

Defusing The Fear of Failure

April 1

*"He shall set me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies." -
Psalm 27:5-6*

You have taken a giant step forward on the walk of faith. You dare to fail! You will risk failure bravely.

PREVIEW

Today you will defuse the fear of failure forever. The fear of failure is the explosive bomb that can blow you out of the water and devastate your destiny. You defuse this fear forever by analyzing the fear of failure.

Ask yourself this key question: Why does the fear of failure frighten me?

INNERVIEW

The fear of failure is really fear of rejection or embarrassment. (What will my friends say? What will my loved ones think of me?) The fear of embarrassment is the fear of the loss of respect of people who support me emotionally.

The fear of rejection is a loss of self-worth, self-esteem and self-respect. I

can live without much money and I can live with just a few friends, but I can never live with myself if I try and do not succeed.

REVIEW

How do you defuse this fear? It is simple! Tell yourself there is no shame in failing while trying to do something great. It is more an embarrassment if I am a coward, lacking the courage to try to do something wonderful and worthwhile.

There is more self-esteem generated in honest and noble failure than there is in cowardly retreat from great opportunity!

"So I would rather attempt to do something great and fail, than attempt to do nothing and succeed."

Praise God For: His virtue.

Thank God For: the empowerment to succeed.

Ask God's Forgiveness For: a poor negative attitude.

The Dare To Try

April 2

"Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, wait, I say, on the Lord!" - Psalm 27:14

Once you dare to risk failure and defuse the fear of failure you have scored in round one.

In the future, you will dare to try.

Once you have attempted to do something great, it is impossible to be a total failure.

At least you have succeeded in conquering cowardice.

You have dared to step into the ring.

PREVIEW

Round one in the fight of life is daring to try even though you know you might fail.

To make a commitment to attempt something great, despite the very real possibility of failure, marks you not as a reckless fool, but as a daring person of great faith.

Most people lose the battle of life by never conquering the fear of failure

enough to attempt to climb the biggest challenges God puts before them. They have never even stepped into the ring! They were knocked out before the first round!

Until you have enough nerve to set some "gutsy" goals, you run the extreme greater risk of becoming a total failure!

INNERVIEW

Affirmation for today: I'll never be a total failure, for at least I can conquer the problem that stops most people. I have looked the fear of failure in the face and I have stared the enemy down!

I am trying; therefore, I am a success!

Every competitor is a winner! The losers never tried. Every contestant is a winner! The losers never made it to the contest.

REVIEW

Let us begin!

Expecting To Succeed

April 3

"In all your ways acknowledge Him [God] and He shall direct your paths." - Proverbs 3:6

Can faith really move mountains? Can faith really release hidden healing powers in dying people? Can faith attract divine and human powers to transform your life? Can you expect your prayers to be answered if you believe? Of course!

PREVIEW

For by believing, we exercise the mental practice of dreaming God's dreams and seeking God's goals.

God deeply desires that His plan for your life will be fulfilled.

You move your faith from low gear to high gear by practicing the mental habit of expecting positive results. This practice of mental expectation strengthens your faith!

If you desire a tougher faith, place your faith on a vigorous fitness program.

INNERVIEW

To begin, give your faith a good diet of spiritual minerals and vitamins. Withhold all negative consumptions that would make your faith "sick."

To maintain the health and vigor of your faith, it must be exercised regularly! How?

Ask yourself these questions: Am I really expecting to succeed? Am I mentally keen on achieving my desired goal? Am I genuinely enthusiastic about the prospects of success?

Faith that passes the fitness test must register high in expecting to succeed. Stretch your faith today by increasing your expectations!

REVIEW

Affirmation for today: I affirm that my goals are definitely going to be realized. I am farther today than I was when I was merely daydreaming. I am committing myself 100 percent to making my dreams come true.

I am expecting to succeed!

Daily Sunshine In The Son

I can feel my faith getting stronger already!

Praise God For: His blessings.
Thank God For: His Spirit within.
Ask God's Forgiveness For: my pride.
Ask God To Help: the proud humble themselves.
Ask God To Supply Our Need For: humility.

!

I pray for the needs of others, especially

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
Select one of the "mind foods" listed in Philippians 4:8 that needs to be added to your "life list." Write a plan for including new sources of positive thinking.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Today, Lord, I need

Lord, today I thank You for:

Announcing Your Intentions

April 4

"O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will show forth Your praise." - Psalm 51:15

Look at the upward steps that the walk of faith is taking.

Faith takes the first step in dreaming. It climbs higher through the public announcement of your goals!

PREVIEW

This is one of the most frightening steps you can take in the walk of faith. As long as you keep your mental picture to yourself and secretly harbor your unspoken desires, then the dreaming is relatively safe. Once you open your mouth and tell the world what you intend to do, you place your integrity on the line. You place your reputation as a believable person on the line once you announce your intentions. Now you must either produce or be proven unreliable at best and a phony at worst.

The public declaration of commitment intensifies the risk. You can immediately expect opposition and criticism to come out of the woodwork. Negative thinkers will leap forward –

“It can’t be done”, “It won’t work” and “Somebody else tried it and failed.” Or negative thinkers will attack your motives by saying, “What kind of an ego trip are you on?”

INNERVIEW

Take the leap of faith upward today. Tell the world what you will accomplish.

Do not be afraid of criticism. Just as criticism and opposition will come, support will also come from unknown and unexpected sources. The power of a positive idea is greater than the power of a negative idea.

REVIEW

Faith allows impossibilities to become possibilities. “As you do not know what is the way of the wind, or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the works of God who makes all things.” - Ecclesiastes 11:5

Daily Sunshine In The Son

O God, give me the humility to make allowance for the possibilities that I am tempted to reject as totally unrealistic! Help me to see that I cannot grow as a person until I am willing to be a believer. Amen.

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praises. I shall tell the world of the dream You have given me and what You and I will attempt to accomplish for Your glory. Amen.

Praise God For: being the wind in my sails.

Thank God For: moving me forward.

Ask God's Forgiveness For: fretting.

Ask God To Help: those in the spiritual doldrums.

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: ready sails.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Make a list of the worries of this life that consume you.

Ask God to crucify your flesh and help you see the bigger picture of His plan for you.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

Getting Excited About Succeeding

April 5

"For who is God, except the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God? It is God who arms me with strength, and makes my way perfect." - Psalm 18:31-32

PREVIEW

Now that you have drawn the mental picture and are ready to announce your intention, you should be excited about the idea of success.

You can pass the course.

You will succeed in the examination.

You are going to get married and make it work.

You are going to set physical fitness goals and succeed.

You are going to establish a new career, open a new business and take a challenging trip.

