

DENNIS BURKE MINISTRIES

# Insights

The Way to a New Life  
JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2013

*the law of*  
**kindness**



THIS IS  
YOUR  
YEAR TO

ADVANCE!





# *the law of* kindness

BY DR. DENNIS BURKE

Everyone responds to kindness. A kind word, a caring smile, or an act of generosity of any kind is a sure way to lift someone's spirits. As much as people need a prosperous economy, they also need the prosperity of kindness and decency in their daily lives. For every believer, this kindness is also a core part of the covenant life God has given to him or her. We'd do well to





understand that the rich life God has given us is made up more of little acts of love and obedience than of great, dramatic sacrifices. In our relationships, for instance, it's the little things such as unselfish acts of kindness and a warm smile freely given that uplift others and add depth and richness to our own lives. As Mother Teresa said, "Smile at each other; smile at your wife; smile at your husband; smile at your children—it doesn't matter who it is—and that will help you grow up in greater love for each other."

Society as a whole could use a lot more kindness. Too many have become accustomed to getting angry, hurt, discouraged, and offended. They seem bent on giving others a piece of their minds and, as a result, remain in turmoil and trepidation most of the time.

For some, the idea of kindness is equivalent to weakness. The law of the jungle rules in much of modern society—attack or be attacked; get them before they get you. In that kind of environment, there is no room for kindness. How tragic it is when people reduce themselves to lives that exhibit little more control or kindness than savage animals! It takes a strong mind to choose to respond in kindness—and it takes a weak mind to see an act of kindness as a sign of weakness.

this passage is one who has the confidence to excel in many ways. She demonstrates the ability to manage her family and her business interests while living a godly life and dealing kindly with people.

Then God provides a glimpse into how this woman speaks to others in verse 26: "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness."

The law of kindness is an integral part of this woman's conversation. Think about that. This woman has made kindness a law of life. Of course, a law is something everyone can rely upon. It is something that is true under every condition and circumstance. This woman keeps kindness in her words. In times of pressure and even of conflicts, the law of kindness is her continual guide.

*The Good News Translation* says it this way: "She speaks with a gentle wisdom..." *The Living Bible* says, "When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule for everything she says."

What a powerful thing it is to maintain kindness as the rule for every word that comes out of our mouths! It's easy to let mean-spirited words fly out when we're upset, but it is truly a sign of

weakness to spew out hurtful, cutting diatribes, regardless of the situation. It takes strength and character to hold our tongues and choose instead to bring peace and kindness into a difficult problem we're facing.

In many scriptures, just as in Proverbs 31, the word "kindness" has an even greater meaning than we may have realized. It's from the Hebrew word *cheched*, which means *favor, good deeds, kindly, lovingkindness, and merciful*. This is a word used to describe God's covenant and the very manner in which He works in our lives. God's Word uses this word *cheched* 240 times.

One of the greatest and most beloved psalms of David speaks of this covenant kindness: "Surely goodness and *mercy* shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6).

Here the word "mercy" comes from that same Hebrew word *cheched*, translated "kindness" in other scriptures. David is telling us that the Lord's goodness or bountiful favor, as well as His mercy and covenant kindness, will follow, pursue, and hunt us all the days of our lives. This is an amazing statement!



**"The Lord's goodness or bountiful favor, as well as His mercy and covenant kindness, will follow, pursue, and hunt us all the days of our lives. This is an amazing statement!"**

Kindness is loving people more than they deserve. Consistent favor, kindness, mercy, and gentleness are all important qualities stressed in Scripture, and they must remain a high priority in all of our lives. Even in uncomfortable times when we have to correct or confront someone, it's the way we speak, more than what we say, that will set the tone.

There is a biblical picture of this in Proverbs 31. Although this chapter is devoted mostly to describing a godly woman, it's clear that the qualities and principles praised here are for men and women alike. The woman described in



David knew God in such a unique way for the days in which he lived. There were no others who spoke of God with such insight and understanding. And through the writing of his psalms, this shepherd-turned-king brought a depth to our relationship with God that has become the expression and cry of believers throughout the ages.

