

DENNIS BURKE MINISTRIES

# Insights

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2015

The Way to a New Life

# GO for the WIN

DEVELOP THE HABITS OF A WINNER



Learn how to  
Live in  
LOVE



## What is it that moves you?

What is at the root of the choices you make? Are you more likely to be proactive in seeking God's wisdom through prayer and His Word when responding to difficulty—or do you find yourself reacting emotionally? :: These kinds of personal evaluation questions are so helpful if we really want to understand ourselves. The answers can help us determine if our life is being motivated by the right things. Are we driven by emotions or by God's way of doing things? »

# THE *love-driven* LIFE

**O**f course, we know that emotions are not evil but actually very good. God made us with emotions because He created us in His image and likeness, and He has emotions. God feels happiness, sadness, pleasure, and disappointment. Although these and many other emotions exist, they must always be in their right place. God's Word to us and His love for us are not changed

by Dr. Dennis Burke

by the emotions that can flare up in a moment because of circumstances, people's words or actions, etc.

We also know emotions are fickle. When people live by their emotions, they can act like a rollercoaster. Their emotions are up and down, back and forth, and they respond very erratically at times. They may be loving and connected with you one minute, and then,

seemingly for no reason, they can turn into an enemy.

Often the reason people have these crazy swings is that their emotions are ruling them. No one is meant to live with emotions leading them; rather, people's emotions are supposed to serve them. Although feelings are not to be dismissed, they are just too undependable for anyone to base his or her relationships or sense of



LOVE IS GOD IN ACTION. GOD SO LOVED THAT HE  
 JESUS SO LOVED THAT HE ACTED.

*gave.*



well-being on them.

We also know that God's love is totally stable and dependable. Living by His love stabilizes our lives and empowers us to act lovingly even when we don't feel like it. Love is God in action. God so loved that He gave. Jesus so loved that He acted. Knowledge has its limits. Our emotions have limits. But God's love is without limits.

Of course, in the heat of a moment of conflict, it isn't always that easy to control our emotions, which can flare in an instant. And at times, those uncontrolled emotions can become very cutting and destructive.

Most of us have acted out of explosive emotions that didn't help the situation at one time or another. For many of us, this is a lifelong pattern that we need God's power to change. When we choose to put love first, it helps us develop some new habits that can take control away from such unbridled emotions.

There are many things that drive people. Many are driven by a need that they are trying desperately to fill—the need to succeed in other people's eyes, measure up to a parent's expectations, prove themselves in one way or another, etc. All of these can be very powerful, driving forces. Some need recognition; others need

acceptance; and still others need to be needed. Greed, power, and sex are also very powerful, driving forces that can take control of a person.

The life that has received the love of God has a new life to discover. God's love can now replace the drive motivated by the flesh — and the love-driven life is not duty-driven, performance-driven, or fear-driven.

What drives you? Or perhaps a better question is this: What is at the core of your personal motivation? Certainly, being driven is not the best way to live. Driven people are often high achievers, but they can also be empty and unfulfilled, because they can't get rid of the chronic feeling that they can never really achieve enough.

In a positive way, a person's inner drive can point to the core motivation of his decisions and actions. The thing that drives a person can be his love for another person, his passion for a cause, and even his unwillingness to give up on his marriage. The person whose marriage has become empty and distant may still maintain the drive to press through toward better days by the inner drive to not give up on the hope and power of love.

There is power in love. It can move us to do amazing things. Love can

empower us to endure the hardest times and unimaginable losses and to overcome when there seems to be no hope.

God's royal law of life is the law of love. Think of it—the law of royalty. This is not referring to monarchs of the world but to kings in Christ. We each have been elevated in Christ to the spiritual

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position of kings; then He tells us to reign in life by His indwelling power. At the center of His power is love.

The true power of God's love is found in His love toward us. His love for us is without end, without limit, and without need to qualify. He loves us because we live. He created us to love

us. We are the object of His love and the apple of His eye,<sup>1</sup> and that is the most liberating thing there is in life.

The knowledge that God's love for us is so complete becomes a foundation that enables us to live the love life. Our love toward Him must also turn into love toward those He loves. In other words, we must let His love be seen through us.

It is so much easier to walk in this divine love toward God than it is toward people around us. People are the problem—or, at least, that's the way it seems. How much easier it would

be if not for people. But, of course, the love life is largely about us continuing to choose to love when people don't deserve it.

God's love overrides what we deserve. He loves us and liberates us when we don't deserve it. This becomes our pattern to follow. When another doesn't deserve our love, we choose to live the life of love.