INNERVIEW

Everything is going to happen! You can become excited about succeeding because God is your Rock, your Refuge and your Fortress. He called you! He installed you! His power and His vision enthrall you!

Read Psalm 18:31-33. Here the psalmist tells us what we can expect from God...

It is God who arms me with strength.

It is God who makes my way perfect before me.

He makes my feet like the feet of a deer...swift and skillful in maneuvering, sometimes slow down rocky pathways and sometimes swift in the race on the meadow, sometimes powerful for the plunge across the canyon or the leap across the stream or the bounding lounge to the upper rock!

REVIEW

God sets your feet on the high places! And you, from your vaulted vantage point of spiritual height catch a vision of success so bright!

Thank You, Father, that you have given me the dream - and now the gleam - of success. I need that today! Amen.

Daily Sunshine In The Son

Praise God For: filling me daily.
Thank God For: bumps turned to blessings.
Ask God's Forgiveness For: spewing anger.
Ask God To Help: hurried business people.
Ask God To Supply Our Need For: patience with others.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
List areas of your life that you must let go of in order to become a pleasing sacrifice. How will you let go of them?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

The Aim To Achieve

April 6

"[God] is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." - Ephesians 3:20

Have you noticed that people who do not walk the walk of faith are also the people who have no definite aim in life? These people "wing it" without any plan. They fail to set achievable goals. They often take refuge behind the pious phrase: "God knows what's best for me and He will provide it."

PREVIEW

If you aim at nothing – you are sure to hit it!

The truth is, the person who sets low goals achieve little. The size of the dream will determine the size of the person you will become.

There are no great people in this world; there are only ordinary people. The difference is some people set higher goals, dream bigger dreams and settle for nothing less than the best!

INNERVIEW

Excellence is the motto of great people. Maximum effort is the hallmark of their character. They focus on goals and aim carefully at a measurable, manageable target. They approach goals similar to a crack rifleman who sights a target, takes aim and fires! All the while they confidently trust God to give them a victory.

Today, are there problems that transcend your ability to solve? Are your dreams beyond your reach? Then stop leaning on your abilities and start trusting God's abilities. He is able! - "to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think..." (Ephesians 3:20) You are not able to think big enough to match God's abilities!

REVIEW

Affirmation: I know that I can never dream big enough to match God's dreams! He is always ahead of me and beyond me! Today I shall praise God for the positive people He used to mold

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my life - a teacher, a parent, a relative, a minister and a friend.

Thank You, God, for those moments when You give me opportunity to lift my sights to improve myself! Thank You, Father, that You created me with wisdom and beauty in mind. I thank You that I have been led to take this walk of faith. My faith is unlocking positive emotional power within me now! Thank You, God. Amen.

Praise God For: His power.
Thank God For: breakthroughs
Ask God's Forgiveness For: refusing inner healing.
Ask God To Help: depressed friends
Ask God To Supply Our Need For: the power of His Spirit.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
*Are you allowing God to perform surgery on your body, mind and heart? What does He need to remove so that you are an empty vessel He can fill?
at action would allow you to take a leap of faith and let God show you that He can give you victory in this area?*

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Verbalizing Victory

April 7

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith." - John 5:4

PREVIEW

Do you remember the marvelous and true story of Babe Ruth? The bases were loaded and there were no strikes against him. It was a crucial inning. Suddenly, Babe Ruth stepped out of the batter's box, lifted his bat and pointed it at the stands off in the center field, indicating to the crowd that he was going to hit the ball out of the park. The pitch came across the plate. He swung and the ball sailed exactly where he had pointed!

INNERVIEW

When you dare to predict your own success, you attract support and you produce the pressures that will ensure your success.

I marvel at the pool player who can point to his goal and say, "Number six in the corner pocket," then shoot, and make it! He verbalizes victory - beforehand!

It takes faith to announce your grandiose intentions! "What if I fail

after I make the announcement?" Be proud that you had the courage to try!

REVIEW

Today, ask yourself this question: Do I believe in God enough to announce what the two of us are going to do together? It's your responsibility to demonstrate that much faith. It is God's responsibility to make it happen.

When you verbalize victory you give yourself a new injection of enthusiasm. People will say that you talked your way into success. That is only partially true. You acted out your faith. In the process you put the ball back in God's court. It is marvelous how God planned life to be such a challenging game of faith.

Praise God For: His sovereignty

Thank God For: ordering my time

Ask God's Forgiveness For: irritation with interruptions.

Ask God To Help: our time to be well spent

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: right priorities.

Taking The Faith Plunge

April 8

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it." - 1 Corinthians 9:24

PREVIEW

An exciting illustration of faith is portrayed in the running of a race. The runner jumps at the starting gun, even though he cannot be sure he will win. But one thing is certain; the person who does not start can never win!

This means that another truth becomes markedly evident: Every starter is a winner. The losers are those who never tried. If you need to be sure that you will win, if you need to be confident of success before you make a commitment, then you are walking the walk of faith!

INNERVIEW

It is the element of uncertainty that adds excitement to life. The predictable always produces boredom. The element of the unpredictable always generates the interest and involvement of spectator and participant.

So the person who walks the walk of faith is alive and is keeping others alive speculating on his success. He is news, because he has entered the race before he is positive that he can win.

REVIEW

God's promises are not offered to the "play-it-safe" spectator in the stands, but to the "let's-take-a-chance" player in the middle of the game!

Take this positive plunge: Today I will double-check my life. Have I plunged ahead with the new opportunities that came to my mind only a day or two ago? If not, then today I will step up on my tiptoe. I will look ahead at the course. Here I go! I am running the race. This time, I am not a spectator in the stands, but a contestant and participant!

Praise God For: cherishing me

Thank God For: good memories

Ask God's Forgiveness For: valuing the wrong things

Ask God To Help: His vulnerable vessels

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: dependence on Him.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

List several times when God provided for you in the midst of difficult situations. Thank Him for His faithfulness.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Deciding To Begin

April 9

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." - Genesis 1:1

God has given you a dream. Now you must prepare to make brave decisions.

Faith is not daydreaming; it is decision making!

Even God's ideas are not worth anything - until a believer acts upon them! We exercise our faith when we make the toughest decision - the decision to get started.

PREVIEW

Procrastination is an exercise of doubt.

Postponing tough decisions is, more often than not, the result of a lack of faith.

God does not promise to bless us, until we make a commitment to live and walk by faith.

We cannot expect God to bless our profession of faith until we stop doing nothing and start doing something.

INNERVIEW

Faith is deciding to begin. Affirm with me:

Today I shall tackle my biggest enemy - inertia.

I will walk.

I will run.

I will talk.

I will write.

