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Insights

The Way to a New Life
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IS YOUR FAITH IN WHAT YOU **DO**—OR IN WHAT **HAS BEEN DONE?**

A nagging question lingers in the minds of many Christians: Am I doing enough right things for God to experience His blessings and to have Him get personally involved in my life?

We often feel more like wishful thinkers than confident followers when it comes to receiving the promises found in God's Word. But by looking back to the people who obeyed God as He led and blessed them, we can discover one of the greatest truths in the Bible: because we are children of the Most High, we ARE blessed, and the work needed to achieve that blessing is already finished!

It was never God's idea for Israel to wander in the wilderness for forty years. The distance from Egypt to the border of the land God sent them to possess could have been covered in weeks rather than years.

During the Israelites' journey throughout those long years, God led them in a limited way. Their own willingness to walk with God determined how far they would enter into the victories

He was ready to provide. They were following God, yet they weren't completely willing to trust Him. Instead of obeying with willing hearts, they often complained about a multitude of things.

When Moses sent twelve men of Israel to spy out the land of Canaan, they all witnessed the same sights. They saw a land of abundance, the rich fruit that the land produced, and the people who lived there. Yet ten of the twelve spies came back only with a report of the dangers. They described how the giants perceived them as grasshoppers—even though the ten spies had never spoken to one giant to find that out! The bad report of these ten men convinced the multitudes listening to them, melting any courage the people might have had in their hearts.

Only two of the twelve men, Joshua and Caleb, returned with a bold report of faith, declaring that they were all able to enter the Promised Land and successfully take possession of it. These two men had seen the same challenges in the land that the ten spies had seen, but they didn't perceive those challenges the same way. Joshua and Caleb saw obstacles in light of what they believed, taking God at His Word that He would enable them to overcome any enemy.

In the same way, God expects us to see the benefits He has provided and recognize that any obstacle or giant we may be facing cannot stop us. But to do this, we must develop more confidence in His way of getting things done than in our own efforts to change things.

This is where real trust in God begins. Trust that is aggressive rather than passive will press into God's blessing and provision rather than wait for it to come. In other words, we're not waiting for God to do something—anything—to change our current situation. Instead, we're discovering God's will in His Word as it applies to the specific situation we're facing. We choose to make it truth to us, even in the face of contradicting evidence.

Think of how the land appeared to those twelve men sent to spy it out. Certainly there were problems ahead if the Israelites entered the land to possess it—yet God called it the land of rest and promise. From God's perspective, the problems Israel would face paled when compared to the supernatural provision He had planned for them.

Hebrews 4:1-3 talks about this divine perspective.

“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do

enter that rest, as He has said: ‘So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,’ although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”

What would the spies' report about the land have been if all twelve had mixed faith with what they had heard from God? All of the spies would have told the people the same thing: that Israel was well able to take the land right then. But the people didn't enter the land because they listened to the ten



“YOUR PART IS TO **BELIEVE YOU RECEIVE....** JESUS TOLD JAIRUS, ‘...DO NOT BE AFRAID, ONLY BELIEVE...’”

spies who refused to see the land or themselves according to the light God had given them.

Notice again what Hebrews says about us: “For we who have believed do enter that rest...” (v. 3). True believing will move us out of the unsettled and confusing position of questioning and into a confident place of repose. The work of God's Kingdom is first to believe and then to actively possess the promise by acting on what we believe.

Notice also in this verse that God said the works were finished before anyone ever started working—before the foundation of the world.

Think about this: Jesus has already finished providing for you before you ever have a need. As strange as that seems, His work is finished for you to receive rightstanding, rest, and provision.

Hebrews 4:9-10 provides another key to entering the rest of faith: “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”

Entering into God's rest and provision requires that you stop your own works, just as God did. When did God stop His work? This is a reference all the way back to the time of creation itself. For six days God created, and at the end of each day, He saw that all He had done was good. Then on the seventh day, He rested.

“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Genesis 2:1-3).

God rested on the seventh day because He was finished creating. He had done all He desired, and it was all good. He

then blessed the seventh day.

How does this truth affect you?

You enter into rest when you stop trying to measure up through your works so you can receive from God. He said to simply believe—to mix faith with what has already been done for you.

The finished work of Jesus has completely resolved the sin and separation problem. When you come into Christ, you are no longer separated from God; now you are indwelt by Him. When you step out of sin and the sinner's way of thinking, you step into God's blessing.

The Sabbath is no longer a specific day. It has now become our way of life as we cease from our own work and rest in His work of redemption, completed on our behalf. It is finished, and we are now complete in Him.