## The Mercies of David

The mercies and covenant kindness of David was one of his unique qualities that set him apart for all generations.

There are a number of references to the mercies of David. For instance:

“Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure *mercies* of David” (Isaiah 55:3).

“O Lord God, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed; remember the mercies of Your servant David” (2 Chronicles 6:42).

“And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’ And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David’” (Acts 13:32–34).

The law of kindness was a core issue for David, as it must also be for the New Covenant believer. Notice that when David’s closest friend’s son was found, David was moved by this covenant kindness (*cheved*) to bless him beyond anything he would have believed.

“Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, ‘Mephibosheth?’ And he answered, ‘Here is your servant!’ So David said to him, ‘Do not fear, for I will surely show you *kindness* for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you

shall eat bread at my table continually” (2 Samuel 9:6–7).

It was the relationship David had with Mephibosheth’s father, Jonathan, that compelled David to restore to the son what had been lost or taken from him. This is a powerful, clear picture of God’s covenant kindness restoring to us the original inheritance He provided for us that was lost through the enemy’s deception and our sinful state.

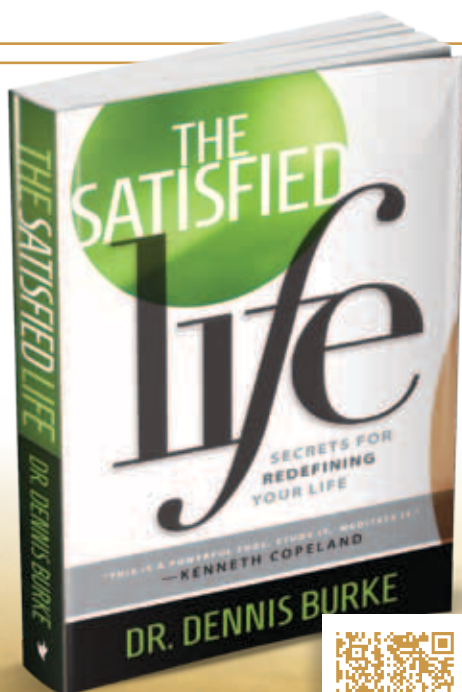
In another psalm, David states that we are surrounded by this covenant kindness: “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the Lord, *mercy* shall surround him” (Psalm 32:10). When we are surrounded by covenant kindness, we are in a safe, protected, powerful, and love-filled place. His Word fills us with His kindness, and we know He will always be there for us.

The power of living in the covenant kindness of God is that we can also surround people in our lives with the words of this law of kindness. Our spoken words can bring safety, restoration, and healing. There is power in our words, and when those words are sprinkled with the salt of this covenant, they will preserve all the right things.

The Apostle Paul says it best: “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer every one” (Colossians 4:6 RSV). He also told us to “...put on tender mercies, kindness....”

Wear this kindness like a coat. Let it fill your words and your thinking. It is *always* in fashion.

*Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures come from the New King James Version.*



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With the onset of each New Year, many people take a great deal of time to carve out specific goals and changes they would like to see accomplished in their lives in the next 12 months.

BY  
VIKKI  
BURKE

# A YEAR OF ADVANCEMENT

Some people even write down their goals, based on a study that claims written goals produce greater results.

I can't say where I first learned about this study, but I heard it was conducted with a graduating class at Harvard Business School and Yale and was followed up several years later. The results of the follow-up study stated that 95% of the graduates who wrote their goals down after graduating achieved their goals. And what happened with the graduates who didn't write down their goals? It was reported that only 5% of this second group had achieved their goals. What's more, the study

claimed those who had written down their goals made considerably more money than those who had not.

This study presents a pretty compelling case, don't you think? If only the study were true. But it *isn't* true. Both Harvard and Yale have denied having conducted this study. Yale posted this response:

In recent years, we have received a number of requests for information on a reported study based on a survey administered to the Class of 1953 in their senior year and a follow-up study conducted ten years later. This study has been described as how one's goals at graduation related to success and annual incomes achieved during the period. It has been determined that no "goals study" of the Class of 1953 actually occurred.<sup>1</sup>

"Vikki," you might ask, "are you saying that it's wrong to write down goals?" Of course not. We can't be so naïve as to think we will experience change by merely setting goals, nor can we assume that the added step of writing down our goals guarantees success. It may be disappointing to realize that the Harvard and Yale study is a myth—but don't be discouraged! The Bible gives us specific directions on the road to success.