I will launch the project.

I will tell people what I am starting.

REVIEW

I will trust God to enable me to keep moving once I demonstrate enough faith to begin! I am really walking the walk of faith. I will start today.

In deciding to begin, I have solved my biggest problem.

I will succeed, for beginning is half done!

Committing To Action

April 10

"Go your way; and as you believed, so let it be done for you." - Matthew 8:13

PREVIEW

Miracles never happen just through meditation - but with mighty action! Read carefully in the Gospels the words of Jesus and notice the verbs. Follow, go, seek, ask and knock. The walk of faith is not merely the serene, silent, spiritual, unspeaking stroll of a holy man in the stillness of the sunrise or the secret silence of the sunset.

INNERVIEW

Faith is the mental activity that draws God into our mind and imagination until a passion begins to inflame our wills, motivating us to action! It is then that the commitment is made. What is a commitment? It is entering into an honorable contract, pledging oneself before the problems are solved. Every commitment generates a new set of problems. If we waited until we saw solutions to problems before we made the commitment, we would obviously not be walking the walk of faith! It is for that reason that commitment in marriage, religion, interpersonal relationships, devotion and dedication

to your career goal or fulfillment of a project becomes self-inspiring.

REVIEW

Walk the walk of faith today. Make a fresh commitment to God, saying prayerfully and sincerely:

"God, I am ready to take the plunge. Please give me the push that I need. I trust that with your help, we will tackle every problem at every turn of the road with a positive mental attitude. Together we will succeed joyously!

Praise God For: His worthiness

Thank God For: all that has past

Ask God's Forgiveness For: trusting self too much

Ask God To Help: those who are anxious

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: refreshment

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What overwhelming challenge lies ahead of you right now? List the ways in which God has promised in His Word to help you through this challenge.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Desiring To Arrive

April 11

"...when the desire comes, it is a tree of life." - Proverbs 13:12

More than anything else, faith is an all-consuming desire to succeed!

PREVIEW

Faith without passion is soda water without the sparkle.

I said to young man who had just complained, "You don't lack faith, your faith lacks drive." Somehow a strong desire must be injected into the project of living, or faith will fizzle out and failure will overtake you.

Open a can of cola or soda water, let it stand for a few hours and the fizz will evaporate. What the sparkle is to soda water is what the inner passion to succeed is to mountain-moving faith. If you have lost your desire, if the fizz is gone and the beverage is flat, you need a new birth of divine desire!

INNERVIEW

Perhaps you need to take a complete break, a holiday or a vacation.

Double-check your motives. Are you too self-serving?

Draw close to a hurting person. Feel their anxiety, loneliness and emptiness. Through your success, you can put a smile on their face and sparkle in their eye; the passion will return.

REVIEW

Invite God to totally control your moods and your mind! For God Himself is the holy passion of helpful, appealing love which will override all other inclinations!

Calculate - who will be helped if I hang in - and succeed? And who will hurt - if I quit and fail?

"God is opening doors that will surprise me with new opportunities."

"God is closing doors that I want to horn because He knows they will lead to my failure and destruction."

Thank You, Father, for assuring me of success on my walk of faith. I know I

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am on the right road. I thank You, Lord,
for opening and closing doors, thereby
guiding me on my daily walk. I sense
my faith growing stronger as I declare
my faith and affirm you as Lord of my
life. Thank You, O God.

Praise God For: His goodness.
Thank God For: helping me endure
Ask God's Forgiveness For: my impatience
Ask God To Help: life dreams come true
Ask God To Supply Our Need For: patience in
our praying.

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
*What is it that you want to do? List several goals you
would like to achieve and explain tell how each of them
will glorify God.*

Journal for Digging Deeper:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

Educating Your Mind

April 12

"When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you." - Proverbs 2:10-11

I will do my best today. I will apply myself to the best of my ability.

PREVIEW

People who have faith believe in themselves and their potential enough to invest everything to obtain the fullest potential of the one life they possess.

How is this accomplished?

If you believe in yourself, you will educate yourself.

You will pay the price to become informed. Perhaps you may need to return to school or aim for another degree.

INNERVIEW

Faith means being good stewards of the treasures God has placed at our disposal, the opportunities He puts before us, the gifts He has given us and the resources He has entrusted to our care.

Is any treasure more valuable than your ability to think? Remember faith and intellect are not opponents. The smarter you become, the stronger your faith can grow. Seek the counsel of the smartest people. Visit the employer you would like to work for and ask what you need to do to qualify for the position you desire.

REVIEW

Keep this formula in mind today.

Inspiration + preparation + self-motivation = successful faith

Prepare yourself to become a leader. You can do it because you are a growing Christian on a Faith Walk.

Praise God For: His work in my soul

Thank God For: giving me wisdom

Ask God's Forgiveness For: struggling too hard

Ask God To Help: with life's annoyances.

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: knowing when to stop striving.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Audition Your Ambitions

April 13

"For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." - Luke 6:45

Now that you have educated your mind, do not assume that a degree will automatically unlock any door. Education merely entitles sell yourself with integrity! Your credentials only give you the right to audition your ambitions in the market place.

PREVIEW

There was an advertisement: "Help wanted: office boy." One positive thinking youngster rushed to answer the ad, only to find a long line of boys ahead of him waiting to be interviewed. He was afraid a selection would occur before he was interviewed.

So he wrote this note: "To the boss: My name is Johnnie. I am number thirteen in line. Do not hire anybody until you have interviewed me!" He handed the note to the secretary, who brought it into the office. A moment later she came out, approached young Johnnie, and said, "The boss would like to see you." It was no surprise that he received the job!

INNERVIEW

If you do not believe in yourself, who will? You owe yourself every possible chance!

Faith is auditioning your ambitions. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works". (Matthew 5:16) He cautioned us not to "light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand". (Matthew 5:15)

Look at a person who is moving forward and making commitments in faith. You will see someone whose actions underscore his positive thoughts. Observe the person who is setting goals and pursuing them with all their might and you will see someone who has turned the leadership of their life over to a dynamic faith.

REVIEW

Stop and think of the most creative thoughts you have had in the past twenty-four hours. What have you done with those ideas?

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Now go back and underline the most exciting ideas you have had in the last year. What have you done with them?

Life becomes what you make of it, and what you make of life depends entirely on how you manage the ideas that come into your brain.

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

Praise God For: His gentleness

Thank God For: solace

Ask God's Forgiveness For: intruding on loved ones

Ask God To Help: people in pain

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: time out with Him.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Describe a time when someone touched your life with unexpected kindness Write a prayer asking the God of all hope to begin a new flow from His reservoir to your heart.

