

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

PRESSING

FORWARD

TO VICTORY

PRAYER AND FASTING JOURNAL

BISHOP KEVIN K. DICKERSON



2023 Dickerson Ministries Publications

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Dickerson Ministries Publications

Irving, Texas 75015

Prayer & Fasting Journal 2023

Bishop Kevin K. Dickerson

Prayer and Fasting

Bible Study

The Right Way To Fast

Matthew 6:16-18

Fasting

- Fasting is more than not eating for a period of time
- Fasting is abstaining from natural food for a **spiritual purpose**
- The issue is so **consuming** that it becomes more important than food
- I'm willing to deny myself the "daily bread" I need
- Set food aside to **concentrate** on seeking God about the matter
- The objective of fasting is to concentrate upon God and **His answer** about a matter
- Jesus expects believers to fast
- Any ordinance or spiritual discipline can be abused or done with the wrong motive or spirit

Fasting The Wrong Way

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

- Fasting without God as the center of the fast is hypocritical ***Isaiah 58:5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes, and an acceptable day to the LORD?***
- Fasting for recognition
 - We want others to think we are **"super spiritual"**
 - We want others to think this is the look of those who fast
 - We take the **glory** that belong to God and shine it on ourselves
 - We want to share our fasting experiences with others so they can be in awe of us
 - We change how we behave and look so others will know it's "fast day"
- Fasting the wrong way has its own rewards
- All you get is the **applause** and **recognition** of men
- You may even gain control and discipline of your body, but the prideful show before men will cost you your reward that **only God** can give ***Hosea 4:7 As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore, will I change their glory into shame.***

Fasting The Right Way

But thou, when thou fastest, ...

- We are expected to fast
- Fasting is a duty of all disciples
- The objective of our fasting as disciples of Christ is seeking His presence
- There is no prescribed **frequency** of fasting

- But we fast when:
 - o There is a **special pull** of the Spirit to be alone with God
 - o Special **needs** arise
 - o We want to **humble** ourselves before God
 - o Before making **major decisions**
- o Fasting the right way makes the disciple “dead” to the:
 - o **Applause** of men
 - o **Criticism** of men

Fast without drawing attention to yourself

...anoint thine head, and wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not unto men to fast,

- Keep your physical appearance up
- You should look like you always look
- Your **behavior** should not change
- Your **attitude** should not change
- No one should know you are on a fast
- You don't want people to notice you, your fast is unto God
- Remember you are on a **private** fast, but you operate in a **public** world

Fasting is between you and God alone

...but unto thy Father which is in secret:

- God is the object of the fast
- Your fast is between you and God
- All your **attention** is toward God
- It is a secret, and secrets are not discussed because:
 1. What God has said or shown you is for you
 2. That's your reward
 3. God may not be finished “talking” to you
- Desiring to fast is to get in the presence of the Lord regarding a special issue

Benefits of Fasting the Right Way

...and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

- Fasting the right way has its rewards, God rewards our “secret time” openly
- His rewards are always greater than recognition of men
- God honors proper and sincere motives
- Fasting keeps us in the presence of the Lord
- Fasting **humbles** us before the Lord
- Fasting teaches us to be **dependent** on God for the answer
- Fasting teaches us **discipline** and **control** over our bodies
- Fasting keeps us from being a **slave** to any food or habit
- Fasting has **health benefits**

Prayer and Fasting

Daily Lessons

Day 1

Pressing for the Prize

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Philippians 3:14 (KJV) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Reflection: Apostle Paul was a witness to the original Olympic Games, and he viewed the Christian life as running, and tracking toward the finish line. In track, the runner is focused only on the finish line. The runner does not look back, to the right or the left, their only goal is the finish line. The runner strains and leans forward to cross the finish line. The goal for the believer is spiritual maturity and Christlikeness, every day we are to be striving to be more like Jesus. In the Olympic Games during Paul's day, the winner received a laurel crown of leaves, which would eventually wither and die. The prize believers strive for is being with Jesus Himself in heaven and the crown of life that never fades away. What are you doing to grow spiritually and become more like Jesus? What do you think heaven will be like?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 2