Colossians 2:9-10 tells us the result of our redemption: "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." In Colossians 1:12, we see further what redemption has done for us: "Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light."

God has not only made you complete in Him, but He has also qualified you to partake of all the inheritance He has provided for any of His people. What He has done for one, He has done for you!

Your part is to believe you receive. Abraham was counted righteous because he believed (Galatians 3:6). Jesus told Jairus, "...Do not be afraid, only believe..." (Luke 8:50).

Faith in Jesus' finished work makes Him your Sabbath. By faith you enter into His rest and the blessing of all He has completed for you.

Notice what Jesus said in John 5:17: "...My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." When you look back to Jesus' earthly ministry, you see that He was restoring to us what sin had stolen from us. He and His Father were continually at work to forever establish the plan of redemption.

Although God rested on the seventh day of creation, He



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didn't rest for long. Once sin entered Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden, God went back to work, working His plan until Jesus finished the work. As a result, Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father, and we are seated with Him, having entered His finished work by believing.

When we accept the idea that we have to do enough to become worthy of Jesus' finished work, we put our faith in ourselves above Him. But the truth is, we are forgiven; sin is no longer imputed. Our repentance doesn't cause God to forgive us; it brings His forgiveness, freedom, and power into our lives.

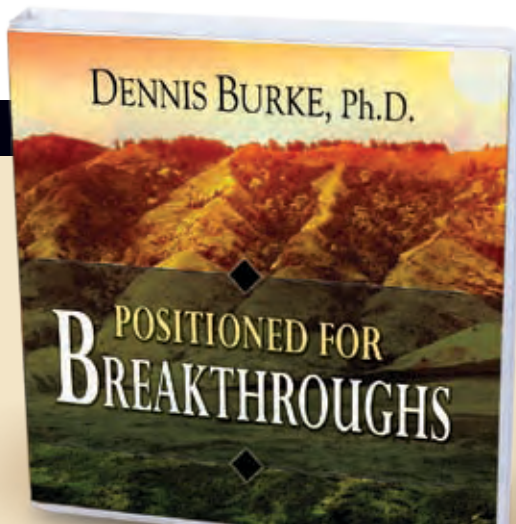
With all the work being done by Jesus, what must we do? Does this mean we can do nothing at all and still enjoy the fullness of His blessing?

If you miss this next point, you will miss it all!

Faith and believing are not passive in nature, but rather *active* and *alive*. God has given all of us specific assignments and callings. Every one of us is assigned to active duty. We don't fulfill our divine assignments to *obtain* a right place or blessing from God; rather, we do so to *reveal* the blessing and righteousness that is already ours. God wants His righteousness and His goodness to be seen by people as *we reflect His nature in our lives*.

Think of it this way: What you **do** is the result of the assignments God has given you to fulfill as you follow His plan for your life. You have the capacity to finish your **do** because of what Jesus has **done**. Your **do** is inside of what is **done**. When you receive all He has **done**—you can rest as you enter your **do** (assignment). This means you are not working to enter God's blessing—you are already *in* His blessing and can therefore work *His* works.

The more you receive a revelation of that truth, the more you will rest in God as you fulfill His assignments and plans. You cannot attain what Jesus did for you by what you do. You can only receive what's been done for you by faith. Only then can you possess your promised land as you rest in God's great love and provision for you!



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Yocheved
SAVING A PRINCE

Think about Moses' mother, who hid her son when the king ordered all newborn Hebrew boys to be thrown into the Nile to prevent the Hebrew population from outnumbering the Egyptians.

Moses
KNOWING GOD
INTIMATELY

Then there was Moses, who wasn't satisfied to see the miracles God performed for the children of Israel; instead, Moses yearned to know the ways of God personally.

Consider the courage of Rahab, who provided a safe haven to Hebrew spies—a risk that would have brought certain death if she'd been caught by the authorities.

Rahab
RISKING CERTAIN
DEATH

David
SLAYING GIANT
AND BEAST

What about the seventeen-year-old shepherd boy David, who killed both a lion and a bear when the beasts attacked his flock?

Joseph
RESERVING
GREAT POWER
FOR MERCY

And what inner strength Joseph revealed when he refused to retaliate against those who had betrayed him, even though he had the power and authority to do so!

Our faith is strengthened as we study these outstanding men and women who, despite all opposition, confronted impossibilities and resisted difficulties. Their testimonies encourage us to join the ranks of those who refuse to accept anything less than what God has promised. They dare us to look at our own situations from a totally different perspective—from God’s perspective.