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

Winning Is Beginning

April 14

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Quit praying and get the people moving!'" Exodus 14:15
(LB) "He who deals with a slack hand becomes poor, but the hand of the diligent makes one rich."
Proverbs 10:4

PREVIEW

To really succeed in life, you must be able to solve two problems: (1) How to get started! (2) How to never quit! These two problems must be solved to become the person God wants you to be!

When you arose this morning, did you think this would be the day your life would change? But it is going to happen! The two problems that stand between you and grand success in living are getting started and never quitting! You can solve your biggest problem and you can begin now!

INNERVIEW

I do not know what idea is in your mind at this moment but I know everyone has some idea of something that he or she should be pursuing. Should you begin an exercise program or a new business. Perhaps I should say "yes" to God and become involved in ministry at the church. Maybe I should begin a daily

meditation that involves reading the Bible through. .

REVIEW

Now, what will you do with that idea? Whatever you do, do not waste it! Begin to do something about it today! Maybe you just need to write down your idea:

My decision today will become tomorrow's reality.

Praise God For: being my teacher

Thank God For: correcting me

Ask God's Forgiveness For: little things getting the best of me.

Ask God To Help: those practicing patience.

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: lessons in patience

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Whom do you know who needs a word of admonishment and encouragement? Pray for that person now, and ask God to give you an opportunity to talk with this person this week.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Entering The Contest

April 15

"Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it pass." - Psalm 37:5

I have known several people who refused to enter contests because they feared defeat. They refuse to compete because they always want to win.. If you never enter the contest, you can never win!

PREVIEW

There is more to winning than never losing! In the walk of faith the person who enters the contest has already won a battle. He has overcome the fear of failure!

What contest are you preparing to enter?

What competitions should you engage?

You can at least compete with your own best record!

INNERVIEW

Consider entering the contest of "generosity champion". It would be wonderful to be known as one of the most generous people who ever lived.

Consider entering the "encouragement contest," and winning the gold medal for encouraging the discouraged.

Perhaps you could enter the "honesty contest". In the final judgment, honesty pays off. What company would knowingly hire a dishonest person?

REVIEW

In the name of Christ, compete against negativity, sin, evil and greed.

"Almighty God, there is a race I should run, a contest I should enter, a competition I must become involved in. Show me the way and I will follow. Win or lose, I know I have kept the faith! Thank You, Father. Amen.

Praise God For: eternal life.

Thank God For: redeeming grace.

Ask God's Forgiveness For: doubting.

Ask God To Help: those who grieve.

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: purposeful lives.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

In what areas do you think of yourself too highly? To whom can you show more honor? In what ways can you place others above yourself?

Attitude Is Everything

April 16

“ For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. . . ” -Prov. 23:7

This week I received a book in the mail entitled **Attitude if Everything** by Jeff Keller. It is a delightful book that challenges and guides his readers to improve their life by improving their attitude. Mr. Keller opens his book with a quote from Thomas Jefferson, "*Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal. Nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong attitude.*" How true! There are three sections to his book I will share with you today.

THINK

Success begins in the mind. A person's attitudes and beliefs will shape their destiny. In an episode of Star Trek the New Generation, there was a great quote that stuck with me: "If a man is convinced he is going to die tomorrow, he will probably find a way to make it happen." What are you convinced will happen tomorrow? If your thoughts were to become a reality, what would your life be like? Would it be full of pessimistic darkness or optimistic light? "A man

becomes what he thinks about."

Proverbs 23:7 (Para)

SPEAK

Attitudes are reflected in words. Positive language can propel you to your goals. There is a natural process in each of us: Thoughts become Words, which become Beliefs, which become Actions, which become Results. People who feed themselves a steady diet of negative words are destined to have a negative attitude. It is a simple matter of cause and effect. You cannot keep repeating negative words and expect to be a high achiever. Why? Negative words always lead to negative reinforcement of negative beliefs.

"Words can bring death or life!"

Proverbs 18:21 cev

ACT

Thinking and speaking positively will not achieve your dreams until you do something! Attitude, planning and counsel are wise - - but even the best plans in the world will not make a

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difference unless they are implemented.
What steps are you taking to turn your
dreams into reality? **"Hard work is
worthwhile, but empty talk will lead to
failure." Proverbs 14:23 cev**

**"I am convinced that life is 10% what
happens to me and 90% how I
react to it. And so it is with you...
we are in charge of our Attitudes."
Charles Swindoll**

Praise God For: His truth.
Thank God For: His indwelling presence.
*Ask God's Forgiveness For: watching for the
wrong thing.*
Ask God to Help: seekers of truth.
Ask God to Supply: understanding His Word.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
List achievements in your life that you have
allowed to become idols of spiritual pride. One by
one, surrender them to God and reaffirm your
dependence on Him.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

Failure or Setback

April 17

"Anyone who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance." - Proverbs. 28:13 (LB)

Have you ever failed or made a mistake? Have you ever missed the goal you planned? The fact that you have failed is proof that you are not finished. Failures and mistakes can be a bridge, not a barricade to success. Failure may look like a fact, but it is just an opinion. Successful people believe that mistakes are just feedback. It is not how far you fall, but how high you bounce that makes all the difference.

REMEMBER THAT NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO SETBACKS

Everyone makes mistakes. Even the greatest athletes do not make the plays every time. Mark McGwire does not hit home runs everytime. Troy Aikman does not throw touchdown passes every time. Manny Fernandez (Aeros Netminder) does not stop every shot on goal. Even Michael Jordan did not make every shot. The only perfect person who never failed was Jesus Christ - and face it, you are not Him!

"Anyone who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance." Proverbs. 28:13 (LB)

DISCOVER WHAT WENT WRONG

Failure is a great teacher, but it is not our undertaker. Failure is a delay, not a defeat. A successful person is big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them and strong enough to correct them. Ask yourself some questions: What went wrong? Did I not plan well? Did I miss something or have the wrong goal? What could I have done different? Find out what when wrong - then fix it!

LEARN THE LESSON AND FORGET THE DETAILS

When you learn what was wrong, make it right. Shore up your weak spots. Vernon Sander says, "Experience is a hard

Getting Energized For Work

April 18

"Those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary." - **Isaiah 40:31**

If TV commercials are accurate, most Americans feel worn-out. The pace of living and working "fast lane" causes many people to experience chronic fatigue. My guess is that as you read this, you may be feeling some of those "Monday Blahs". Living in a state of constant fatigue costs you a lot:

- It causes you to miss great opportunities.
- It brings out your worst attitudes.
- It limits your performance.
- It lowers your resistance to illness.