Use All Your Arrows

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: *2 Kings 13:14,18-19 (NLT2)* **14** When Elisha was in his last illness, King Jehoash of Israel visited him and wept over him. ... **18** Then he said, “Now pick up the other arrows and strike them against the ground.” So the king picked them up and struck the ground three times. **19** But the man of God was angry with him. “You should have struck the ground five or six times!” he exclaimed. “Then you would have beaten Aram until it was entirely destroyed. Now you will be victorious only three times.”

Reflection: Elisha was near the end of his life and King Jehoash visited him. Elisha told the king to pick the arrows and shoot the ground. King Jehoash only shot three arrows when there were many more arrows available. Elisha was upset with the king because he did not fully take advantage of his opportunity. As a result, Elisha told the king that his victory over Aram would not be complete. Many things God wants to do in our lives never come to fruition, or are never finished, because of a lack of faith, opposition, or discouragement. Make a list of the things you believe God wants to do through you. What is keeping you from completing the items on your list? How do obstacles, opinions of people, or discouragement affect your faith?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 3

Victory Over My Flesh

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Romans 7:23-25 (NLT2) **23 But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So, you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.**

Reflection: Every day we are in a spiritual battle. We have a desire to obey the commands of God, but we don’t always obey them. Paul was painfully aware of his sin, and if we are honest, so are we. What can we do about it? We should follow Paul’s example and remind ourselves that we have been delivered from sin by our faith in Jesus. If we yield to the pressure of sin, we know that we have open access to the presence of God to ask for forgiveness. Jesus freed us from the law of sin and death by dying on the cross for us. Then He sent the Holy Spirit to empower us to live a holy and righteous life. The Holy Spirit doesn’t eliminate the battles within, but the Holy Spirit can change the outcome. You don’t have to be defeated by sin. The Holy Spirit gives you the power to resist. The Holy Spirit gives you the power to discern. The Holy Spirit gives you the power to overcome. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your life?

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 4

Keep Moving Forward

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Exodus 14:15 (KJV) And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward:

Reflection: The Israelites have been delivered from 400 years slavery in Egypt. Moses is leading over two million Israelites to the Promised Land. Suddenly, they came to the Red Sea, but Pharaoh and his army are behind them, and they have no way out. They can't go back. Moses cries out to the Lord and God says, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward." How can they go forward when Moses and the Israelites have no boats, there were no bridges, and the Red Sea is big for two million people to safely swim across. But God told Moses to go forward. Moses and the Israelites *kept moving forward* and they crossed the Red Sea on dry land! How did they do it? God did the miraculous, the unexpected, and the supernatural as they kept moving forward. There are problems, obstacles, and challenges in every life, but you cannot let them stop you; you must keep moving forward. God is ready, willing, and able to do the miraculous for you when you keep moving forward! What is your Red Sea? What is keeping you from obeying God's command to keep moving forward?

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 5

Victory Over Fear

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 56:1-4 (NLT2) **1 O God, have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long. 2 I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me. 3 But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. 4 I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me?**

Reflection: When you are afraid what do you do? Some people do nothing because they are paralyzed by fear. Others allow fear to silence them. Still others retreat because of fear. In this text Saul was seeking David's life and he was overwhelmed by fear. But David realized the antidote to fear is faith in God. When his fears became more than he could bear, he compared the size of his fears to the greatness of his God. When David focused on God, he realized God would fulfill His promises. With confidence in God's plan for his life, David no longer feared what people could do to him. No mortal human being could derail or overrule God's purpose for his life. When you are afraid, what is your faith level? How has your faith in God helped when you are afraid?