True and lasting change begins with recognizing the *need* for change. You may find it difficult to admit that change is required so you can move forward in life, because to do so might make you feel inadequate or weak. But if you accept this lie that you're better off avoiding any form of true, substantial change, you're destined to repeat the same mistakes and get the results you always get.

The truth is that when we acknowledge our need for change (as we do when we repent for sin), we are empowered for transformation. (Don't panic, I'm not suggesting we announce our shortcomings to the world! These are personal goals and changes, remember? They are between us and God.)

If you're like me, you've heard this familiar statement quoted many times by a variety of people (but coined first by Albert Einstein): "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." Although we enthusiastically nod our heads in agreement with Einstein, the real question is this: *What are we doing to get different results in the areas of our lives in which we desire change?*

Sometimes the changes we need to make in our lives appear so large that they seem impossible. But they're not! That's where writing down goals can come in so handy.

Habakkuk 2:2 gives us clear biblical direction on how to start the transformation process that will advance us forward in life. It says, "...Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it." Habakkuk wasn't referring only to *heavenly* visions, but also to visions in the form of thoughts and dreams. He forewarned us that writing down goals and dreams must be clear and specific because we will never accomplish what is too vague and unclear.

Once our goals and dreams are clearly written down, Habakkuk then empowers us by saying that we must run with it. This is where the mythical Ivy League study fails to empower us for true advancement. In other words, *we* are responsible to take action; we are accountable to *do* what the Bible instructs to make change a reality.

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"If you accept this lie that you're better off avoiding any form of true, substantial change, you're destined to repeat the same mistakes and get the results you always get."

## upcoming meetings

dennis & vikki burke



3 James 1:22

3 Mark 11:23 NKJV

Mark 4:28

2 Isaiah 28:10

1 http://faq.library.yale.edu/recordDetail?id=7508&action=&library=yale\_business&institution=Yale

### January 13-15

Victory Church  
1208 East Hardy  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
(601) 541-8485

### January 20

Omega Church  
3737 Roosevelt  
San Antonio, TX 78214  
(210) 923-2220

### January 22-24

Kenneth Copeland Minister's Conference  
Fort Worth, TX 76161  
(817) 252-2700

### January 26-27

Living Word Christian Center  
9201 75th Ave North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55423  
(763) 315-7000

### February 10-13

Faith Family Church  
420 N Wakea Avenue  
Kahului, HI 96732  
(808) 244-4992

### February 21

Faith Christian Center  
8050 Lone Star Road  
Jacksonville, FL 32211  
(904) 721-0094

### February 22-24

Heritage of Faith Family Church  
52406 Highway 12  
Frisco, NC 27936  
(252) 995-6677

### March 2

New Life Family Worship  
28330 Bermont Road  
Punta Gorda, FL 33982  
(941) 639-1700

### March 3-5

New Life Family Worship  
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VIKKI  
(LADIES MEETING)

The *King James Version* also translates the Hebrew word for "run" as break down. When I think about breaking something down, it always reminds me of one of our favorite movies, "What About Bob?" In the movie, Bob Wiley suffers from multiple phobias. To treat his phobias, psychiatrist Dr. Leo Marvin uses "baby steps," a method from his new book with the same title. Although we may laugh at the baby steps Bob takes throughout the movie, the Bible actually teaches that true change in a person's life comes in a similar manner.

Of course, the Bible doesn't use the phrase "baby steps," but the principle is the same. Our transformation process is "broken down" into a step-by-step walk of obedience over a period of time. Scripture defines the process of change this way: precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, and there a little; first the stalk, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.<sup>2</sup> In other words, true and lasting change will never be attained with a "microwave prayer" or a "high-speed internet download" kind of method.

However, change *can* be attained!

