

Insights

DENNIS BURKE MINISTRIES

The Way to a New Life

JULY / AUGUST 2009

change your *thinking*



change your life

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Many years ago, a London newspaper reported the strange death of a woman who, the article stated, had been “killed by 30 years of thought.” Thirty years ago when she was a little girl, this woman had watched in horror as her mother suddenly died from a heart attack while sitting in a dentist chair. Severely traumatized by

that tragic experience, the little girl grew to adulthood refusing dental treatment.

Even the suggestion that she should go to a dentist struck a deep note of fear in her. On a rational level, this young daughter knew that the visit to the dentist wasn't the cause of her mother's death. Nevertheless, for the next 30 years she couldn't bring herself to have any dental treatments.

Finally, the woman couldn't put off a visit to a dentist any longer. Despite her terror, she desperately needed dental work. Before she would agree to make a dental appointment, however, she insisted that her physician accompany her.

Still consumed with fear, the woman went to the dentist's office along with her physician. But as she sat down in the dentist chair, the unthinkable occurred. Just as her mother did 30 years before, the woman suffered a massive heart attack and died right there in the dentist's office! There was nothing her physician could do to help.

Thirty years of fearful thoughts killed that woman. Just think of how different her life would have been if she'd had 30 years of faith-filled thinking and believing!

There's an important lesson we can learn from this account: The way we see ourselves and our future plays a very powerful role in the reality we actually experience.

Let me point out someone else's experience that has a very different and happy ending. It happened 200 years after Joshua had led the families of Israel out of the wilderness and into the land God had promised them.

Joshua had led Israel into the Promised Land to conquer and possess it. But 200 years later, this victorious nation had turned into a nation of victims. Israel was being ravaged by an Arab tribe called the Midianites. The attacks were so severe that many Israelites were living in caves, just trying to scratch together enough food to feed their families. The relentless oppression threatened to destroy Israel's very existence.

The Israelites were crying out to God as a nation. They were in terrible trouble and distress and, as God always does, He answered His people's cry. In this case, He sent an angel to the one He had appointed to be Israel's deliverer — a young man named Gideon.

The angel had some good news for Gideon, straight from the throne of God: "...The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12). A mighty warrior? A strong and courageous man? Gideon didn't believe a word of this message from God, even though an angel had declared it!

Gideon isn't the only one who has ever made the mistake of not believing what God says about him or her. Christians do that all the time. They'll read scriptures where God declares certain truths about them, but they won't truly believe and act upon those truths.

Take time to review what you truly believe. You can change your life by changing your thinking, and you can do it one day at a time.

Once Gideon finally did take hold of God's point of view, it empowered and changed him. He became the mighty man God said he was. He went to battle in the power of God's might, embracing God's plan and acting in faith on what God had told him. As a result, Gideon saw God's power deliver the entire nation of Israel from the Midianites.

Gideon created a future that was different from anything he had previously believed. How did he do it? By changing his thinking and his perception of himself. Once he knew how



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God viewed him — as a mighty and capable champion — Gideon knew what to believe about himself. He took God's ideas and made them his own — and as a result, Gideon turned his life into one of the greatest success stories in history.

The 'As for Me' Principle

Through the centuries, there have been many other people who, like Gideon, had to drastically change their thinking about God and about themselves in order to be mightily used for the Lord's purposes. Once God made His thinking clear to these individuals, He expected them to see themselves and the challenges they faced from His point of view.

One example can be found in the life of Noah:

"Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 'And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you'" (Genesis 9:8, 9).

It was clear that God was ready and willing to work with Noah and to establish his family through His covenant. In response, Noah believed God and embraced His covenant. Noah's decision to accept God's point of view changed him forever and saved his entire family from being destroyed.

In Genesis 17:4, God spoke essentially the same words to Abram: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations."

Abram took his place as the father of faith because he believed God was able to perform what He had promised (Romans 4:21). Abram changed his thinking, his name — and, ultimately, he changed history.

When God said, "As for Me..." He clearly stated His own position and gave a glimpse into His heart. He had settled what He would do and with whom He would do it. Those divine words "as for Me" represent the very thing our hearts should be listening for as we seek to follow God's will in our lives. When He gives us His way of thinking about

a matter, it becomes clear what our response should be: “As for me, I receive it!”

That was the faith response of both Noah and Abram. Their actions after receiving God’s “as for Me” to them indicated that they had changed their thinking to embrace God’s point of view. And as a result, they saw God’s power manifested to bring His promise to pass in their lives.

This was also Joshua’s declaration. Joshua established his entire family in a covenant relationship with God with this one statement of commitment: “...As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15).

That same principle is to be applied in every area of our lives. For example, when God says in essence, “As for Me, you are made whole,” He expects our thoughts and words to immediately come into alignment with His as we declare, “Then as for me, God has made me whole!”

Everything God has said becomes a point of change in our thoughts. That means we must learn to declare in every situation: “As for me, whatever God has said is true for me!”

- As for me, Jesus is my Shepherd.
- As for me, I lie down by still waters.
- As for me, Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
- As for me, I am loved with an everlasting love.
- As for me, I am strong in the power of His might.
- As for me, I am a mighty champion!

You can see how powerful it is to declare truths like these every day. As you do, you will cause God’s higher thoughts to become settled and established in your own way of thinking.

In conclusion, I want to share five habits you can begin to develop today that will change your thinking. If you’ll make a practice of doing these five things, you will set each day on the right course so it can be filled with God’s power and presence. You can turn your life around — one day at a time.

- 1 **Imagine the good things God wants for the day.** Events are largely the result of faith-filled thoughts. Therefore, a positive concept of this day will have a strong impact on how it plays out.
- 2 **Pray in faith, and receive God’s blessing on the day.** Psalm 118:24 says, “This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.” Declare it: “As for me, I make a choice to rejoice!” Then determine that you will receive the best of God’s goodness throughout the day.
- 3 **Plan a good day.** It has been said many times: Plan your work, then work your plan. Put some thought into what will make this day fulfilling and successful. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you think His thoughts.
- 4 **Be grateful.** Thank God in advance for His blessings, for health, for prosperity, and for His guidance. Thankfulness is your faith in action.
- 5 **Sow the right seeds.** Your thoughts, words, attitudes, and actions are all seeds that will set a course. Don’t give in to carnal emotions. The fruit of the spirit within will bring self-control to the surface and override your feelings, filling you with God’s joy and peace.

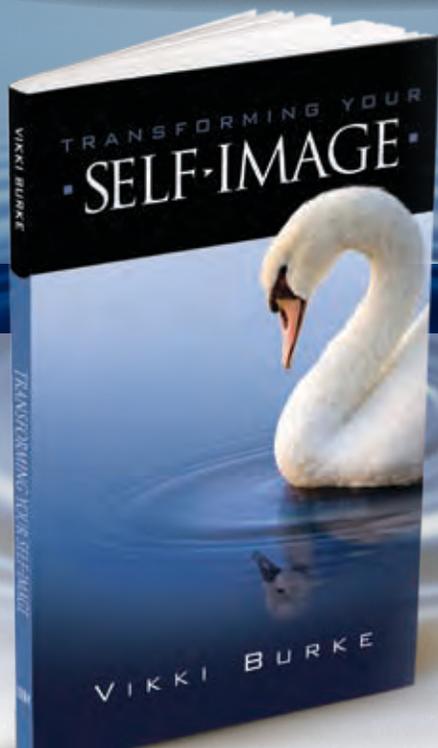
You can change your feelings, your attitude, your future, and your life. You are empowered to be changed when you begin to think like God thinks and to see yourself and the situations you face from His point of view.

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YOU WILL BE LIKE GOD *to* THEM!



BY VIKKI BURKE

In order to stop the ever-increasing population of Hebrews living in Egypt, Pharaoh ordered his soldiers to throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. Hearing the sound of agonizing screams draw closer as soldiers went from home to home, slaughtering children, one Jewish woman named Jochebed made a life-threatening decision: She would hide her newborn son from Pharaoh's murderous decree.

But after three months, Jochebed realized she could no longer protect the growing infant. So she developed a plan that would not only guarantee her baby's deliverance but would also guard him in the royal palace under the watchful eye of Pharaoh's daughter. The child was found floating down the river in Jochebed's carefully crafted basket and brought to Pharaoh's daughter. She named the child Moses and decided to adopt him as her own.

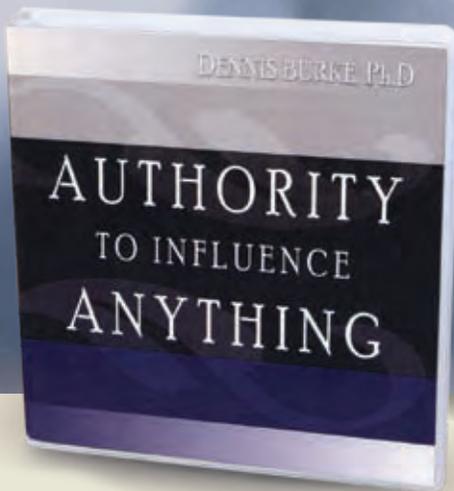
Moses' mother imparted to her son the extraordinary legacy of a deliverer. His heritage became evident when, many years after his adoption by Pharaoh's daughter, he paid a visit to his people, the Hebrews. During this visit, Moses witnessed an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave. Thinking that no one was watching, he killed the Egyptian and buried him. But someone did see what happened — and when Pharaoh heard what Moses had done, he ordered him to be killed, forcing Moses to flee to the land of Midian.

Although God had a plan to use Moses to deliver the Hebrews, Moses' method was not God's way. But after spending years in exile, Moses' life was about to change!

As Moses was living the life of a lonely shepherd, the Lord appeared to him from a burning bush with His plan for deliverance. Moses would be God's spokesman, demanding that Pharaoh let the Hebrews go free.

Making a demand of a king is an outrageous prospect for anyone. But the waters between Moses and Pharaoh ran deep, which made God's instructions to Moses even more extreme. Needless to say, God had to convince Moses before he finally agreed to take this seemingly impossible assignment.

Moses' first response was a familiar excuse — one that many of us use today. "Who am I?" he asked God (Exodus 3:11). Like Moses, we also have a tendency to focus on our weaknesses and inabilities. But to do so means we are more self-conscious than God-conscious — placing ourselves before God. It means we



Jesus gave you authority over all the power of the devil.

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put more faith in our inability than in His ability.

Certainly making a demand of a king is an extreme measure, but God has a way of being extremely convincing. The excuses Moses used ranged from “Who am I?” to “Who are You?” to “No one will believe me.” Despite everything God had done to convince him, Moses brought up one final issue: “...O Lord, I'm not very good with words. I never have been, and I'm not now, even though you have spoken to me. I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled” (Exodus 4:10).

The Lord ignored Moses' shortcomings, inadequacies, and imperfections and simply responded, “Now go! I will be with

In his anguish, Moses cried out to God, saying, “...Why have you brought all this trouble on your own people, Lord? Why did you send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh as your spokesman, he has been even more brutal to your people. And you have done nothing to rescue them!” (vv. 22, 23). Yet the Lord had warned Moses that Pharaoh would not agree until the pressure had become unbearable.

The same thing happens today when people complain about how bad things are with the economy, the media, the government, and immorality. Yet Jesus warned us that the closer it gets to His return, the more this world would resemble the days of Noah and Lot.

Noah was the only righteous man alive in his generation, and there were only ten righteous people where Lot lived. Today's difficult conditions aren't nearly as desperate as theirs were. Jesus warned that in this dark world, there would be trouble. Yet He instructed us to remain untroubled because He has overcome the world (John 16:33)! How do we obey that divine command? By sinking our teeth into God's promises like never before.

Moses was unwise to accuse God of doing “nothing” just because he didn't see immediate results. In the same way, what we see or don't see in the natural is never an indication of whether God is working. He always does what He promises.

“God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?” (Numbers 23:19).

God is always at work bringing to pass what He has declared, but the kingdom of darkness is resistant. Daniel provides us with insight into what is taking place when we don't see immediate change:

“But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia” (Daniel 10:13).

We are in a spiritual battle that our natural eyes are unable to see. While the battle is raging, we must stand our ground in faith, believing God will do just what He promised.

you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say” (v. 12).

After Moses delivered God's message, notice Pharaoh's reaction: “Is that so?” retorted Pharaoh. “And who is the Lord? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2). Outraged at Moses' request, Pharaoh punished the Hebrews by eliminating the straw needed to make bricks, only increasing their grueling burden. This then angered the Hebrews toward Moses, causing them to turn against him.



THE LORD IGNORED MOSES' SHORTCOMINGS, INADEQUACIES, AND IMPERFECTIONS AND SIMPLY RESPONDED,

'NOW GO! I WILL BE WITH YOU AS YOU SPEAK, AND I WILL INSTRUCT YOU IN WHAT TO SAY.'



WE NEED TO STOMP OUR FOOT AND MAKE THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS OBEY GOD'S WORD! JESUS SAID, "WHATEVER YOU FORBID ON EARTH WILL BE FORBIDDEN IN HEAVEN...."

"Therefore put on God's complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all the crisis demands, to stand [firmly in your place]" (Ephesians 6:13 *AMP*).