Whenever we limit ourselves to our own point of view, we become a hindrance to God’s plan. As Jesus said, “...You stand right in my path, Peter, when you look at things from man’s point of view and not from God’s” (Matthew 16:23 *Phillips*).

Nehemiah is a great example of a man who didn’t look at things from man’s standpoint. When Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, he wept. His heart was so troubled that he prayed and fasted over the condition of God’s beloved city. He took the situation so seriously that he repented on behalf of the sins of God’s people.

Then Nehemiah reminded God of His promise to them. As this man of God prayed, a desire to rebuild Jerusalem’s neglected walls captured his heart.

But if Nehemiah were to carry out this mission, the king would have to grant him a leave of absence from his service. Nehemiah prayed, “O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honoring you. Please grant me success now as I go to ask the king for a great favor. Put it into his heart to be kind to me” (Nehemiah 1:11). And guess what? The king granted Nehemiah’s request because the hand of the Lord was upon this man whom He had called to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls.

As Nehemiah began fulfilling his divine mandate to restore the walls of the city, his enemies didn’t sit in silence. In fact, they flew into a rage, mocking and accusing Nehemiah as they tried to hinder the work in any way possible. They jeered,

“...What does this bunch of poor, feeble Jews think they are doing? Do they think they can build the wall in a single day if they offer enough sacrifices? Look at those charred stone they are pulling out of the rubbish and using again!” (Nehemiah 4:2).

Does that mocking attitude sound vaguely familiar? Give these words a slightly different twist to fit your particular situation, and you’ll recognize that these are familiar words of intimidation often spoken toward God’s people.

What did Nehemiah do in response to this intimidation? He simply prayed and continued to oversee the rebuilding of the city walls. When Nehemiah’s enemies threatened those

Nehemiah was **driven by his own inner passion** to correct the heartbreaking condition of God’s city. This **burning passion ignited a fire** within him that **could not be quenched** by weariness, mockery, or threats.



working on the wall, he told them, “...You know you are lying. There is no truth in any part of your story” (Nehemiah 6:8). Relating the incident later, Nehemiah explained, “They were just trying to intimidate us, imagining that they could break our resolve and stop the work. So I prayed for strength to continue the work” (v. 9).

Nehemiah didn’t allow anything to discourage or stop him, but those who worked with him to rebuild the walls were another story. These people weren’t cut out of the same mold as Nehemiah. When they got tired, they complained. When they heard the threats of the enemy, they were gripped with fear.

But Nehemiah refused to consider his weariness or his enemies’ threats as long as the work was unfinished. He never brought up the fact that he lacked the qualifications for rebuilding the wall. Nehemiah was a governor, not a carpenter. Although he lacked the natural skill of a builder, it didn’t stop him from stepping out of his natural ability and into the supernatural ability of God!



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Instead of becoming tired and fearful, Nehemiah was driven by his own inner passion to correct the heartbreaking condition of God's city. This burning passion ignited a fire within him that could not be quenched by weariness, mockery, or threats.

Too many Christians complain about the condition of our nation's government, schools, or whatever else they feel like criticizing. But instead of complaining, they could follow Nehemiah's example by choosing to do their part to change the situation through the power and favor of God—even if they themselves lack the natural ability to effect the needed change.

If Nehemiah's passion hasn't yet challenged your faith, wait until you see what he did next!

For the 12 years that Nehemiah was Governor of Judah, he refused to draw on the food allowance provided for governors. The former governors laid heavy burdens on the people by demanding food, wine, and silver from them. Even the governor's assistants took advantage of the people. But Nehemiah refused what every other governor received, using his own financial supply to feed the Jewish leaders and notable visitors who sat at his table while he worked on the wall!

"I asked for nothing, even though I regularly fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from other lands! The provisions I paid for each day included one ox, six choice sheep or goats, and a large number of poultry. And every ten days we needed a large supply of all kinds of wine. Yet I refused to claim the governor's food allowance because the people already carried a heavy burden" (Nehemiah 5:17,18).

What a man! Although Nehemiah was granted personal provisions to sustain him while he worked to restore the wall around Jerusalem, he refused to use that provision. Instead, he fed everyone from his own personal wealth for the duration of the rebuilding project.

This was no small task! It took 52 days to rebuild the wall. Thus, for nearly two months, Nehemiah fed 150 officers and their guests at his own personal expense! These are not the actions of someone content with the status quo. Nehemiah was more interested in the work of God and the burden that had been placed on the people than his own bank account!