We can attain whatever God promises when we consistently apply the principles that most of us have heard for many years. For instance, most of us know that Job 22:28 (*NKJV*) says, "You will also declare a thing, and it will be established for you...." I've been in situations (and I'm sure you have as well) that looked hopeless and impossible. But I discovered a crucial principle that has consistently held true, whether the impossible situation involved family, finances, health, job, or any other area of life: When I've taken the "bulldog" approach of consistently declaring what God has said belongs to me and of refusing to accept defeat, I've never been disappointed! Sometimes it took a year of declaring God's promise before I saw results, but I refused to quit. Other times, it only took a few weeks of declaring in faith before victory came.

One time I was in a service when the minister spoke these words by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "All who will give an offering of \$1,000 will see their miracle in seven days." Acting on those words in faith, I had my miracle in seven days! (Later, a woman spoke critically to me about this minister for saying what he did. When I informed her that I had given in that offering and had indeed received a miracle, she sat dumbfounded with her mouth gaping open. I hope she learned not to judge or criticize from that experience.)

What's the most important principle to learn from this personal testimony of mine? Just this: *I didn't quit declaring what God said belonged to me on a daily basis.* Now, I'd be remiss not to admit that I wanted results in less time, but I've learned through these faith battles that time isn't the issue—*victory is!* When you grab hold of that "bulldog" kind of attitude—the attitude that refuses to let go of what belongs to you, no matter what—God's promise is as good as yours!

Jesus had this to say about dealing with problems: "...Whoever *says* to this 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*."<sup>3</sup> Far too often, people get caught in the trap of talking about their mountain of problems instead of talking to that mountain!

Talking about the problem will not bring about the change we desire. In Mark 11:23—just this one verse alone—the concept of "saying" is emphasized and repeated three times. Even though we may *know* what Jesus said, that knowledge is *not* what brings results. Only as we *act* on what we know in our particular situation will we experience victory as the outcome. And if we fail to act on what God tells us is true, James says we are hearers and not doers who deceive ourselves.<sup>4</sup>

Sometimes it bothers people to declare what God says before they have it. Some

say they  
feel like they  
aren't being truthful. But  
faith declares what is *promised*,  
not what it already *has*. Romans 4:17  
(NKJV) says, "...God...calls those things which  
do not exist as though they did." The same principle is  
expressed this way in Isaiah 46:10: "I am God, and there  
is none like me. At the beginning I announce the end,  
proclaim in advance things not yet done."<sup>5</sup>

What does this have to do with a year of advancement?  
Everything! We must begin to consistently declare what  
God has promised us and refuse to speak otherwise. At the  
*onset* of a problem, we must announce what the Word has  
promised will come to pass *in the end*. We must call things  
that do not yet exist (in other words, the answer God's  
Word gives to our problem) as though they did exist. That  
is when we'll see true advancement.

When I was first learning this principle, I dug myself  
in a hole that I couldn't quite dig myself out of. Maybe  
you've done something similar. I began to proclaim God's  
promise regarding my family's salvation from Acts 16:31,  
which says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you  
will be saved, you and your household." I wrongly assumed  
from this verse that for me to stand in faith meant I  
had to declare to everyone what God said about my  
unsaved family. So I told my mother (by faith) that one  
of my sisters was saved. And because my mother didn't  
understand anything about declaring things by faith, she  
called my sister to ask her about it. Needless to say, that  
didn't turn out the way I had expected!

I learned a huge lesson that day. It isn't what we declare  
to unbelievers that produces God's Word in our lives.  
*It's only when we stand before the kingdom of darkness (that  
is trying to steal what belongs to us) and persistently  
declare in the authority of Jesus' name what rightfully  
belongs to us that we will experience true and lasting  
change in our lives.*

So I encourage you, my friend—let this new  
year be one of advancement. Begin today—and  
*every day*—declaring what God has promised you  
in His Word. Remember, He cannot lie. And as  
you become as tenacious as a bulldog, refusing  
to let go of the promises that are yours in Christ,  
every mountain that stands in your way will no  
longer stand a chance!

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