The prophet Elisha viewed this spiritual resistance from a completely different perspective— through the eye of faith! When the Syrians were at war with Israel, the Lord would reveal their plans to the prophet. Time and again, Elisha warned Israel's king of the Syrians' strategies, thereby avoiding attack. So accurate was this information that the king of Syria assumed there was a secret informant among them. When the king discovered it was Elisha warning Israel, he sent his army to seize the prophet.

One morning when Elisha's servant, Gehazi, went outside, he saw troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. Panic hit Gehazi as he related the desperate scene to Elisha. But the prophet merely prayed that Gehazi's eyes would be opened to see — and when Gehazi looked up, he saw that the hillside was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

There is more going on in the unseen realm than we realize!

With that in mind, let's go back to Moses and notice how he and Aaron are described in Exodus 6:27 (*NLT*): "They are the ones who went to Pharaoh to ask permission to lead the people from the land of Egypt." God didn't tell Moses and Aaron to ask permission, He told them to demand it. There is a huge difference in the attitude, posture, and tone of someone asking permission versus someone demanding it. Moses stood before Pharaoh with little or no confidence in what he asked. As a result, Pharaoh put an even greater burden on the Hebrews than before.

Although Moses didn't see the Lord at work, he heard God's response to his

accusation that He had done nothing to rescue His people (Exodus 5:23): "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Pay close attention to this. I will make you seem like God to Pharaoh...'" (Exodus 7:1). Moses' focus on his own inability caused him to lack the confidence that God would do what

He said. I can imagine God's finger pointed in Moses' face when He spoke those powerful words: "...I will make you seem like God to Pharaoh..." (7:1). What a statement! Demonic forces are unable to tell the difference between our voice and God's voice when we speak what He tells us to speak — so they must obey.

If you ask the enemy to give you what God has promised, he'll slap you down with an unbearable burden, hoping to silence you forever! God didn't tell us to ask permission, He said to demand.

Smith Wigglesworth tells about a woman whose dog followed her to the bus stop. Along the way she would turn to the dog saying, "Go home, little doggie," but the dog would just wag its tail and keep following her. This happened several times until the bus arrived, at which time she turned to the dog, stomped her foot, and said: "Get!" At her command of authority, the dog immediately turned around and ran home.

We need to stop acting like that woman did before the bus ever arrived at the bus stop. It does absolutely no good at all to tell the devil, "Please leave me alone." We need to stomp our foot and make the kingdom of darkness obey God's Word! Jesus said, "Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven" (Matthew 18:18 *Phillips*).

Because Pharaoh refused to obey God, Egypt suffered one dreadful plague



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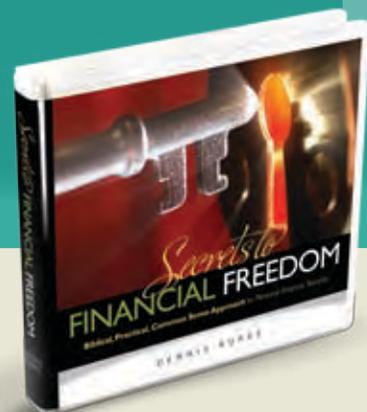
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continued from pg. 7

after another. But notice what God said about His people: “But it will be very different in the land of Goshen where the Israelites live.... I will make a distinction between your people and my people...” (Exodus 8:22, 23). God has always intended that there would be a clear distinction between His people and others. While things get darker in the world, the light should shine on God’s people, just like it did in the land of Goshen!

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With each of the ten plagues that Egypt suffered, the people of God were spared. While plagues of flies, boils, hail, and death were widespread in Egypt, God promised, “But among the Israelites it will be so peaceful that not even a dog will bark. Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites” (Exodus 11:7).

In the most distressful situations — even life-threatening situations — the Lord will give His people peace and protection. Psalm 91:7 promises, “Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you.” Even when the threat of death is at hand, you can use your God-given authority to change the situation.

Too often Christians resist the kingdom of darkness only until the pressure is removed, allowing the attack to return. David wasn’t that way! Notice his attitude: “I chased my enemies and caught them; I did not stop until they were conquered. I struck them down so they could not get up; they fell beneath my feet. You have armed me with strength for the battle; you have subdued my enemies under my feet. You placed my foot on their necks.... I ground them as fine as dust in the wind. I swept them into the gutter like dirt” (Psalm 18:37–40,42).

This is the attitude of someone who knows that God is on his side! It’s the tone of someone who knows when he speaks, it sounds like God to the enemy. It’s the posture of someone who is confident that God’s Word will not return without accomplishing what it intends!

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