

Insights

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JULY / AUGUST 2015

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There is more to you than meets the eye! This is true for everyone.

No one truly knows the inner dialogue, feelings, or values that another person carries within. And for those who have become new creatures in Christ, there is even more to them now than there was before they received Jesus! There is so much more on the inside of a new-creation believer than most would dare to believe. *The potential for amazing exploits in God is born into our inner man.*



Knowing this can make the difference between seeing and experiencing the great things God has designed for us or missing out.

The inner man — what Peter calls “the hidden man of the heart” — is home to the gifts and deposits that were infused into us when we came to know Jesus as Lord. We can learn to live successfully by the strength those deposits provide, or we can remain weak and in lack by allowing God’s deposits to lie dormant and ineffective.

The Apostle Paul gave Timothy, his son in the Lord, specific direction about this very subject. Notice what Second Timothy 1:6-8 says:

“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

The gift of God within is His deposit into the inner

man of the believer. This gift is not to be confused with a talent in music, art, mathematics, or in any other field. Although a person can certainly be gifted in these areas, this isn’t what is referred to in this passage of Scripture.

A look into the original word for *gift* — the Greek word *charis* — in this text sheds a lot of light. Our English word *charisma* comes from this Greek word. The New Testament word translated *grace* also comes from the word *charis*. This indicates that God’s gift of *charisma* is more than having a great personality or being a good leader. It is actually the “grace-gift” He has deposited within the believer.

This is exactly how some Bible translations read. Notice the *Mirror Bible* paraphrase:

“This gives me all the more reason to remind you to fan the flame of God’s grace gift within you into

a blazing hot fire. Your life and ministry mirrors mine; I endorsed the gift of God’s boldness within you within you when I laid my hands on you” (2 Timothy 1:6).

God’s grace-gift within is freely given to us all. We can live in a place where His grace continually empowers and sustains us to live the life He’s prepared for us.

The Apostle Paul provided some of the insights required to make sure this grace-gift within remains strong. He told Timothy—and all believers—that it is vital to “*fan the flame of God’s grace-gift within...*” It is clear that without maintaining this blazing hot fire within, even the seasoned child of God can become cooled to God’s grace and lose ground in receiving from Him.

Keep in mind that Timothy was not a novice. Although he was younger than Paul and like a son to him, he was also the pastor



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of the first mega-church found in Ephesus located in the Roman province of Asia (modern-day western Turkey).

Paul believed even this powerful man of God needed to be reminded to stir up the grace-gift within him. And if Timothy needed this reminder, we need it too!

The next verse gives more detail about the gift and how to fan the flame:

“Become fully acquainted with his gift in you. There is nothing timid about it; the dynamic of a mind liberated in the spirit of love is fearless and unstoppable” (v. 7 *Mirror Bible*).

This grace-gift within liberates the mind to trust in God’s love and results in a life *fearless* and *unstoppable*. That is the power within every believer. We are not waiting for God to bring more power. Instead, we are becoming aware of the grace-gift we have received!

There are numerous variations of God’s grace. His grace in our lives is expressed in many ways. First Corinthians 12 details nine different grace-gifts that will flow through us to minister to people or to provide light and direction for our lives. Romans 12 details grace-gifts for serving and ministering that God distributes and assigns.

When these gifts of grace are active in our lives, we can

see the power of God’s grace in action. As a result, we are revealing love — the God-kind of love. His grace brings supernatural wisdom, healings, knowledge, and the vast array of blessings that His love provides us.

Just knowing all the possibilities of this great grace will blast the fear of lack, disease, and failure right out of us. Why would we fear the enemy’s strategies against us when we have full access to all of God’s grace supply? This is why becoming more fully acquainted with His grace-gift within is so empowering.

Within the abundance of this place of grace is His complete supply for any need we will ever face. As Romans 5:2 (*AMP*) says, “Through Him also we have [our] access (entrance, introduction) by faith into this grace (state of God’s favor) in which we [firmly and safely] stand. And let us rejoice and exult in our hope of experiencing and enjoying the glory of God.”

The grace-gift stirs within us as we meditate on all God has made available to us and boldly declare that His grace is more than enough. The more we allow His Word of grace and righteousness to flood our thoughts and fill our words, the more His power, love, and soundness of mind will dominate our lives.

In Him we have every reason to remain fearless and unstoppable. So don’t stop! Don’t quit! Stir up the grace-gift within, and stay strong in Him.

Knowing all the possibilities of this great grace will blast the fear of lack, disease, and failure right out of us.