There are two types of fatigue: *physical fatigue* (involving your muscles) and *spiritual fatigue* (involving your emotions). Spiritual fatigue is most common in our society. It is caused by the stress of worry ...anger ...guilt ...indecision ...fear ...boredom... resentment and many other negative emotions.

While rest cures physical fatigue, recovery from spiritual fatigue requires much more! A weekend of rest alone will not do it! I suggest that we familiarize ourselves with the five energizers listed in the Bible.

1. A CLEAR CONSCIENCE (1 John 1:9) I saw a gas station sign that said, "A clean engine produces more power!" That is true of people, too. Guilt is the #1 robber of emotional energy. Ask God for help.

2. A NEW PERSPECTIVE (Col. 3:23) Try to look at your work from a different viewpoint. You cannot always control your circumstances but you can control how you choose to view it. Stress is often a matter of perspective.

3. A CHALLENGING PURPOSE (Phil. 3:13-14) Discover a new dream and you will have energy plus. Set a goal that inspires you.

Daily Sunshine In The Son

4. A SUPPORTIVE TEAM (Heb. 10:25) Get together with encouraging people. Many get their spiritual battery recharged each weekend at church.

5. GOD'S CREATIVE POWER (Isaiah 40:31) Plug into Him! "Those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles; they will run and not get weary."

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

Praise God For: His willingness to heal.
Thank God For: physical, spiritual and emotional healing.

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Ask God's Forgiveness For: clinging to wounds.
Ask God To Help: the wounded.
Ask God To Supply Our Need For: willingness to be healed.

Today, Lord, I need

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
When have you recently misused words? To who were they directed? How can you rectify them?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Excelling At What You Do

April 19

"Whatever your task is, put your whole heart and soul into it, as work done for the Lord, and not merely for men." - Colossians. 3:23

The Olympics this summer gave us a dramatic display of the pursuit of excellence. Those who participated were the peak performers in each category. What are the characteristics of people who excel at what they do? The Bible identifies five traits of those who make it to the top:

1. PEOPLE WHO EXCEL WORK WITH ENTHUSIASM. Emerson once said "Nothing great has ever been accomplished without enthusiasm." Regardless of whether the job is big or small, give it your best. Great performers give their best effort, no matter what is the size of the audience. *"Whatever your task is put your whole heart and soul into it, as work done for the Lord, and not merely for men." Colossians. 3:23*

2. PEOPLE WHO EXCEL SHARPEN THEIR SKILLS. They never stop developing...growing...learning...improving.

ing. *"If the ax is dull, and its edge unsharpened, more strength is needed, but skill will bring success." Eccl. 10:10* It takes more than desire to excel, it takes skill! Remember – you are never wasting time when you are sharpening your "ax".

3. PEOPLE WHO EXCEL KEEP THEIR WORD. They are reliable. They can be counted on to do what they say they will do. They excel because people of integrity are rare in our society. *"Everyone talks about how loyal and faithful they are, but just try to find someone who really is!" Prov. 20:6 (GN)* Reliability beats talent in the long run.

4. PEOPLE WHO EXCEL MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE. Even under pressure...or change...or unrealistic demands, they do not allow themselves to become negative. Complainers never excel at anything except complaining. *"Do all things*

Daily Sunshine In The Son

without grumbling or arguing...and you will shine out like a light in a dark world." Phil. 2:14-15 Remember, "If the boss is angry with you, don't quit! A quiet spirit will quiet his bad temper!" Eccl. 10:4 (LB)

5. PEOPLE WHO EXCEL DO MORE THAN IS EXPECTED. This is a secret that every successful person has discovered. You'll never excel by only doing what is required - the bare minimum. Jesus said, "*If anybody forces you to go a mile with him, do more, go two miles with him." Matt. 5:41 (Ph)*

Oscar Hammerstein told a story of seeing the top of the head of the Statue of Liberty up close from a helicopter. What impressed him was the incredible detail the artist had sculpted on an area of the statue that the artist never expected anyone to see. The artist had no idea man would someday fly above his statue!

When you are tempted to cut corners and think "No one will ever know", remember God is looking down and sees everything you do. Give it your best this week!

Praise God For: the wonders of His gifts.
Thank God For: renewed perspective.
Ask God's Forgiveness For: indifference.

Ask God To Help: those who feel they are missing something.

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: a change.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
Have you gossiped about someone, even under the guise of a "prayer request"? Write a note asking forgiveness from anyone you have hurt in this way.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

What's On Your Mind

April 20

"Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts."- Prov.4:23 (GN)

One of the great psychological discoveries of this century is that your thoughts control your actions. If you want to change the way you act, you must first change how you think.

Actually, thousands of years earlier Solomon pointed this out: *"Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts."* (Prov.4:23 GN) The Bible says your thoughts influence six (6) areas of your life:

1. MY INTERPRETATION INFLUENCES MY SITUATION. It is not what happens to me that matters as much as how I choose to see it. The way I react will determine whether the circumstance makes me *better* or *bitter*. I can view everything as an obstacle or an opportunity for growth... a stumbling block or a stepping-stone. James 1:2-4

2. MY IMPRESSIONS INFLUENCE MY DEPRESSIONS. In other words, my mind affects my moods and my thinking determines my feelings. If I am *feeling* depressed, it is because I am choosing to *think* depressing thoughts -

about my work, family or anything else. While you cannot always control a feeling, you **CAN** choose what you think about - which will control how you feel. Psalm 55:2

3. MY BELIEFS INFLUENCE MY BEHAVIOR. We always act according to our beliefs - even when those ideas are false. For instance, as a child in your bedroom at night, if you believed a shadow was a monster your body reacted in fear (adrenaline, sweat, etc.) even though it was not true. That is why it is so important to make sure you are operating on true information! Your convictions about yourself, life and God influence your conduct. John 8:31

4. MY SELF-TALK INFLUENCES MY SELF-ESTEEM. You are constantly talking to yourself unconsciously. When you walk into a room full of strangers what do you tend to think about yourself? To develop more confidence you must stop running yourself down! *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."* Proverbs 23:7

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5. MY ATTITUDE INFLUENCES MY ABILITY. Winners expect to win. Your perception controls your performance. Mohammed Ali only lost two fights in his career. Before both of these fights he said something that he had not said before other fights: "If I should lose this fight..." *"All things are possible to him who believes."* Mark 9:23

Lord, today I thank You for:

6. MY IMAGINATION INFLUENCES MY ASPIRATION. In other words, your dreams determine your destiny. To accomplish anything you must first have a mission, a goal, a hope, and a vision. *"Without a vision the people perish."* Proverbs 29:18

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its mold, but let God remake you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed." Rom. 12:2 Think about it!

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Praise God For: being the living Word.
Thank God For: words to use in praising Him.

