

# Insights

DENNIS BURKE MINISTRIES

MAY / JUNE 2015

The Way to a New Life



STOP  
THE  
LITTLE

# FOXES



Practical tools to strengthen every relationship

CAPTURE THE FAITH OF MARTHA:

God can turn around any situation, no matter why it didn't work.



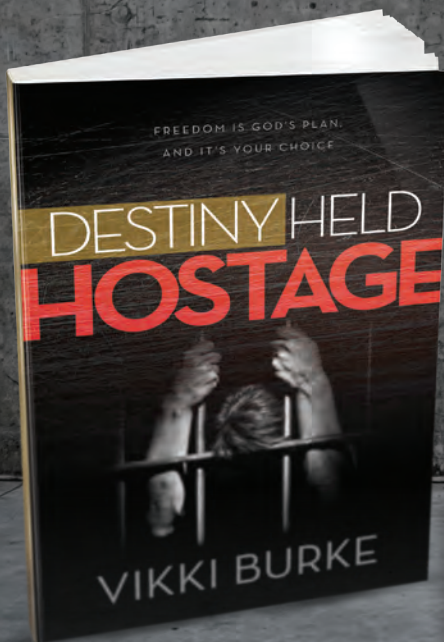
I ordered *[Destiny Held Hostage]* before it was ready for release due to the awesome changes in my life since I read *Some Days You Dance* and since my husband and I started reading the daily devotionals. This book is also life changing and such a wonderful teaching book. YOU WILL LOVE IT!!! You won't be able to put it down."

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STOP THE LITTLE

# FOXES

IN YOUR  
RELATIONSHIPS

by Dr. Dennis Burke







Solomon was a very wise old man when he wrote the Song of Solomon in the Bible. Tucked away in this book is a short phrase that contains a key secret to success: “...the little foxes that spoil the vines...” (Song of Solomon 2:14).



“  
...more spiritually minded people lose their way as a result of their daily relational conflicts or failures than any other single thing.”

Very often the access point that drains our spiritual momentum comes from the most common or familiar places — the “little foxes.” In fact, more spiritually minded people lose their way as a result of their daily relational conflicts or failures than any other single thing. Consistently translating the spiritual truths in God’s Word into our day-to-day, emotion-filled existence is not always easy.

To close the door to this kind of vulnerability, there are certainly a multitude of issues that would be important to address. Our day-to-day personal relationships can be some of our greatest challenges to manage. Juggling a variety of roles, such as a spouse, parent, coworker, and employee, can stretch our relational skills to the limit.

How we conduct ourselves with the people in our lives many times is like a window into our own soul. The value, respect, love, and interest we have for someone is expressed as much in how we say things as in the content of what we say. In fact, sometimes the person we’re talking to can’t even *hear* what we’re saying because of *how* we are saying it!

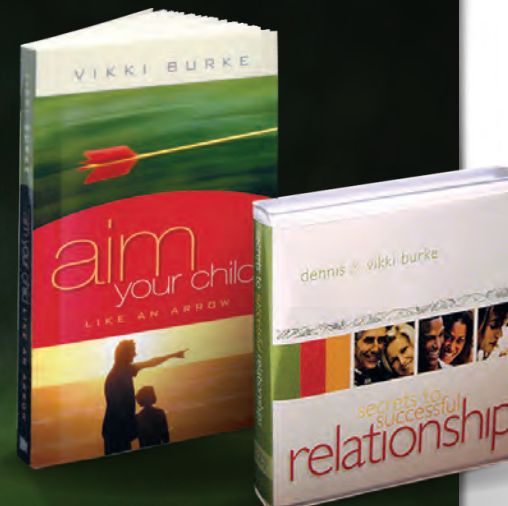
What we say matters — but *how* we say it also matters. If we’re not expressing the love we have for someone, it remains inoperative within us and doesn’t impact that relationship. It just isn’t enough to *have* love — love must also be spoken and expressed.

When we really love someone, we will find out what truly expresses love to him or her.

When I first married Vikki, I was so in love and wanted her to know it in every way. So I decided to save what money I could and buy her a beautiful piece of jewelry. My mother loved jewelry, and I was sure Vikki would love a beautiful ring. So over the next year, I worked on saving \$5.00 from my meager income as a youth minister. All year I set aside money till I had saved the full amount I needed. Then I found the ring — a gold ring with a beautiful garnet stone.

I proudly gave that ring to Vikki as a special gift, and she did love it and wear it from time to time. But as time passed, I realized that I hadn’t seen the ring for a long time. So I saved up and bought a different ring with a different color stone. My mother owned jewelry that matched everything, so I was sure Vikki would love having rings to match different-colored outfits.

Each time I gave my wife a new piece of jewelry, she thanked me and wore it — for a little while. But I didn’t see her wearing much of this beautiful jewelry. In fact, most of the time, she didn’t have *any* jewelry on



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Complaining and criticizing can become habits, and our society is addicted to these in particular.



except for her wedding ring.

It was years before I discovered that Vikki didn't really like to wear a lot of jewelry. I had never bothered to ask what she liked. I just gave what I *thought* she would like. Of course, she appreciated the gift, but it wasn't communicating my love to her in the way I wanted.

As you can imagine, this discovery has now saved me untold thousands of dollars. I'm grateful to have found out that Vikki didn't need me to give her jewelry in order for her to feel loved. By paying more attention to what does communicate love to her, I've been far more successful at showing my love as I've intended.

The point is to know that what we're expressing is truly connecting with a person the way we are intending. It's also important to know that although we can't control how people *bear* what we say, we *can* control the way we say it.

## The Power of Encouragement

It requires a sincere respect and interest in people to develop the skill of compliments and encouragement. People are far more motivated by being built up with



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- » Find out how to stir up the grace-gift within
- » Discover the systems and laws of His grace
- » Learn how you can access a constant download of power



encouragement than by being torn down with criticism and complaints.

If you want to influence someone toward a positive change, take the approach that God has used for centuries — focus on who that person can be rather than what he has failed to do. In John 3:17, Jesus said, “For God did not send His Son into the world to *condemn* the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Jesus sees us for who we are, not for what we have done. He came to build up people and deliver them. Although none of us *is* the Deliverer, we are all capable of building up people — and one of our greatest tools to empower people is our encouragement.

There is a great hidden hero found in the book of Acts. His name is Barnabas, and in Acts 4:36, he is called “the son of encouragement.” Barnabas was known as an encourager and was later used by God to bring the Apostle Paul into the ministry God had called him into. Without Barnabas and his encouragement, we may not have had Paul's ministry.

At the other end of the spectrum is *discouragement*. Experts have agreed that frequently bringing up a child's mistakes from the past will result in filling that child with a deep sense of insecurity. In fact, this is also true for adults. Pointing to a person's past failures is not only condemning but destructive.

A negative environment of fault-finding can be deeply discouraging and very damaging. No one feels comfortable with someone who, at any moment, may bring up a past failure or bad decision. These emotional barbs undermine trust and intimacy, shutting down the very thing we crave in a relationship — a sense of security and respect. If we don't feel like we can talk to someone without wondering if it will produce a “zinger” about our past failures or mistakes, we can't really trust that person.

Millions of people go to bed each night craving a simple word of encouragement. How much richer life is when we fill our conversations with uplifting encouragement! It is the Holy Spirit's job to correct

and direct. It is ours to build up people and let His love flow through us.

Remember this: *There is nothing that can conquer us when we have conquered ourselves.*

Our real assignment is to let the Holy Spirit empower us to conquer ourselves.

There is another little fox that is a relationship slayer and is as common as sliced bread. The Apostle Paul addressed it in Philippians 2:14 (*NLT*): “Do everything without complaining and arguing.” The *Message* bible says it this way: “Do everything readily and cheerfully — no bickering, no second-guessing allowed!”

Complaining and criticizing can become habits, and our society is addicted to these in particular. This character trait can develop in a person from bad experiences or from their environment. Often negative parents will teach their children to see life from *their* negative outlook. It can sometimes take a child a lifetime to overcome that destructive mindset — and some *never* do.

For a person caught up in this negative habit, criticism starts pouring out of his or her mouth at the mere mention of someone's name. Immediately there is a negative comment or a story of how she or he did wrong.

But God's Word exhorts us to develop a different habit — to do everything without grumbling, debating, or challenging!

Benjamin Franklin said, “Any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain — and most fools do.” His jaded insight points to an important principle: Your perspective or point of view will determine your ability to influence people.

All of us see things we don't like or we disagree with in other people's lives. But it takes effort to see past the negative and discover the qualities in people that are to truly appreciate and value. When people are surrounded by others' negative opinions about themselves, a positive word is like a drink of cool water on a hot day.

So how is your point of view? Typically negative? Is it your first tendency to find the downside of a situation? You may want to take a good look at this “little fox” so it doesn't continue to “spoil the vines” and the good fruit God is growing inside you!

\*Unless otherwise indicated, scripture references are taken from the *New King James* version.



*don't talk yourself out of a miracle.*



BY VIKKI BURKE

Sometimes when life isn't going our way, we can begin to wonder, *How can this situation ever work out?*

That's when we are in danger of settling for what's happened in the past and for where we are now in life. It can lead to wrong thinking— thinking that says, *It just wasn't meant to be.* Or something like, *Others get all the breaks, but it never seems to work out for me.* That's a dangerous place to be. That kind of attitude will put us in a spiritually neutral place or can even set us on a downward spiral.

*Jesus can see what we can't see.*

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we must  
have the  
faith of

martha



A couple of Jesus' friends faced one of these difficult situations, and after a while, the difficult situation began to look hopeless. Mary and Martha had a brother named Lazarus who had fallen ill and seemed to be getting worse instead of better. The sisters knew Jesus was in a nearby town, so they sent a messenger to tell Him that His friend, Lazarus, was very ill. They just knew Jesus would come after He heard what was happening. They waited and waited for Him, but He didn't show up. Four days had passed since the messenger was sent, but Jesus never arrived. Finally Lazarus died. Their worst nightmare had come true.

Martha and Mary must have been sorely tempted to get angry with Jesus. They had seen the miracles He had performed, so they knew that Jesus could have healed Lazarus if He had only been there before their brother died. Finally, after it seemed to be too late, Jesus showed up.

Have you ever had the feeling that God was too late? That's exactly how Martha felt. In fact, she said, "...Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."<sup>1</sup> She must have felt quite confused. After all, she and her brother and sister were very close friends of Jesus. The least a friend could do was show up during a crisis, right?

But Martha didn't get angry and explode at Jesus. Instead, she said something very significant that we would do well to learn from. She said, "...If only you had been here...but even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."<sup>2</sup> In essence, Martha was saying, "I don't see a way to turn this around, but I know You can see what I *can't* see."

When it looks like things just *can't* turn around in our world, we need to adopt the attitude Martha had. Even in the face of what looked impossible to her, she kept the door of possibility open so God could move. She expressed her faith this way:

"I know that even *now* God is able!" She may have felt like she was hanging by a thread, but she kept her faith active.

Sometimes it can look like the odds are against you in your situation. That's when you have to say as Martha did, "Even now, Lord, You can turn it around!" Your marriage may be threatened, or perhaps an addiction has been passed down from past generations. Or maybe the baby you've always wanted just doesn't seem like a possibility. Whatever circumstance you're facing, begin to have faith like Martha and say to the Lord: "God, *You* have the final say! Not the doctor. Not my boss. Not my DNA. Although *I* don't see a way, I know *You are the "Waymaker"!*

Just don't give up on your dreams! God is more than able to give you the desires of your heart. He can turn *any* situation around! That's His specialty!

Get a fresh, new look at the situation. Adopt the attitude that this is a new day"— another opportunity to start fresh! Begin to believe that even now God can turn your situation around for you — no matter *what* the experts may say about the situation. God can make something wonderful happen when everything looks hopeless.

I've experienced God's power to turn things around countless times and in a variety of circumstances — in situations where I needed healing or a financial breakthrough, and even in the death of a loved one. Just when I thought it was all over, the Holy Spirit would speak something to me that was life-changing. His faithfulness to help me see as *He* saw my situation was so valuable in adjusting my perspective.

Sometimes we need to look from God's vantage point instead of our own. Things look very different from His higher, panoramic view.

Situations usually don't change overnight, but if we'll get persistent about speaking what *God* says and if we'll *refuse* to give up, He will show up with something that salvages an otherwise hopeless condition.

<sup>1</sup>John 11:21

<sup>2</sup>John 11:21-22



God will  
meet us at  
the point  
of our  
expectation.



Then He commanded,  
 “Roll the stone aside....”

If we don't expect to overcome in life, then we won't. We have to dare to believe like Martha!

Here's something else to remember if we want to see our situation turned around: *We can use our words to dispatch God's mighty angels.* God has given us them to work on our behalf.<sup>3</sup> But too often we don't avail ourselves of what He has provided, and we let Heaven's answer just sit idly by. No wonder things appear hopeless! We have to become proficient in utilizing *all* of God's provisions.

We don't have to live with the diseases associated with our family heritage. We can be the one family member who stops the chain of events forevermore. We can put an end to heart disease, depression, poverty, addiction, or anything else that runs in our family. Just because something has been passed down for generations doesn't mean *we* have to accept it! Instead, we can become the one who puts an end to it *once and for all*. God has raised us up to make a difference in life! This is one mission we can sink our teeth into. We can stop any past problems from continuing into future generations.