Every seed sown of God's love has a predictable harvest—it never fails! If we become discouraged, it usually comes during the “in-between time” when it's easy at times to lose sight of the truth that love is working. Yet the only way to continue to walk in God's love is by keeping our eyes on the truth, even when it doesn't look like anything is changing.

What does the love life look like? The Scriptures tell us that love gives, love forgives, love overlooks, love covers, love pursues peace, love builds up, love liberates and lets go, and love does not fail.

We are designed to live in this kind of love. Our bodies were made for harmony, not strife; for love, not fear; and for forgiveness, not bitterness. Bitterness and strife release very dangerous toxins in the human body. Researchers have linked mental illness in many to the consequences of unforgiveness. The toxins that surround the brains of people who live in chronic strife or unforgiveness create a type of brain damage.

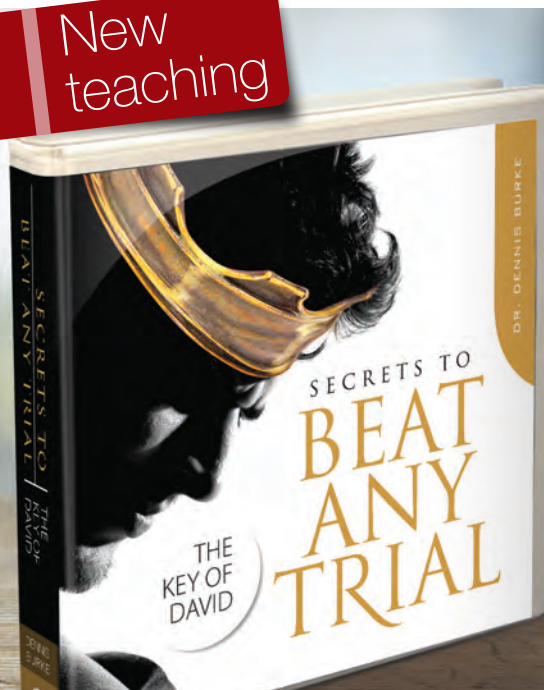
This is the issue of our times. Jesus warned that in these last days, the love of many would become cold.<sup>2</sup> Because Jesus uses the Greek word for “love” that refers to God's love, He was specifically warning those who have already received Jesus and His love.

That means we as Christians are at risk. We must maintain our commitment to our love life, even when bitter events of life tempt us to become cynical and unloving.

We have been born of love that we might live in love and give love to others. God's love within is the true source of the life we have always longed to live.

I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding (Philippians 1:9 *NLT*).

New  
teaching



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Christians spend their entire lives playing defense to the devil's offense. They never make much progress in life...

by Vikki Burke

# Develop [ THE HABITS OF A ] WINNER

Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. You also must run in such a way that you will win. 1 Corinthians 9:24

**I am** not a football fan or a betting woman either. But if I were I'd never put my money on a team that just plays defense.

**That kind of team can't win.**

In football, as in life, winners always have an offensive strategy. They know where the goal is and they're prepared to go after it. They have an aggressive game plan.

Sadly, most Christians don't. That's why they're often defeated by the devil. They show up on the spiritual playing field expecting to become champions, with only the vaguest idea of how to do it. Naïve as Pop Warner players on the first day of practice, they think that just because they're saved and God loves them, everything's going to turn out right.

Dear Dennis,

I know I am a miracle, but in the past there were times when pain or discouragement or hopelessness would override my faith. August 30<sup>th</sup> was one of those times. Such demonic activity overwhelmed me all I could do was speak the Word. It got worse and I couldn't breathe or quit sobbing but I kept speaking. After 45-50 minutes the Holy Spirit said very loudly, "Dennis." "Conflict." "Last chapter."

I keep your books in a basket beside my chair where I study. I grabbed your book, read the last chapter out loud and when I came to Second Chronicles 32:7,8 there it was!! I read that verse over and over and over again. And in 10 minutes I went free. I know that was the last attack. I am totally healed, mended back together and restored to perfect 100%. I am so gratefully to the Lord for you and Vikki. To think that those words were penned so many years ago, for me, in 2014.

Thank you.  
S.B.



Too many Christians spend their entire lives playing defense to the devil's offense. They never make much progress in life because he's scoring all the points and they're just trying to survive.

Don't get me wrong. It's not that defense isn't important. It is. It's a vital part of spiritual victory. The Bible says, "Resist the Devil;"<sup>1</sup> and that's mostly what we've been learning to do.

But resistance by itself won't make you a winner. It won't propel you into God's great plan for your life. To do that, you have to go on the offensive. You have to run toward the end zone, knocking demons out of your way, and fulfilling your divine assignment.