Ask God's Forgiveness For: keeping silent.
Ask God To Help: His children to glorify Him with words.

Today, Lord, I need

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: just the right word.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
Describe a time when God used you to speak His Word to someone else. What happened as a result?

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Succeeding Through Self-Discipline

April 21

"A person without self-control is as defenseless as a city with broken down walls." -Proverbs 25:28 (LB)

High achievers usually have one obvious thing in common: personal discipline. Successful people are willing to do things that average people are unwilling to do.

As a minister and psych-therapist over the last quarter of a century I have had the opportunity to know and counsel many successful business leaders. I have observed that successful people express self-discipline in six key ways:

- **Successful people master their moods.** They live by their commitments, not their emotions. People who do the right thing even when they do not feel like it accomplish most of what gets done in the world! *"A person without self-control is as defenseless as a city with broken down walls." Proverbs 25:28 (LB)*
- **Successful people watch their words.** They put their minds in gear before opening their mouths. *"He who guards his lips guards his life." Prov. 13:3*
- **Successful people restrain their reactions.** How much can you take before you lose your cool? *"If you are sensible you will control your temper. When someone wrongs you, it is a great virtue to ignore it." Prov. 19:11 (GN)*
- **Successful people stick to their schedule.** If you do not determine how you will spend your time you can be sure that others will decide for you! *"Live life with a due sense of responsibility...make the best use of your time." Eph. 5:15-16 (Ph)*
- **Successful people manage their money.** They learn to live

Daily Sunshine In The Son

on less than what they make and they invest the difference. The value of a budget is that it tells your money where you want it to go rather than wondering where it went! *"The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets."* Prov. 21:20 (LB)

- **Successful people maintain their health.** One can accomplish more and enjoy their achievements if they have maintained good health. *"Each of you should control his own body, keeping it pure and treating it with respect."* 1 Thess. 4:4

Where do you need to develop self-control? The disciplines you establish today will determine your success tomorrow. It takes more than just willpower for *lasting* self-control. It takes a power greater than you. Think about this promise from the Bible this week: *"God does not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, love and self-control."* II Tim. 1:7 The more I accept God's control over my life, the more self-control He gives me!

Praise God For: being the living Word.

Thank God For: words to use in praising Him.

Ask God's Forgiveness For: keeping silent.

Ask God To Help: His children to glorify Him with words.

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: just the right word.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER: Ask God to show you someone today who needs your touch and His love Tomorrow, write in your journal about what happened today.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

Establishing A Life Objective

April 22

"Seek Ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you".-Matt. 6:33

Many people set *goals*... but few people ever set a *Life Objective*. Goals relate to separate parts of your life: your career, finances, family, retirement, etc. But a Life Objective sets the *direction* of your whole life. Your Life Objective is the big picture. There are four (4) tremendous benefits of thinking through and writing down a Life Objective:

- **IT REDUCES FRUSTRATION** - by simplifying decision-making. Every day you are faced with many, often complex, choices. Having a Life Objective gives you a standard by which to evaluate which alternative is best for you.
- **IT INCREASES MOTIVATION** - The right Life Objective will inspire you to get up in the morning and persist when you feel like giving up. *"Where there is no vision, people perish."*
Proverbs 29:18

- **IT ALLOWS CONCENTRATION** - Success is largely the result of focusing on one thing and doing it well. Dan Rather has a plaque on his desk that says, "Will what I'm doing right now benefit that broadcast?" A Life Objective helps you focus your time, energy, and resources.

- **IT ATTRACTS COOPERATION** - It is an observable fact that when you decide exactly where you want to go in life, many other people will want to go along with you. People follow those who have clearly figured out who they are and what they are here for.

Find some time this week to get alone in a quiet place to start thinking about a Life Objective. Here are three (3) steps to begin:

1. **IDENTIFY MY TALENTS/GIFTS** - Ask "What can I do well?" What

Daily Sunshine In The Son

do I really enjoy doing because I do it well?" When God designed you, he put certain characteristics and abilities into your DNA structure. That combination of traits makes you unique! God wants you to do what he has *gifted* you to do!

2. REVIEW MY EXPERIENCES

- Ask, "What have I learned?" Our greatest lessons come from our hurts and pains. These need to be factored into a Life Objective.

3. DECIDE WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT

- The *urgent* is not always the important. William James, the father of American psychology once said, "The best use of your life is to invest it in that which outlasts it." So ask "What is going to last the longest?"

- Praise God For:* His support.
- Thank God For:* The sensitivity of others.
- Ask God's Forgiveness For:* my disappointment in others.
- Ask God To Help:* the physically and emotionally needy.
- Ask God To Supply Our Need For:* Immanuel.

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
Ask God to show you someone today who needs your touch and His love Tomorrow, write in your journal about what happened today.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Today, Lord, I need

The Peril of Procrastination

April 23

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done." - Ecclesiastes 11:4 (lb)

Most of us have experienced the Eight (8) Phases of Procrastination:

Phase 1: "I'll start early this time" (hopeful)

Phase 2: "I've got to start soon" (a little tension)

Phase 3: "I should have started sooner" (creeping guilt)

Phase 4: "There is still time to do it" (false reassurance)

Phase 5: "What's wrong with me?" (getting desperate)

Phase 6: "I can't wait any longer!" (intense pain)

Phase 7: "Just get it done!" (Get it over with!)

Phase 8: "Next time, I'll start earlier." (The cycle repeats)

Procrastination does tremendous damage to others and us at work. It causes unnecessary pressure and problems. Procrastination wastes opportunities, time and money.

The problem is: procrastination is addicting! The more you succumb to it,

the harder it is to change. It becomes a way of life, causing you much misery.

The Bible says, "**IF YOU WAIT FOR PERFECT CONDITIONS, YOU WILL NEVER GET ANYTHING DONE.**"

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (LB)

So...

- ⊙ Stop making excuses!
- ⊙ Realize perfectionism performance!
- ⊙ Face your fears!
- ⊙ Focus on the gain, not the pain!
- ⊙ DO IT NOW!

What have you been putting off that you know you need to do?... something at work... at home... at church. **DO IT NOW!**

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A PRAYER: "God, help me to **DO** what I already know I need to do. Help me to do it **NOW!**"

"Never boast about tomorrow. You don't know what will happen between now and then." (Proverbs 21:1)

Praise God For: reconciliation

Thank God For: peacemakers

Ask God's Forgiveness For: strained relationships

Ask God To Help: bring peace to the world

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: tenderness

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

What are three things you can do this week that will equip you to be a better Christ follower? Who do you need to pray for rather than praying protection for yourself?

