

DENNIS BURKE MINISTRIES

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Insights

The Way to a New Life

“ Before we can effectively influence the things that confront us, we must first subdue the things within us. ”

Dennis Burke

Don't be defined by the

When we get stuck in a cycle of reliving the past, we become burdened down by the

EXCESS WEIGHT we carry.

PAST

BY
VIKKI
BURKE



CONQUERING THE KINGDOMS WITHIN

by Dr. Dennis Burke

Subduing the earth has always been the driving force of mankind and of each of us individually.

In Genesis 1:28, the divine command is clear:

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

Subduing the earth has always been the driving force of mankind and of each of us individually. It has been the primary motivation for advancement and invention throughout the ages.

In order to develop this calling to subdue the things we face around us, we need to understand that everything we do starts within our inner self. Before we can effectively influence the things that confront us, we must first subdue the things within us.

Everything God does in the earth through people will first be done in them. The more freedom He has to work in a person, the more He can then work through that person.

In Hebrews chapter

11 is a list of people who subdued the things around them. They are powerful people who changed entire generations. The chapter then states something very strong in verses 32-34:

“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

The word translated “subdued” is used only in the New Testament. In Bullinger’s book “Great Cloud of Witnesses,” he stated that this word does not indicate the use of weapons to conquer armies or kingdoms of nations. It is used to picture the contending or wrestling of an athlete. It really points to the individual conquests we each must attain over the things that threaten our forward progress in God.

David is in the list of those who “subdued kingdoms.” David was one of the greatest leaders in all of Israel’s history. He understood God’s heart and desire better than any of his peers. Yet before David could ever rise to a place of conquering the kingdoms around him, he had to face the threats within. Each step of his rise to power and influence required a new level of personal conquest.

In looking at the life

of David, you find how he overcame the most difficult issues imaginable and demonstrated the inner strength and ability that sustained him through it all.

David Subdued Rejection of His Own Family

It began when David was first anointed by the prophet Samuel. God had told Samuel to go to Jesse’s house and anoint one of his sons to be king in Saul’s stead.

Jesse didn’t even consider bringing David before Jesse. He brought all of his other sons to Samuel. Jesse’s lack of confidence in David could have marked his son for life.

David’s brothers had even less confidence that their younger brother could be used by God. It was evident later when David was bringing food to his brothers on the battlefield. Goliath was breathing his threats against Israel, and all the

One day I was walking

through a park and saw a little boy with his parents. He was about three years old—and he was all boy. Some birds landed on the grass close to where the family was eating their lunch, and the little boy started to chase them, yelling out a growl as he did. For more than 20 minutes, he chased these birds, watching them scurry away.

Certainly there was little threat that the little boy was going to actually catch one of those birds. They were completely safe. But this boy was exercising an inner drive that we all share and demonstrate in a myriad of different ways. It is a drive given to us all by God from the beginning of mankind: the calling to subdue the earth and all that is in it.

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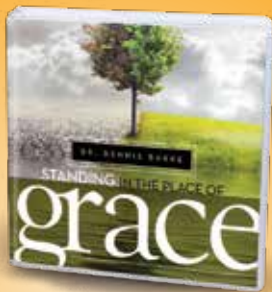
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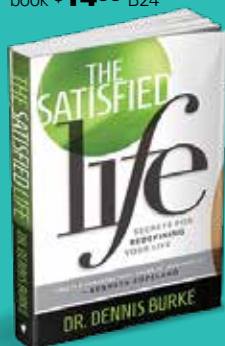
You will overcome your enemy because you have subdued that kingdom within.



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warriors of Israel were cowering in fear. Eliab, David's brother, didn't believe he had come to the battlefield to do anything important.

There are times in life when people may reject you, belittle you, or misunderstand you. But if you allow people's negative responses to affect you, your faith will be paralyzed. Your parents, brothers, or sisters may not see you in the light of what God has done in you. Their words of criticism can cut deep into your soul, with the wound remaining for many years.

David was not moved by his family. He had settled in his heart that the anointing that came on him through the prophet Samuel was more than enough to empower him.

Like David, you can use God's Word to subdue and overcome every critical, unloving, or belittling word spoken to you. As you guard your heart, those words will never be able to hurt you again.

David Subdued His Enemy — the Threat of the Philistine Giant Goliath

When David reached the battlefield, he saw Goliath but wasn't moved by his size or his threats. David subdued this aspect of his own life, focusing on the covenant he had with God. He knew in his heart that God would deliver him and all of Israel.

When you seek God first, everything else comes into perspective from a new point of view. Enemies and threats that would ordinarily strike fear in your heart don't shake you. Your confidence remains in God's promise and faithfulness. You will overcome your enemy because you have subdued that kingdom within.

David Subdued the Bitterness of Betrayal From Family and Friends

Two of the most significant people in David's life were his son, Absalom, and Ahithophel, his covenant friend and counselor. David loved these men and trusted them. Yet for many years, they each held deep-rooted resentment and hatred against David for failures he had committed.