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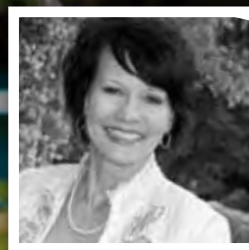
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Who says
you aren't

Qualified?

As Christians, we believe that God has a plan for each of our lives. It's a plan that God has designed specifically for us as individuals.



by Vikki Burke

We can be confident of that because God has said, "For I know the plans I have for you. . . . They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."¹ Yet repeatedly when a desire swells up in our hearts, or when a God-given opportunity comes our way, it's filtered through a list of mental qualifications we use to determine whether we are truly eligible. And all too often, we let opportunities pass us by because we just don't seem to make the grade, either in our own eyes or in someone else's opinion.

There are many ways in which we determine whether or not someone is qualified for a particular assignment. We use filters to measure our credentials, such as physical appearance, education, talent, family of origin, and financial status, along with an array of other factors. But the truth is, God doesn't determine our future by any of these credentials. In fact, He doesn't look at qualifications the way people ordinarily do.

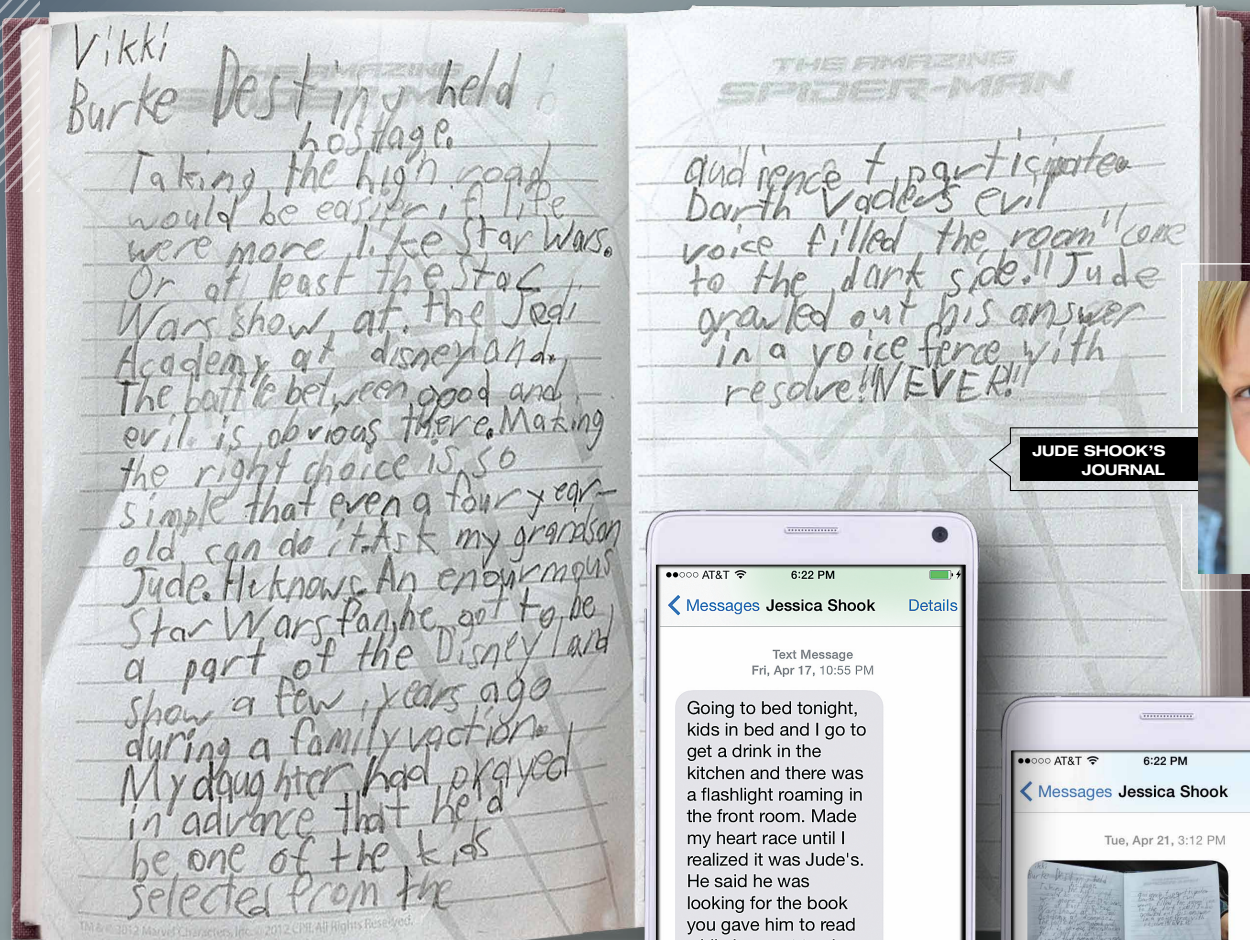
Do you remember when God told Samuel to go to the house of Jesse and select a king from among his sons? The most obvious choice was Jesse's eldest son, Eliab, who was a tall, good-looking man. But God warned Samuel not to judge by his appearance. He said, "People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the

¹ Jeremiah 29:11

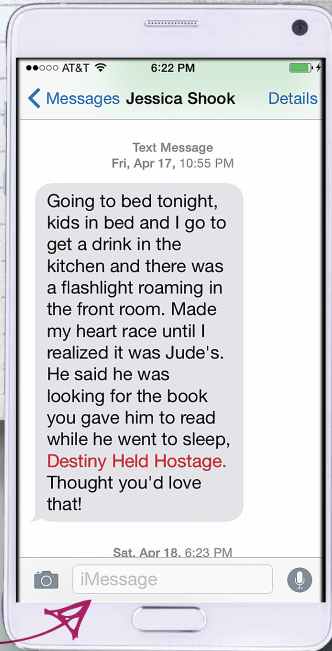


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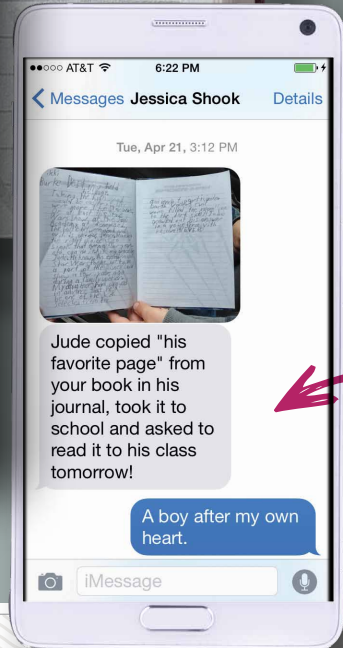
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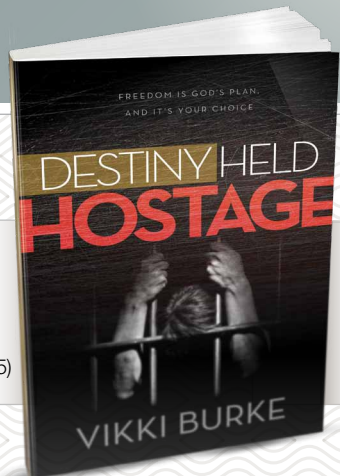


I GOT THIS TEXT FROM MY DAUGHTER JESSICA



THEN I GOT THIS ONE!

Vikki received a late-night message one Friday.



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heart.²² The old adage, “Looks can be deceiving,” never rang so true as it did in Eliab’s case.

After Samuel had rejected each of Jesse’s sons, he asked if Jesse had any other sons. Jesse admitted he had another son but that the son was young and inexperienced—seemingly insignificant compared to his older brothers. This younger son was good only for watching after sheep and goats; he couldn’t possibly qualify as a king.

But the moment Samuel laid eyes on David, the Lord confirmed that David was the one whom the prophet was to anoint as Israel’s future king.³ The one son whom Jesse disqualified because of youthfulness and inexperience, God had qualified for an entirely different reason: David was a man after God’s own heart.⁴ David’s situation should encourage each of us to measure ourselves not through our own filters, but through *God’s*.

And, of course, if we accept God’s assignment, there are always friends and family who will come up with reasons to disqualify us from God’s service. After Samuel had anointed David as Israel’s future king, his brothers were infuriated. A little while later, Jesse asked David to take food to his brothers on the battlefield. When he arrived, Eliab was so embittered against David that he began taunting and insulting David in an effort to make him feel insignificant. “What about those few sheep you’re supposed to be taking care of? I know about your pride and deceit. You just want to see the battle!”⁵

David could have easily returned Eliab’s insult by asking, “What battle? When you saw Goliath, you ran for cover.” But he didn’t do that. He didn’t let Goliath’s massive size or threats to dampen his spirit. He trusted God’s anointing to empower him to slay the giant. And that’s exactly what happened.

When God gives us an assignment, we cannot allow the limitations others put on us to overshadow God’s ability to accomplish what He intends. People don’t determine our future — *God* does.