I pray for the needs of others, especially

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:

Today, Lord, I need

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

What Makes A Winner

April 24

"In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success." - Proverbs 3:6 (Living Bible)

Genuine, lasting success is never an accident. It is the result of personal character. I have observed six (6) qualities in winners that I have worked with over the years. Here is my list with a Proverb from the Bible for each of them:

- **Work with a purpose.** Winners have a sense of mission. They know where they are headed and have figured out how to get there. They are focused. They plan their work and work their plan. *"An intelligent man aims at wise actions, but a fool starts off in many directions."*
- **Insist on Integrity.** Nothing lasts without integrity. Winners tell the truth. Then they do not have to worry about being caught in a lie. *"Dishonest gain will never last, so why take the risk?"*
- **Never make excuses.** Winners never play the blame game. They accept responsibility for their mistakes. People who are good at making excuses are rarely good at much else. *"The lazy man is full of excuses."*
- **Never stop learning.** All leaders are learners -- the moment you stop learning, you stop leading. The dinosaurs became extinct because they could not adapt to a changing environment. Can you? *"The intelligent man is always open to new ideas -- in fact, he looks for them."*
- **Economize your time and energy.** We all have the same amount of time, but winners manage it better. They realize that time is more valuable than money. They work smarter, not harder. *"There is a right*

Daily Sunshine In The Son

time and a right way to do everything."

- **Resolve to stick with it.**

Winners do not know how to quit. They keep on "keeping on". They learn from their failures. Winners realize that discouragement is a choice. You can get up and start over. *"For if a righteous man fails seven times, he rises again."*

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

Ask God to help you build these six (6) qualities into your life? **Proverbs 3:6 says, "In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success." (Living Bible)**

I pray for the needs of others, especially

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
List ways that you are picking up your cross daily and following Jesus.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Today, Lord, I need

Lord, today I thank You for:

What Do You Expect?

April 25

"Delight yourself also in the Lord/And He shall give you the desires of your heart." - Psalm 37:4

Bruce taught college in Oregon. Upon beginning his first semester teaching, he was told that the college placed students in English classes by their level of ability. Bruce was assigned to teach two "average ability" classes and one "advanced ability." He really enjoyed teaching the advanced class: they were more alert, more fun to be with, asked better questions, and as expected, had a higher grade average than the other classes.

On the final day of the semester, Bruce commented on these differences to the other professors in the faculty lounge. He said he hoped to receive more advanced classes next semester. But to his surprise, his department director said, "Bruce, I do not know where you received your information but we phased out the average/advanced distinction a year ago. You have been teaching mixed classes all semester like the rest of us!"

Bruce could not believe it! He checked his records, and sure enough, there were far more "A"s and "B"s in the class he *thought* was full of smart kids. And he really *had* enjoyed teaching that class more. But the only real difference between the classes had been Bruce's *expectations* of them.

YOU CAN SET PEOPLE UP FOR SUCCESS OR FAILURE BY YOUR EXPECTATIONS.

People tend to become what they think we expect them to be. If you communicate to the people you work with that you expect them to be lazy, uncreative, and negative – that is probably how they will respond to you. On the other hand, treat people like winners and they become winners. Psychologists call it "The Pygmalion Effect."

- The best salesmen *expect* customers to buy their product.

Daily Sunshine In The Sun

- The best executives *expect* employees to have creative ideas.
- The best speakers *expect* audiences to be interested.
- The best leaders *expect* people to want to follow.
- The best teachers *expect* students to learn.

Lord, today I thank You for:

Would you like to bring out the best in those around you? Here's the key: **Treat them the way they could be!** Do not just "tell it like it is". Tell it like it *could* be. Jesus once said, "*According to your faith it will be done to you.*"

What are you expecting this week...from yourself... from others...from God?

EXPECT THE BEST!

Praise God For: His Forgiveness

Thank God For: the Gospel

Ask God's Forgiveness For: not consistently sharing the Gospel with others

Ask God To Help: all receive Jesus

Ask God To Supply Our Need For: renewed strength

Thank You for these answers to prayer:

I pray for the needs of others, especially

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Make a list of the needs of people who are close to you. Ask God to show you how you might meet a need this week.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Breaking Out Of A Rut

April 26

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you'll never get anything done." -Ecclesiastes 11:4 (Living Bible)

It is easy to get stuck in a *rut* at work; same place... same thing...same responsibility. But settling into a rut is dangerous. As Will Rogers used to say, "Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there!"

What does it take to get you moving? There are three (3) common motivators:

- **PAIN** - motivates us to change. Often it is not "*seeing the light*" that gets us going, but "*feeling the heat.*" You delay the dentist appointment until the pain is unbearable.
- **PRESSURE** - when the doctor says "Lose 50 pounds or die," or the boss says, "Improve performance or be fired." The problem with pressure as a motivator is that it does not last. When the pressure subsides, so does your motivation. There is a better motivator.
- **PERSPECTIVE** - when you see the big picture, or when you are inspired by a challenging vision or purpose. You realize that you are wasting your potential.

The Bible says, "*If you wait for perfect conditions, you'll never get anything done.*" (Ecclesiastes 11:4 Living Bible)

HERE ARE FOUR STEPS FOR BREAKING OUT OF A RUT:

1. **ASSUME** responsibility for your own life. Refuse to be either an *Excuser* (rationalize failure) or an *Accuser* (blame others). Instead, be a **CHOOSE**R and choose to break out of the rut you're in.

2. **BELIEVE** you can change! Stop saying "I can't" and start saying "I can."

3. **CLARIFY** what you really want. Write down specifically how you'd like to change.

4. **DON'T WAIT** for ideal circumstances. Stop saying "When things settle down.." Do it now! "One of these days" is really *NONE* of these days.

PRAY THIS: "God help me this week to do something differently this week and to do it better. Give me your strength to change."

- Praise God For:** Christ our Redeemer
- Thank God For:** wise men
- Ask God's Forgiveness For:** half-hearted commitment
- Ask God To Help:** all who come to Him
- Ask God To Supply Our Need For:** recommitment to Him

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
Write down one problem that is causing you to experience a lack of joy. Ask God to give you back your joy and to grant you a willing spirit to sustain you in the days ahead.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Commitment Traps In Business

April 27

"It is a trap for a person to dedicate something rashly and only later to consider his vows." - **Prov. 20:25)**

Have you ever..
promised to deliver by a set date
and later regretted it?

volunteered for a job you had no
idea would take so long?

agreed to a deal that looked great
but wasn't?

accepted an invitation you wish
you hadn't?