*God will meet us at the point of our expectation.* If we don't expect to overcome in life, then we won't. We have to dare to believe like Martha! A report may say our situation is impossible, but despite how it looks, we can declare with the Martha-kind-of-faith, “I know God's power is greater than *any* expert opinion,” or, “I believe that my dream *can* come true!”

When the children of Israel had come to a dead end at the Red Sea

and Pharaoh's army was hot on their trail, Moses raised his staff and the sea parted. All odds were against Abram having a baby; he was far too old. But in essence, Abram said, “Even now, Lord, You can make a way where it appears impossible.” Abram refused to look at the inability of his body, and then one day when he was *ninety-nine* years old, he became a daddy!

We know God is able to do the impossible, but when it doesn't happen instantly, what will we do? Do we accept the situation as it is? Or do we keep the “possibility door” open like Martha?

If Martha had gotten bitter, she would have missed a miracle. In the same way, we must give God the opening to do the supernatural. If we close the door and say, “That's it — it's over,” we tie His hands.

This is the question: Can we keep an “all-things-are-possible” attitude when circumstances look otherwise? Even when we don't understand what's going on, can we keep resisting discouragement and steadfastly believe that God *will* redeem the situation? When a difficult situation seems to drag on and on, it can be our attitude that determines the outcome.

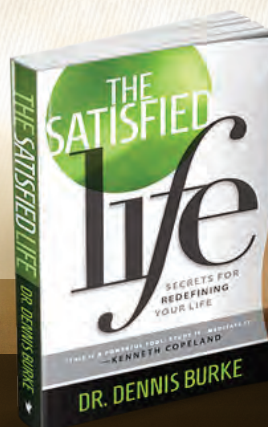
When our hopes or dreams have died, it does *not* necessarily mean the situation is hopeless. Look what happened after Lazarus died!

Jesus asked to be taken to the place where Lazarus was buried. Then He commanded, “Roll the stone aside....”<sup>4</sup> Of course, Martha

<sup>4</sup>John 11:39

<sup>3</sup>Hebrews 1:14

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**Some Days You Dance**  
 by Vikki Burke  
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protested, knowing that her brother's body would stink.

Quite often we don't want to return to deal with stinky stuff, but it may very well be what we need to do — the bankruptcy, the divorce, or the failed business. God may or may not ask us to return to the place we quit believing so we can recover it. But regardless, we must hold fast to what Jesus said: "...I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying."<sup>5</sup>

I'll never forget when Jessica was about five years old and I had been speaking to a beautiful, old oak tree that was starting to die. Every time we came home, I spoke to that tree. But then one day I called a tree service to come remove it.

<sup>5</sup>John 11:25

That day when we drove up to the house, Jessica asked, "Why is that man cutting down the tree that will live and not die?" I had to laugh at her choice of words, but it was a good question. It looked like failure. But as soon as that tree was gone, dozens of trees began to grow *rapidly* in its place! Now there are many trees there.

God can turn around any situation, no matter *why* it didn't work. He knows how to resurrect dead things and multiply them to boot! So don't talk yourself out of your miracle. And don't let others talk you out of it either! Keep believing "... all things are possible to him who believes."<sup>6</sup> As you keep doing what you know to do, God will be faithful to do what you can't!

<sup>6</sup>Mark 9:23

\*All scriptures are taken from the *New Living Translation*.



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dennis & vikki burke

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Faith Life Now Church | 2407 Beech Rd. Johnstown, OH 43031  
740-964-7400

**May 17**  
Living Word Christian Center  
7600 W. Roosevelt Rd. | Forest Park, IL 60130 | 708-697-5000

**May 31**  
The Word Church of Lloydminster  
1802 49th Ave. | Lloydminster, SASK S9V 1T2 Canada | 306-825-9673

**June 7-8**  
Calvary Light Christian Center  
1101 N. Lakme Ave. | Wilmington, CA 90744 | 310-830-3043

**June 7** (pm only)  
The Rock | 99 E. Orangethorpe Ave.  
Anaheim, CA 92801 | 714-526-8233

**June 28**  
Living Word Bible Church | 320 E Brown Rd. | Mesa, AZ 85213  
480-964-4463

**July 19-21**  
Praise Center Church | 420 West Murray Ave. | Visalia, CA 93291  
559-733-2744

**July 26**  
Stonegate Faith Center | 130 M St. Bedford, IN 47421 | 812-279-6670

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