Absalom had seen how his father failed to protect Tamar, one of his daughters, who had been violated by Absalom's half-brother Amnon. When Amnon committed that perverse act against Tamar, David did nothing to make it right. Absalom finally avenged his sister and killed Amnon. But something had forever changed in his heart toward his father. He saw a side of David that planted a seed of rebellion in his heart.

Years later, Absalom would rise up against David to remove him from being king in Israel and step in to replace him. When that time came, Absalom found that Ahithophel wanted to be his ally. Ahithophel had also seen the king's weakness when David committed adultery with Bathsheba. This was more than a violation of David's leadership and walk with God. This became a very personal offense to Ahithophel, because David had destroyed the marriage and the innocence of Ahithophel's granddaughter, Bathsheba.

Ahithophel maintained his role in David's life as friend and counselor, but he held the pain and bitterness of David's failure in his heart. The time would come when Ahithophel would avenge Bathsheba.

When Ahithophel chose to ally himself with Absalom's attempted rebellion, David was surprised and hurt that two people he loved deeply could plot together to destroy him. They certainly felt

justified in their actions, but their evil plans could not succeed against a man who had subdued these things in his own heart.

David's failures from years before did not remain weaknesses in his heart. He overcame his own flesh and failures with God's help. As a result, he subdued that which had once subdued him, and when it seemed like his just reward for his own evil deeds had come upon him, David could confidently trust in God to deliver him.

You can have this same testimony. Your past failures, sins, and mistakes don't have to dominate your present or future.

First, roll all of these things over on the Lord. In Psalm 55:22, David said, "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved."

Then seek God through prayer, worship, and His Word. Let Him reinforce who you are in Him and who He is in you.

Second Corinthians 10:5 is an important part of this process: "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Every stronghold in your mind that rises up to challenge who you are in Christ or what God has promised you can be subdued. He said to cast it down. You are to consciously throw it from you.

Now that you are in Christ, you are born of His Word. The very seed of God is in your spirit, and you are one with Him. The kingdom of darkness has no place in you. By the strength of the Greater One living inside you, you can lay hold of this promise from the Lord found in Isaiah 54:17 (NIV) and subdue every aspect of that kingdom!

"No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me," declares the Lord."

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

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defined
by the*

PAST

When we get stuck in a cycle of reliving the past, we become burdened down by the **EXCESS WEIGHT** we carry.

BY
VIKKI
BURKE

One thing we all have in common is that we've had unpleasant things happen to us in life. We've all had someone do wrong to us. Some have been betrayed by their employers, who laid them off right before retirement. And everyone has experienced untrue accusations. >>



I've learned that regretting something simply means we didn't learn from it.

Every day things come our way that can offend us—and if nurtured, those offenses can eventually make us bitter and cynical. These things can cause a victim mentality that constantly points the finger of accusation at others, ourselves, or even God.

Someone wisely coined the phrase, “You can’t go forward if you’re looking back.” When we don’t deal with the past, it can be filled with “should haves,” “could haves,” or “if onlys.” Thoughts like that are very unproductive because they bring the unsavory feeling of regret, which can easily turn to sorrow. Numerous passages in the Bible instruct us to “sorrow not.” That’s not a suggestion; it’s a command. “And the ransomed shall return...with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”¹

In fact, according to the prophet Isaiah, Jesus carried our sorrow on the Cross so that we wouldn’t be crushed by it.² Over the years, I’ve learned that regretting something simply means we didn’t learn from it. Every unpleasant experience we go through can be turned into a time of learning and growing.

On the other hand, when we get stuck in a cycle of reliving the past, we become burdened down by the excess weight we carry. Honestly, the best thing we can do is to let it go. It doesn’t matter whether it’s something that happened twenty years ago or twenty minutes ago,

it’s unhealthy to carry the baggage of the past into our present. We will never live a life of victory if we continually replay our past pursuits that didn’t work out, our past relationships with people who hurt us, or our own past mistakes and failures. There is a reason it’s called the past: It is to remain behind us. It’s old history, and it’s time to move forward.

When we hold on to the hurtful things others have done to us, those hurts continue to have power over us. People may have hurt us in the past, but we shouldn’t allow them to continue to hurt us in the present. Yet that’s what we do by continuing to mull over past hurts and offenses in our minds. As long as we fix our thoughts on the past, we hinder ourselves from experiencing the blessings God has for us in the present.

God has made strong promises for those who have been mistreated. He promised that He would give us beauty for ashes. He promised that He would repay us for the injustice we experience. He promised to turn our mourning into joy.³

But if we expect to experience God’s promises, we have to let go of the past. We have to step out of the cycle that keeps it alive so we can move forward. Rehashing the past in our minds will only blind us to new opportunities that are



AS LONG AS WE FIX OUR THOUGHTS ON THE PAST, WE HINDER OURSELVES FROM EXPERIENCING THE BLESSINGS GOD HAS FOR US IN THE PRESENT.

right in front of us.