Eventually, we all learn by experience a
basic law of life:

**IT IS ALWAYS EASIER TO GET IN
THAN GET OUT!**

The Bible says, *"It is a trap for a person
to dedicate something rashly and only
later to consider his vows."* (Pr.20:25)

There are three common commitment
traps in business:

- **The Money Trap:** It is always easier
to get *into* debt than *out of* debt! It's

always easier to borrow than to pay it
back.

- **The Partnership Trap:** It is always
easier to get *into* a partnership than to
get out of one! Falling in love is easy -
the difficult part is staying in love.

- **The Time Trap:** It is always easier to
fill your schedule than to *fulfill* it!
You can get so many irons in the fire
that you put out the fire! The person
who burns the candle at both ends is
not as bright as he thinks he is.

THE SOLUTION? Remember what the
Bible says – do not make rash vows. In
other words...

**CHOOSE YOUR COMMITMENTS
CAREFULLY!**

**THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK!
UNDER-PROMISE AND OVER-
DELIVER!**

You will build a reputation as a person
of your word - and that is worth its

Don't Give Up

April 28

"Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing, if we don't get discouraged and give up."-Gal.6:9

Calvin Coolidge once said, "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

Great people are just ordinary people with an extraordinary amount of determination. They simply do not know how to quit. They just keep on "keeping on".

I believe that a person's greatness is not determined by his or her fame, position, or wealth but rather *what it takes to discourage that person*. You can tell a lot about someone by watching how he or she responds to criticism or failure. It reveals character.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO DISCOURAGE YOU?

- ... Things do not go your way?
- ... Expectations are not met?
- ... Someone disapproves of how you did it?

The Bible says this: *"Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing, if we don't get discouraged and give up."(Gal.6:9)*

Things that last usually require more time and determination than usual. When God wants to make an oak tree, he takes sixty (60) years. When he wants to make a mushroom, he takes six (6) hours. Do you want your **business** to have the stability of an oak tree or a mushroom? Do you want your **career** to be an oak tree or mushroom? How about your **family...** or your **personal life**?

CONSIDER: What have I been tempted to give up on, that I know is the right thing to do?

PRAY THIS: "God, give me the energy to persist this week."

REMEMBER THIS: *"I can do **all** things through Christ who gives me the strength."*
(Philippians 4:13) Hang in there!

Praise God For: darkness

Character Traits of Successful People

April 29

“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me”-Phil. 4:13

The road to success is not straight. There is a curve called *Failure*, a loop called *Confusion*, speed bumps called *Friends*, red lights called *Enemies* and caution lights called *Family*. You will have flats called *Jobs*. But, if you have a spare called *Determination*, an engine called *Perseverance*, insurance called *Faith*, a driver called *Jesus*, you will make it to a place called *Success*.

They are hard working. There is no such thing as easy money. Success takes hard work and people who are willing to do it.

They are honest. Those who are successful long-term are the honest ones. Dishonest people may get the first sale, but honest people will get all the rest!

They persevere. How many success stories will go untold because they never happened or because someone quit? Successful people outlast everyone else.

They are friendly. Have you noticed that most successful people are friendly and people oriented? This endears them to others and enables them to lead others to accomplish the task.

They are lifelong learners. Successful people are people who stretch themselves and grow continually, learning from all areas of life, including from their mistakes.

They over-deliver. The old statement of under-promise and over-deliver became famous because it made a lot of people successful, including the richest man in the world - Bill Gates

They seek solutions in the face of problems. Problems are opportunities to do the impossible, not just complain. Successful people are the ones who find solutions.

- Praise God For:* His friendship
- Thank God For:* childhood friends
- Ask God's Forgiveness For:* avoiding responsibility
- Ask God To Help:* the discouraged
- Ask God To Supply Our Need For:* friends

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:
What situations are you allowing to block God's joy in your life? Ask God to take away the joy blockers from your life and give you courage to conquer them. Find at least one opportunity today to bring joy to a joyless situation.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

When Time Seem To Be Too Limited

April 30

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life..." -Psalms 27:4

Because of several deadlines I have set for myself I am finding myself feeling rushed, a bit overwhelmed by all that has to be done, pressured, even talking to myself. One of the things I could be heard saying is, "There is not enough time to get everything done that needs to be done." I have found myself running from place to place, task to task, and hour to hour trying my best to get everything done on my "to do" list before the day is done. I have found myself getting frustrated, irritated, and easily distracted.

PREVIEW

From time to time as I zipped from one location to another trying to do too much in too little time if anyone happened to get in my way moving a little slower than I think they should, if anyone were listening they could have heard me say, "What are you doing? Get out of my way!" Those outbursts are usually followed by a period of reflection and repentance.

I don't get like this very often, but when I do it is not unusual for me to wake up in the morning thinking about all I need to get done, and go to bed at night thinking about all I should have gotten done that I didn't get done, or that I forgot that I was supposed to have gotten done.

INNERVIEW

My schedule is probably not any busier than yours. In fact, it is not unusual at all to hear others say the same thing I said earlier, "There is not enough time to get everything done that needs to be done." Yet, somehow I know that's not true. As overwhelming as some days (and weeks, and months) may be, there really is time to get things done that need to be done.

I believe that is some of what Paul was saying when he said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." I don't believe Paul meant to imply he could do everything that he wanted to do. In fact, earlier in the letter he had expressed how much

Daily Sunshine In The Son

he wanted to be with these people but was unable to do so. In Romans 7 he describes his struggle with the flesh and indicates that there were some things that he wanted to do but could not, and some things he did not want to do, but he kept doing them.

I do believe he was expressing a basic principle for the believer that he had the power, the ability, and the time to do the things that God wanted him to do.

REVIEW

Perhaps our frustrations are caused in part because we make our lists of things that we want to do, or things that we think that we need to do. Then, we drive ourselves nuts trying to do things that could have gone undone. Instead, when I concentrate on doing the things that God wants me to do my life settles down and joy returns.

When I give my friend my undivided attention. When I treat my neighbor like a neighbor. When that young person gets someone who really is interested in them and actually listens to them. When my students get a teacher. When my wife gets a truly attentive husband. When the Lord gets a servant.

This week is likely to get just as busy as last week, but the challenge is to focus more on doing what I know the Lord wants me to do, and what I know I have time for. If you can rearrange your schedule, I invite you to join me in living differently this week.

Praise God for: His generosity!

Thank God for: keeping me company!

Ask God's forgiveness for: avoiding strangers!

Ask God to help: the lonely and alone!

Ask God to supply our need for : compassion for the lonely !

DIGGING DEEPER AND REACHING HIGHER:

Do you doubt God's care for you? Have you been trying to reach your goals without his help? Tell God about it and ask Him to lead you to victory.

Journal for Digging Deeper:

Lord, today I thank You for:
