* the Bible rather than reading the Bible. In another version Jesus said, "Continue in My Word," and the key word there is "continue." If you stay, or continue, in His Word, then you will have discernment; you will know the truth.

A few years ago, my wife, Ann, decided she wanted a dog, a cocker spaniel. Now, I am from the farm and we don't pay for pets there; animals work! But she wanted a puppy, so since full-blood cocker spaniels were \$500, we were looking for something a little less full-blooded. When we found an ad for one, it took us to a veritable menagerie of animals in the man's backyard. Included were lots of chickens and roosters, and the puppies were housed

beneath the chicken coop. Ann picked out her puppy, from then on christened Buffy.

Buffy came home with us, and all was well . . . until about 2 o'clock in the morning when we were startled awake by an unexpected sound. "What's that!?" I asked. "Sounds like a rooster . . . is that our puppy?" Ann asked. And yes, our new little puppy was crowing, like a rooster! You see this puppy had gotten confused. She didn't know that she wasn't a rooster, because she had been surrounded by chickens. Until she spent some time away from the chickens, she didn't know how to act like a dog. After some time, without me having to train her in how to bark and howl like a dog, she started sounding just like a dog and our rooster-puppy was no more.

Buffy had been hearing the wrong things, so she couldn't discern what she was. In the same way, you have to find out for yourself the truth of what the Bible says about you, and then you will walk in the benefit of discernment.

.....

3 THE THIRD BENEFIT is deliverance. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." An interesting example of deliverance can be seen in American history. Americans celebrate independence, our deliverance from tyranny, on July 4, 1776. But that is not the day the Revolutionary War ended. The war actually ended on October 19, 1781. Why don't we celebrate October 19th?

July 4th is more accurately when the Revolutionary War began, yet this is what we celebrate. Why? Our forefathers did not want us celebrating when our tyrant said we were free. We celebrate a date five years before that, when we said we were free.

In a similar way, you are not free because the devil doesn't fight you. You're only free because you agree with the Word of God and declare your own freedom. Deliverance comes not because somebody delivers you, but because you determine to be delivered. Jesus said, "The truth shall **MAKE** you free." A creative force happens on the inside of you when truth gets through to you, and you change, embracing the freedom that the Truth of God's Word brings.

The three benefits of the Word of God outlined by Jesus are available; they are yours for the taking. All you have to do is continue in the Word, setting your mind to becoming a disciple, gaining discernment and finding freedom. 🍷

An Unexpected Choice

• By Missy Lindsay

We all resonate with the movies where the social misfit, the one mocked and ridiculed, is chosen for something great. We love to cheer for the underdog who, against all odds, conquers something significant that the naysayers couldn't overcome. We love it, because deep down, we all long to be chosen, to be overcomers.

The good news is that it isn't just in the movies! One of God's favorite things to do is choose the forgotten

one, the discards of society, for something extraordinary.

In 1 Samuel 16, God does just that! We find a poor, hardworking shepherd who's rejected, mocked and scorned by his brothers; a boy whose own father doesn't seem to think much of him. He even excludes him from important social events, yet parades his brothers before famous society—including the most significant event yet, when the revered prophet Samuel visits their

home to choose the next king. It's like the president coming to your home. The town's been buzzing and tidying up. Inside the home, it's a joyous occasion where all the best food is served and finery is on display. Yet David is hidden alone in the fields, smelling like the sheep he shepherds. But suddenly, in one life-changing moment, someone summons David from the dusty fields. Shortly thereafter, he is anointed the next king of Israel. This completely shocks everyone!

NO QUALIFICATIONS

David did not look the part of the next king. He had no special upbringing, no university degrees or formal training. Without any titles or success to speak of, he hadn't accomplished anything great. He was not "head and shoulders" above everyone else like King Saul. All David had was a harp, a slingshot and some sheep.

WHAT DISTINGUISHED DAVID?

So why did God choose David to be king of Israel? First and foremost, we know David was a man "after" His own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). He wrote 450 songs and 3,600 psalms to the Lord. While David's brothers were out seeking titles and position in the king's army, fighting big and impressive battles, David was alone in the fields, seeking the heart of God.

INTIMACY

An intimate love relationship with the Lord is what catapulted David to the top of God's list when he was searching for a king. David may have been an absolute nobody, but his intimate relationship with the Lord elevated him above every other man in the nation and brought the prophet to his house.

In the same way, intimacy with the Lord will distinguish you above every other person applying for the same job, just as David's brothers were. Others may have all the talent and look the part, but it's that deep, intimate relationship with the Lord that will distinguish you above everyone else. So keep seeking your savior. Others may have "forgotten" you, but He hasn't. Your time will come.



CHARACTER

David had also proven himself to be a man of character. David's true character was evident in his life long before he ever became king. In the mundane, monotonous, uneventful, day-to-day operations, David served his father faithfully, caring for the family sheep with whole-hearted devotion, even putting his life at risk to care for those "few sheep" (1 Samuel 17:28).

Charles Spurgeon makes this comment, "Exercising the care and art of those who watch for the young lambs, David followed the ewes in their wanderings; the tenderness and patience thus acquired would tend to the development of the characteristics most becoming in a king. The care that David took of the lowly sheep was an indication of how he would take care of God's people."

God watches everything! How we fare in the seemingly little tasks God gives us serves as an indication of how we will fare in the big things God wants to give us.

SKILLFULNESS

David's skillfulness, his spirit of excellence, elevated him above those around him and brought him to the attention of the leaders of the land. From his beginning as a shepherd boy, David disciplined himself to develop and perfect his skill and ability in the little things.

Making good use of his leisure time, he practiced long hours on his harp, perfecting his playing ability, the talent that first gained him national recognition.

David also mastered the use of his sling while shepherding, which aided him in his victory over Goliath and elevated him in the esteem of the people as a hero.

Oswald Sanders said this, "Many have missed God's best through the misuse of leisure." David's faithfulness to develop and perfect his skills, shepherding little with excellence, prepared and positioned him to shepherd the nation of Israel in the future.

God, in His search for leadership, looks for and promotes those individuals who are faithful to develop and hone their skills and talents for the purpose of becoming excellent in their work or life's calling. In the parable of the talents, God demotes the man who was not faithful to cultivate his one talent (skill) and promoted the man who strived for excellence and endeavored to expand all 10 of his talents (skills). So, if you need to read some books, spend time with experts, or just put time aside to hone your skills in specific areas, keep putting the time in. It will give more place for Him to use you for His glory!

In the end, like in the story of David, it is God who promotes, not mankind. Psalm 75:6 declares, "For not from the east nor from the west nor from the south come promotion and lifting up. But God is the Judge! He puts down one and lifts up another." You may be the least in the eyes of man, but if you distinguish yourself before the Lord Almighty, whose favor alone has the power to distinguish you, you may find yourself at the top of God's list, the one who becomes the unexpected choice! 🏆

Healing Miracles Still Happen

• By Kelly Head

After a freak accident involving her dog, a renowned healing minister was told she would never talk, eat or smile normally again. Dr. Sandra Kennedy recounted her riveting testimony at Christ For The Nations recent Voice of Healing Conference, about the day she had half of her upper lip completely ripped off by her dog, leaving her mouth severely distorted and her nose laying sideways on her face.

She grabbed a towel and rushed to the emergency room, but didn't yet realize the extent of her injuries. "Where's your lip?" doctors asked her incredulously. She didn't know, but as an international speaker on healing and miracles, she did have deep understanding of the power of God for healing. However, her faith was about to be tested in a personal way. Doctors told Kennedy that her upper lip couldn't regenerate. "They said

that I would need six surgeries just to try to help put me back together, but that I still would never talk normally, or even smile," she shared.

This would be a difficult scenario for anyone, but especially for a renowned preacher who teaches internationally on healing and victorious living. She even had a healing conference scheduled for 10 days later! The enemy wanted Kennedy, founder and president of Sandra Kennedy Ministries and The Healing Center, in Augusta, GA, to cancel her meeting and give into fear. Instead, Kennedy kept praying and believing and made plans to keep her ministry dates. She put pictures of herself from before the accident all-around her house; pictures of her smiling with perfect lips. She spoke to her lip and said, "Lip, that is what you look like!" She refused to doubt what the Word of God said, which is that by His stripes we are healed.

During this time, the doctor wanted Kennedy to look at a book of cleft palettes and other defects to see the future of her mouth, but she refused. "We are Spirit," she declared. "You have a soul (mind, will and emotions) and live in a body."

Even if your body is sick, you are not, she explains, because the ultimate nature of who you are is spirit. When your body begins to manifest symptoms, your soul will either agree with the body and believe for sickness, or it will agree with your spirit and declare your healing. "Two against one wins!" she said. "Get your soul and spirit together. If you think what God thinks, believe and declare it and your body

mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

"So when I got to that place in the service when I'm teaching them how to grab hold of their healing, I turned around and said 'It's every man for himself.' I turned my back to the audience and threw my hands up into the air. I began to tell that lip in the name of Jesus to move itself, because I had already been speaking to it," she said. "I had already told that

IF YOU THINK WHAT GOD THINKS, YOUR BODY WILL EVENTUALLY CATCH UP AND CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER.

will eventually catch up and change your life forever." Kennedy's intention was to get her lip to line up with God's word for healing! She painstakingly had to talk in a very deep and muffled voice, barely able to talk out of only one side of her mouth.

"But I went ahead and had the conference, and I'm teaching them on healing," she said. "I'm a 'whosoever going after my whatsoever,' and in between my whatsoever is a mountain," she said. She often shares Mark 11:22-24 as a framework for dealing with sickness. "So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this

doctor I would not look at any book; I would not get that picture in my mind. I had already put on every wall in my house a picture of me smiling a beautiful smile, because that's what I wanted in my mind. So when I turned my back on the congregation, I began to command that lip to move. I said, 'I command you lip to reform, reshape and to materialize and to grow in Jesus name.'"

Then, what should have been impossible since her mouth was literally glued to her teeth, she felt her lip move. She began to scream and shout, because she knew the Lord was healing her! Healing broke out all over the room!



Kennedy said that she continued speaking to her lip over the next eight months, refused to look at any books from the doctor (who was shocked at how she was progressing) and was eventually completely healed. Today she can talk normally, smile and looks completely normal!

What the Lord did for her, He will do for you, Kennedy says. Mark 11:22-24, which begins with, "Have faith in God," says doubt is unacceptable, she explains. "You have to either believe God or

your crazy mind," shared Kennedy. **"Don't call God a liar with your unbelief.** Tell yourself, 'I'm gonna get this!'" The battle in your mind is meant to get you to agree with your body. **If your body and mind agree, you can actually block God,** says Kennedy. Or you can change your thinking with the Word of God and be healed.

"Symptoms are not sickness," she says. "But your thinking can turn it into one. Simply take care of your soul. Change your thinking with the Word of God. Agree with the Book. When you do this, the power of God comes into your thinking process. **You begin to think what God thinks! Your body eventually will catch up!"** 🗣️

To learn more about Dr. Kennedy, visit sandrakennedy.org. Also, visit The Healing Place, at Christ For The Nations in Dallas, Texas, where miracles are expected. And, save the date for Voice of Healing 2015: CFN.org/VOH.

Kennedy makes the following points about the verse in Mark 11:22 in relation to healing:

1 If it was God's will for you to have this mountain in your life, He wouldn't tell you to move it! God wouldn't tell you that you can move that mountain (sickness, lack of a job, financial issues) if it wasn't true.

2 No mountain or problem in life is unable to be moved. You have the power within you to move that mountain based on what you believe in the Word of God.

3 God has already given you the victory over what you are dealing with in your life. You can't make it happen, but the Holy Spirit can!

4 If you knew what was on the other side of the mountain, you would get moving! Glory to God! He has a lot in store for you!

5 The mountain needs to hear your voice. Your voice is your spiritual address, so you have to use your voice to take authority and address the mountain to move. "I take authority. Sickness, get off me in Jesus name! No, you will not stay!"



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BROWN BAGS ARE BACK! ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

LUNCH
SO LETS TALLY UP
HOW MUCH YOU SAVED BY
EATING BROWN BAG LUNCHES
FOR 30 DAYS.



• By Jennie Bogart

As we look for ways to live to give, it's often little changes that can add up to big savings. So, with giving season upon us, we challenge you, dear reader, to go "brown-bag" for 30 days!

>>> Here's The Challenge:

Pack your own lunch for 30 lunches – absolutely no eating out! Follow this plan for 30 days, and you'll begin to experience financial and health benefits immediately (up to \$200 saved in one month). Donate the savings and make a difference with that money.

> 1. Plan Ahead



Don't skip this step! Planning ahead helps build routine. Write out all of your meals for the upcoming week (or month if you're feeling adventurous). Using that list, create your grocery shopping list and make sure all ingredients are on hand. Lastly, try preparing your lunch the night before. This is a great way to ensure freshness, and you will never be without a lunch on the days you're rushing out of the door.

> 2. The Right Lunch Box



If you're carrying your lunch in a purse or backpack, consider purchasing a lunch box with a hard shell so your meals won't get squished. Thermoses are a great option for soup. When you're not using your thermos for soup, it can double as a bottle for your beverage, hot or cold!

> 3. Three Simple (and healthful) Recipes



Experiment with different recipes while you're starting out. Finding one or two good salad, sandwich and soup recipes will ensure that you have at least one week's worth of meals. Once you've found your favorites, rotate them throughout the month. Go with what works!

> 4. Spread the News



Tell your friends at school or work about the 30-day challenge. Ask them to join you and hold each other accountable. This will help you avoid the pressure of feeling like you have to spend money eating out, while still keeping up with your social life.

> 5. Stay Healthy



Choose healthy recipes—not only will you be saving money, but you'll feel great doing it! When you eat out, you are usually unaware of the fat, sugar and calorie content. By making your own food you are able to control these factors and also monitor your portion size. Wow, double benefit!



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