Like the Apostle Paul, you have to get spiritually aggressive enough to say, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

Pressing takes spiritual muscle. It involves training and preparation. It requires us to be proactive. We don't press by just sitting around watching American Idol, eating nachos, and waiting for the devil's next attack. We can't advance toward our spiritual mark if we open our Bible only when we're under attack.

If we live like that, we'll fold when the pressure hits. We'll not only fail to gain any ground, we'll find ourselves going backward. Responding to the devil's offensive plays by calling all our friends and begging them to pray for us, we'll end up doing the very things we know we shouldn't. We'll get mad. Get bitter. And say something we shouldn't.

Because as spiritual beings, we're wired to go into "automatic" when a crisis hits. Our minds are designed to take a back seat to our spirit in times of emergency. God created us that way so that instead of falling apart or depending on our own limited understanding, we'd access the wisdom and Word of God within us and come through every trouble in triumph.

heart the counsel (advice, plans, purposes, and wisdom) of God.

It's an awesome system. There's just one hitch: For the Word to come out of us at such times, it must already be in us. Which means we don't want to wait till we've got the ball in our hands and the devil breathing down our neck to ask, "Now, what does the Bible say I'm supposed to do with this thing?"

That's a good way to lose the game.

### Winning is a Habit

Football wasn't being played in Paul's day, but if it were, I think he would have talked about making tackles and touchdowns. Coaching us like a Lombardi, he even might have given a Biblical version of this famous quote:

Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all time thing. You don't win once in a while, you don't do things right once in a while, you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.<sup>3</sup>

That's as true for believers as it is for athletes. If we're going to beat the devil and walk in our destiny, we have to do what's right all the time. We have to develop the habits of a spiritual winner.

The most important of those habits is spending time in God's Word every day. Why is daily time in the Word so crucial? Because it's our spiritual food. It's what nourishes and strengthens our inner man. It's what helps us grow up in



Personally, I enjoy growing.  
It improves my life.

Proverbs 20:5 says, "Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out." That's what we're designed to do when crunch time comes—draw out of our

the Lord.

We all start out in the Christian life as spiritual babies—weak, helpless, and clueless. That's okay for a while. After all, babies are great! As parents, we love our sweet little

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<sup>1</sup> James 4:7

<sup>2</sup> Philippians 3:13-14, *KJV*

<sup>3</sup> Vince Lombardi, long time coach of the Green Bay Packers |



# upcoming meetings

dennis & vikki burke



**Hattiesburg, MS : January 11**

Victory Church | 1208 E Hardy St  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401 | 601-544-8485

**San Antonio, TX January 18**

Omega Church | 3737 Roosevelt Ave  
San Antonio, TX 78214 | 210-923-2220

**Brooklyn Park, MN January 24 - 25**

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

**Kahului, HI January 28 - February 1**

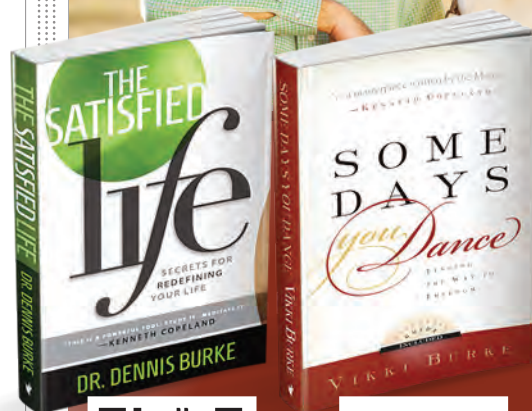
Faith Family Fellowship | 420 N Wakea Ave.  
Kahului, HI 96732 | 808-244-4992

**Punta Gorda, FL February 22 - 23**

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

**Stillwater, OK March 8**

Solid Rock Church | 2917 East Sixth St  
Stillwater, OK 74076 | 405-743-4128



**The Satisfied Life**

by Dennis Burke | book  
\$14.99 | B24



**Some Days You Dance**

by Vikki Burke | book  
\$15.99 | B23

We must discipline ourselves to do what's right every day in the minor issues of life when it doesn't look like it matters, so that we won't blow it when something major happens.

The word train means to develop or form habits, thoughts, or behavior by discipline or instruction, to make fit by vigorous exercise, to bring into a desired form or direction by obedience.

babies, don't we? But when they get to be 20 or 30 years old and they're still acting like infants, we want to shake them and say, "Grow up!" The same is true in the Kingdom of God. Infancy is fine if it doesn't last too long. But some believers let it drag on for years.