If you’re like me, your past may be filled with tons of damaging experiences that could cause you to live with a chip on your shoulder—

untrusting, bitter, and resentful. But we cannot allow our past to define who we are today. Instead, we can turn hurtful experiences into lessons that make us stronger, wiser, and more confident.

By no means does that mean we have to allow people to continue to walk on us. When we learn from those experiences, they can teach us how to handle future events and to let wisdom replace the “poor-old-me,” victim mentality. Past mistreatment or injustice shouldn’t keep us in a pitiful state. Instead, we can choose to allow those difficult experiences to make us more powerful. It really is simply a matter of choice.

Each of us has made many mistakes that can cause us to feel regret. Maybe we regret how we’ve handled our marriage, our children, or our parents. But the simple truth is, once the eggs have been scrambled, we can’t unscramble them. Feeling guilty and condemning ourselves for what we’ve done wrong in the past certainly doesn’t do us any good! So we have to learn to put past failures and missteps behind us

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where they belong. Only then can we exchange the spirit of heaviness for a garment of praise.⁴ And only after the heaviness is gone will we be able to clearly see the things God has for our future.

Paul said, "...Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."⁵ The word "is" is present tense. So when we think about the past all the time, we won't experience the freedom that the Holy Spirit has for us in the present. We have to dust the past off our hands—like dusting dirt off our palms—and move forward where freedom and new opportunities await us.

There is freedom available today! Living in sorrow over what happened yesterday won't produce freedom; it will keep us in bondage. Looking back with regret with continual thoughts of who we could have been or what we could have done only serves to stagnate and pollute our lives. We are all a product of our past, but we don't have to let it hold us prisoner.

I like the way my high school friend viewed the abuse he suffered as a teenager by his parents. He said, "I was in a prisoner camp. I survived. I escaped. Hallelujah! Now I will move on and enjoy what life has for me." What a great attitude! And he has moved on to become a doctor helping to bring healing to hurting people. I love that story! We should all adopt my friend's attitude! We can choose to allow God to turn every setback into a comeback!

Just stomp your foot and declare, "That's enough! No matter what I've gone through or how many mistakes I've made, I'm not wasting another day thinking about them! I'm escaping the prison camp of the past and stepping into the enjoyable things God has planned for my life!"

That doesn't mean you are ignoring past offenses or your own failures; it means you're giving

them to God, who is the only One qualified to vindicate you. If the mistakes are self-inflicted, call on Him for mercy, for "the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."⁶

We can't allow the things we don't understand, such as abusive parents, to make us bitter. We have to let go of past hurts and allow

God to handle them, believing God's promise that the best is yet to come—or as Ecclesiastes says, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning."⁷

Like me and my high school friend, you also may have had a rocky start. But it doesn't have to end that way. Choose to believe

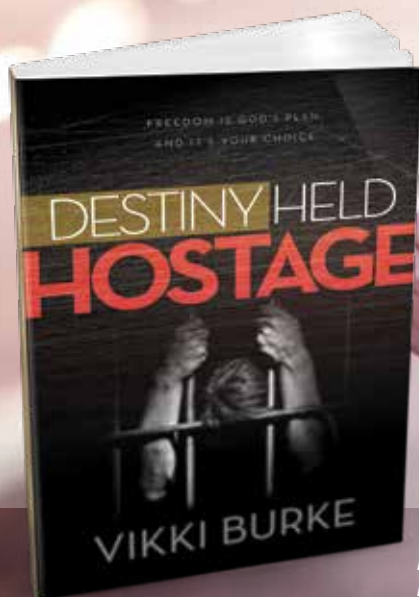
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IT'S TIME TO LET GO OF THE HURT AND GRAB HOLD OF YOUR DESTINY.

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— M. S. R.



Your words gripped my heart!
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— N. J.

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continued from pg. 7

God when He says that it will end better! He promised to make rough places smooth,⁸ so whose report are you going to believe? Take God at His Word!

We cause ourselves to get stuck in life when we are always thinking about the past. Paul gave us God's higher way: "...Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead."⁹ Paul could have focused on his past or on the mistreatment he endured. But he stated what's important: forgetting what lies behind.

Who knows—Paul might have missed his destiny if he'd focused on the wrong things from his past! Paul endured a lot of mistreatment. He was falsely accused, imprisoned, beaten, and shipwrecked. He went without food; he was stoned and left to die. But Paul chose to forget. He chose to reach for what lay ahead.

That's the attitude we must adopt if we expect to enjoy the good life and accomplish what God has for us. We can become experts at letting it go!

You might ask, "How do I drop that past hurt?" It's simple, really. Just stop thinking and talking about it. Make the same decision Paul made—forget it! When it pops up in your mind, just cast it right back out! Don't let the accuser have access to your mind. Then move forward by fixing your thoughts on what is true, honorable, pure, and lovely.¹⁰

The Amplified Bible tells us, "Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him [drop the issue, let it go], so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions and wrongdoings [against Him and others]."¹¹ So don't let your past define you. Your destiny is too important!

8 Isaiah 40:4 | 9 Philippians 3:13 | 10 Philippians 4:8 | 11 Mark 11:25 AMP

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