Some time ago, I was trusting God to turn around a serious situation. Then one night after ten months, He told me that I would have my miracle

in seven days. A friend of mine had gone through a similar situation that had lasted seven years. When I told her what God had said, she gave me a patronizing pat on the back and a mechanical “you’re so naive” gesture. But I didn’t allow her bad experience to contaminate my faith. I also decided that I couldn’t be close to someone who discounted God’s promise. And in seven days, I had the miracle God had declared to me!

When God gives us an assignment, no matter how large or small, it’s not our talent, education, finances, or good looks that will cause us to succeed. Instead, we will accomplish it when we believe that *because* God gave us the assignment, He will equip us with whatever we lack in order to get it done.

Certainly we aren’t the first ones to disqualify ourselves when God gives an impossible task. When God told Moses to speak to Pharaoh, he responded with a long list of excuses. He reminded God that he had been banished from Egypt. He couldn’t just waltz into the palace and start giving Pharaoh orders. And what if Israel didn’t listen to him either? No one listens to an outcast, right?

Besides, as Moses told God, he *stunk* when it came to public speaking! He put it this way: “I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.”⁶ God countered every one of Moses’

⁶Exodus 4:10



When we get so focused on our problems we fail to see the good things God is doing for us.



excuses with His promise to be with Moses and perform miracles on his behalf. God’s never been real good at accepting excuses!

We can’t allow ourselves to listen to the voices of naysayers and cynics. We should develop an ear to hear God’s voice. I like what Psalm 123:2 says about a watchful servant: “. . . Just as servants keep their eyes on their master, as a slave girl watches her mistress for the slightest signal.”

That’s such an excellent image of how in tune we can be with the Lord. A servant knows her mistress so well that all it takes is the slightest signal that others don’t even see, and the servant goes into action. Even when we lack confidence and no one else believes in us, God still believes we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.⁷ God is willing and able to cover us whenever we come up short.

That’s exactly what the angel told

⁷Philippians 4:13 NKJV

continued on back



²¹ Samuel 16:7 | ³V. 12

⁴Acts 13:22 | ⁵1 Samuel 17:28

Gideon after he asked why God had allowed bad things to happen to Israel. In essence, the angel told Gideon that God had anointed Israel, so His people were to get up and do something about it themselves. Gideon explained to God why that couldn't happen, claiming, "My clan is the weakest in the whole tribe of Manasseh, and I am the least in my entire family!"⁸ Gideon was so focused on his weakness and inability that he missed the fact that God had sent an angel to help him. (That's what happens when we get so focused on our problems — we fail to see the good things God is doing for us.)

But the angel answered Gideon saying, "...Go with the strength you have..."⁹ God's promise was to be with Gideon to such a degree that He told the young man, "... You will destroy the Midianites as if you were fighting against one man."¹⁰

When we have "little strength," we can rely on God's supernatural strength to make up the difference. God's arm is not short when it comes to equipping His people to destroy the enemy. I would imagine Gideon felt a little foolish leading the small nation of Israel into battle against the powerful Midianites. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."¹¹

The truth is, we all have weaknesses and flaws, but they don't disqualify us from being used by God. Rahab is a prime example of God using what others consider worthless and insignificant. Rahab was a harlot whom men used but didn't respect. She wasn't a

harlot because it's what she always dreamed of doing! No one believes that. She was a harlot because life had knocked her out of the game and she was unable to do survive any other way. The fact that she asked the spies to help her get out of Jericho was proof that she didn't want to stay the same. God honored her faith and gave her the desire of her heart. When she was safely living within the camp of Israel, she married an Israelite and ultimately became the great-grandmother of King David in the lineage of Jesus. That's not too bad for a gal whom society once rejected!

However, just because God promises we will do something significant with our lives doesn't mean we have no part to play! Gideon had to supply the little strength he possessed before God would make up the difference. Moses had to stand in front of Pharaoh before God forced Pharaoh to release God's people from slavery. And Rahab had to believe that God understood her plight enough to deliver her and give her a respectable life.

We each have to engage our faith in what God has promised us and then dig our heels in the ground and fight for it! There are forces arrayed against us to try to stop us, just as there were against these biblical characters. There will always be voices that say we are not qualified, so it's up to us to make a renewed decision to become as sensitive to God's voice as the servant girl is to her mistress!

⁸Judges 6:15 | ⁹V. 14 | ¹⁰V. 16

¹¹1 Corinthians 1:27

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