The Church of Jesus Christ could benefit from a lot more men and women like Nehemiah! God needs more believers who are so in touch with the condition of His people that they are willing to fast and pray, repent on behalf of the sins of others, and spend whatever amount of money necessary to get the job done!

Of course, there are many who have the desire to do what Nehemiah did but who lack the finances. They earn just enough to help their family "get by" but have nothing left over.

That's why it's so vitally important to hear biblical prosperity preached on a regular basis. So often those with financial problems are the ones who claim that prosperity is emphasized too much. These voices of cynicism accuse those who teach on prosperity of trying to get their money.

But faith for financial prosperity only comes by hearing what God says about it. Instead of complaining, you can be one who joins the ranks of the men and women who refuse to live in lack and press into God's promise to bless them abundantly.

It took Nehemiah a great deal of money to feed more than 150 people for 52 days. He was able to do so only because he had plenty to share with others.

Nehemiah wasn't the only one in the Bible who had that testimony. The Good Samaritan was another wealthy man the Lord used to help restore someone in need.

Upcoming Meetings

Nov. 2

Grace Church
Broken Arrow, OK | (918) 252-1611

Nov. 11-18

Parkway Church
Kambah, Australian Capital Territory | Australia

Nov. 19-20

Dream Centre
Ashmore, Gold Coast, Queensland | Australia

Nov. 23

Living Word Faith Ministries (AM Service)
Eight Mile Plains, Brisbane, Queensland | Australia

Nov. 23

Impact Ministries (PM Service)
Ashmore, Gold Coast, Queensland | Australia

Dec. 6

Heritage of Faith Christian Center (Vikki Burke)
Crowley, TX | (817) 297-2243

Jan. 4-5

River of Life
Chattanooga, TN | (706) 891-2120

Jan. 20-22

KCM Ministers Conference
Newark, TX

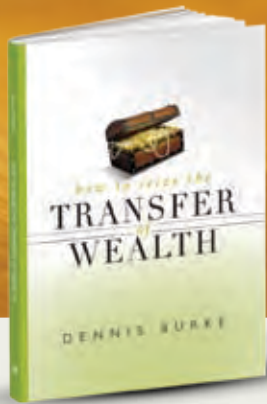
Jan. 25

New Life Family Fellowship
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When the Good Samaritan came across an injured man lying along the road, he first bandaged the man's wounds; then he placed the unconscious man on his donkey and took him to an inn. The next day the Samaritan paid the innkeeper and said, "...Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I'll pay you the next time I'm here" (Luke 10:35).

Obviously, the innkeeper knew that the Good Samaritan was financially able to fulfill his commitment. For one thing, this Samaritan rode a donkey at a time when most people walked. But what if the Good Samaritan had been living from paycheck to paycheck? Regardless of his desire to help the injured man, his desire would have gone unfulfilled.

Christians who are struggling financially often think that asking the Lord to bless them financially sounds selfish or greedy. To many of these Christians, it sounds more godly and humble to be poor. But this kind of thinking isn't humble. In fact, it's actually very selfish.

When all you want is enough for your family, your limited desire hinders you from helping others when they're in need, even if the Lord asks you to do so. But if you had more than what it takes to run your household, you could actually become a channel of the Lord's provision to others in need. Your family could actually become known as a "distribution center" for the Kingdom of God. Now, that sounds like the right kind of discontent with the status quo!

God needs people who will be bold enough to press for more than just enough to meet their own needs—people who desire to become distribution centers for the Lord, ready and able to help wherever He calls on them. As Romans 12:13 says, "When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always

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be eager to practice hospitality." That's what Nehemiah did.

When the wall was finally finished, Nehemiah reflected on the goodness of God and how often He'd had mercy on them. "For forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out, and their feet did not swell!" (Nehemiah 9:21).

Yet despite God's goodness, His people had repeated a cycle of disobedience, misery, and repentance over and over again. As a result of Israel's continued disobedience, Nehemiah said: "So now today we are slaves here in the land of plenty that you gave to our ancestors! We are slaves among all this abundance" (v. 36).

Doesn't this sound all too familiar? Nehemiah's statement could be a commentary on the condition of God's people today! Even though God has promised to bless His people with abundance, many still live as slaves to lack among all this abundance. What a tragedy!

But you don't have to count yourself among that number. Instead, you can follow Nehemiah's example. Regardless of your own natural limitations, choose to see your situation from God's perspective and to rise above a lifestyle of mediocrity and lack. As you press beyond your own need into a life of abundance, there is no limit to what you can do to bless others and impact God's Kingdom!

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