They keep thinking they're going to mature automatically over time, but it never happens because that's not how things work. We don't become spiritual grownups just because we've been saved for a decade or two. We have to feed on the truths of the Bible. We have to do what First Peter 2:2 says and, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."<sup>4</sup>

Personally, I enjoy growing. It improves my life. When I look back at how much Jesus has done for me over the years as I've grown in Him, I want to grow even more. I not only want to keep drinking in the milk of the Word (that's the easy stuff God tells us to do), I want chow down on the meat. I want to eat the solid food that, as Hebrews 5:14 says, "is for those who are mature, who have trained themselves to recognize the difference between right and wrong and then do what is right."

Notice, according to that verse, if we don't want to be stuck eating spiritual pabulum all our lives, we have to train ourselves. The word train means to develop or form habits, thoughts, or behavior by discipline or instruction, to make fit by vigorous exercise, to bring into a desired form or direction by obedience.

Bible knowledge without training won't get us anywhere. The Pharisees in the Gospels proved that. They were experts when it came to studying the Bible, yet Jesus continually had to rebuke them. "You search the Scriptures because you believe they give you eternal life," He

said, "but the Scriptures point to me! Yet you refuse to come to me so that I can give you this eternal life."<sup>5</sup> The Pharisees knew the Word but they didn't apply it. They refused to live what they'd learned.

People do that in a lot of different areas. Take exercise, for instance. Some people watch videos and read books about it. They buy the clothes and equipment. Yet their muscles stay weak and scrawny, their bellies big and doughy, because they never actually train.

I understand those people. You probably do too. We know from experience that training, because it involves overcoming resistance, isn't any fun. That's why, from time to time, we go to the gym, lift a barbell a few times, and suddenly start thinking, What am I doing here? I don't want to lift this thing. It hurts. This is too hard. My body doesn't really look that bad.

Then we go home and collapse on the couch.

You may not consider this especially good news, but spiritual training is much like physical training. Just as we build up our outward man by lifting weights, we build up our inward man by overcome the resistance of our flesh. We pump up our spiritual muscles by "putting to death the deeds of the body,"<sup>6</sup> and doing what God tells us to do—whether it's keeping our mouth shut when somebody makes us mad, responding with love when somebody treats us ugly, or doing a good job at work even though the boss doesn't appreciate us.

Those things aren't fun. But our destinies depend on them. And, like Lombardi said, if we want to make sure we do them when it really counts, we must do them all the time. We must discipline ourselves to do what's right every day in the minor issues of life when it doesn't

continued on back

look like it matters, so that we won't blow it when something major happens and our future is on the line.

Proverbs 22:6 puts it this way. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Or, paraphrasing it to fit this context, Train up yourself in the way you should go: and when you're under pressure, you will not depart from it.

The Hebrew word translated train in that scripture doesn't mean what you might expect. It doesn't refer to teaching or discipline. It refers to the way Israelite babies were weaned in Old Testament times. Back then, Gerber's wasn't around yet, so a mother would take a bite of food and chew it until it was soft enough for her baby to eat. Then she'd take it out of her mouth and put it on his

palate. As she repeated this process over and over with a various kinds of solid foods, the child would develop a taste for them.

It sounds disgusting, I'll admit. But even so, it's a good picture of the process we believers go through as we to grow to maturity.

When we're babies, the things God tells us to do in His Word don't always appeal to us. They're hard on our flesh and they don't suit our immature spiritual appetites. But they're right and they're good for us. So we keep feeding on that Word and putting it into practice. Over time, our palates mature and we develop a taste for doing God's will.

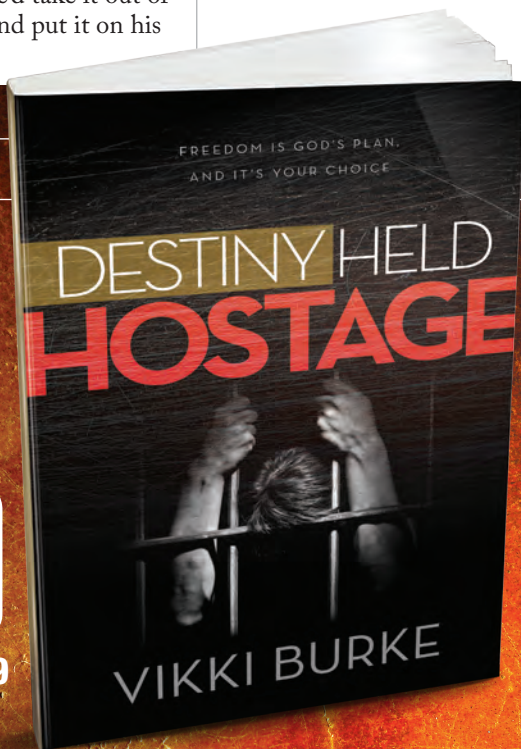
So let's begin developing the habits of a winner today!



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