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 6

Victory Over Procrastination

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Ecclesiastes 11:4 (NLT2) **Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest.**

Reflection: I will start my business someday. I will serve in my church someday when my schedule frees up. I will start exercising when I get some new workout clothes. I will finish my degree someday. I will clean out the garage when the weather warms up. I will honor God with my finances when I have more money. One of the greatest hindrances to victory and success in life is waiting for the perfect time to get started. It's called *procrastination*. If we are waiting for the perfect conditions, we won't accomplish very much. If we wait for things to be just right, time and opportunities may be lost. We must break the spirit of procrastination by taking action even when conditions are not perfect. There are things God wants to do through you in your life, family, career, finances, and in your church *today*. Name some of the ways you procrastinate. What can you start today to strengthen your walk with God? What can you do right now to jumpstart some of the things you've put off? Identify someone in your life to become your accountability partner to help you get things done.

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 7

Victory Through Faith

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: 1 John 5:4-5 (KJV) For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Reflection: Every believer should memorize this passage because it is central to living a victorious Christian life. Every person who is *born of God* (believes Jesus is the Son of God) overcomes the world. The conquering power that overcomes the world is our faith. It is our faith that saves us, and it is our faith that keeps us. We are saved by faith; we walk by faith. We are born children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is the only way in which you and I will be able to overcome this world around us. How has your faith in Jesus helped you overcome the world? How does knowing that Jesus dealt with every temptation we face, successfully help you deal with the enticements, temptations, and attractions of the world?

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 8

Moving On

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Philippians 3:13 (KJV) Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Reflection: Some people are prisoners of the past. They seem to dwell on past events in their lives. Someone talked about them, or they committed a sin, or got a super promotion three years ago. It could have happened a year ago, five years ago, twenty years ago, just last week. They can't seem to make any progress in life because they are constantly looking back. Dwelling on past hurts and sins hinder our spiritual growth and when preoccupied with past successes, we're at risk of getting lifted up in pride. Instead of focusing on the past, Paul invites us to strive for what's in front of us. God has a great future in front of us and the only way to experience it is to forget the past and move on to what He has in store for us. What has happened in your past that you can't move on from? Why? What area of your life will you start reaching for what God has in store for you?

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 9

Pressing Forward through Distractions

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 6:1-3 (NLT2) 1 Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies found out that I had finished rebuilding the wall and that no gaps remained—though we had not yet set up the doors in the gates. 2 So Sanballat and Geshem sent a message asking me to meet them at one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But I realized they were plotting to harm me, 3 so I replied by sending this message to them: “I am engaged in a great work, so I can’t come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?”

Reflection: Nehemiah has worked hard to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah worked to obtain the materials for the walls, cast vision for the wall to the leaders of Jerusalem, mobilized teams to work on the wall, and overcame opposition to work on the wall. The wall is almost finished, and Nehemiah’s enemies want to have “a meeting” with him. Nehemiah recognizes it as *a distraction* and says, “I’m doing a great work, I can’t come”. The closer you get to your goal; the enemy will devise ways to get you from finishing what God has called you to do. Have you ever been distracted by the enemy and how did you handle it? What are you doing to stay focused on your goals and avoid distractions?

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 10

Hidden Sins Bring Defeat

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Joshua 7:1-5 (NLT2) 1 But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the LORD. A man named Achan had stolen some of these dedicated things, so the LORD was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was the son of Carmi, a descendant of Zimri son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah. 2 Joshua sent some of his men from Jericho to spy out the town of Ai, east of Bethel, near Beth-aven. 3 When they returned, they told Joshua, “There’s no need for all of us to go up there; it won’t take more than two or three thousand men to attack Ai. Since there are so few of them, don’t make all our people struggle to go up there.” 4 So approximately 3,000 warriors were sent, but they were soundly defeated. 5 The men of Ai chased the Israelites from the town gate as far as the quarries, and they killed about thirty-six who were retreating down the slope. The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away.

Reflection: Joshua and the Israelites had just defeated Jericho and God said don’t take any of the spoils. Joshua didn’t know Achan had stolen gold, silver and clothing and hid it in his tent. Joshua went to Ai and was so confident that they overestimated the strength of their army and thought they needed only 3,000 soldiers to defeat such a small town like Ai. The Ai army defeated them and Joshua lost 36 soldiers. The hidden sins of Achan were directly related to the defeat. The Bible says in Proverbs 28:13 (NLT2) people who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy. One way to avoid spiritual defeats caused by hidden sins is to confess and receive God’s mercy. Write a prayer of repentance for unconfessed sins.

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 11

You Shall Recover

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 30:7-8 (KJV) 7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. 8 And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

Reflection: David and his fighting men returned from battle only to discover their city was burned to the ground and their wives, children and their livestock were taken. Even David's own fighting men threatened to stone him. In the midst of all of this, David asked for the ephod, a prayer garment worn by the priest. In the crisis, David prayed for direction on whether he should go after the enemy. Not only did God say pursue the enemy, but that David would recover everything he lost. God's guidance through prayer is critical for believers when we face spiritual attacks. And the promise of recovery that God made to David is a promise for us as well. What has the enemy stolen from you? Make a list. Whatever the enemy has stolen from you pray that you shall, without fail, recover all!

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 12
Shake It Off and Keep Moving!

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Acts 28:1-5 (NLT2) 1 Once we were safe on shore, we learned that we were on the island of Malta. 2 The people of the island were very kind to us. It was cold and rainy, so they built a fire on the shore to welcome us. 3 As Paul gathered an armful of sticks and was laying them on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand. 4 The people of the island saw it hanging from his hand and said to each other, “A murderer, no doubt! Though he escaped the sea, justice will not permit him to live.” 5 But Paul shook off the snake into the fire and was unharmed.

Reflection: As Christians we have a common enemy, the devil, and we must be watchful because spiritual attacks can and will happen. We are not exempt from attacks from the enemy. While you are helping and serving others, the enemy from the seat of hell may attack to stop you from serving God’s people. People may see what the enemy is doing, but instead of helping you, they will blame you for what you are experiencing. People may even stand by and watch to see how this spiritual attack affects you. But God will use the attack of the enemy on your life to help unbelievers see that God is greater than the attacks of the enemy. We may not be able to avoid enemy attacks, but we do have the power to shake it off! What has been your response to a spiritual attack? How can you use your snakebite as a witnessing tool to encourage unbelievers to accept Jesus? How did you shake off your attack from the enemy?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 13

What You Have is Enough

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Judges 3:31 (KJV) 31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

Reflection: God chose Shamgar to be a judge over Israel. Shamgar was not someone most would consider to be a leader of people because he didn't have the traits of a leader. Shamgar was a farmer. What Shamgar lacked in education, connections, speaking ability, etc., he more than made up for it by defeating the enemy with an "ox goad" and saved Israel. An ox goad is a rod with a metal tip; it's a cattle prod. An ox goad is not much of a weapon against skilled Philistine soldiers. But Shamgar had two things going for him; 1) he was a godly man chosen by God, and 2) he used what he had. An ox goad *dedicated* to God can become a weapon of victory. You have been chosen by God to do great things. What has God placed in your hands? Make a list of your spiritual gifts, talents, skills, and natural abilities. How are these spiritual gifts, talents, skills, and natural abilities being used to glorify God and help others experience victories in their lives?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 14

Ready for Battle

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 6:10-11 (KJV) **10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

Reflection: We don't have to live a life of spiritual defeat because we have access to the power and might of God Himself. Paul instructs believers to: *Be strong* – God will empower you with His power, His strength, His might *In the Lord's power* - the sovereign, unlimited power, and dominion of God *In the Lord's might* - the force and the ability of God. Our strength is found only in the Lord. Our strength is not the human, fleshly strength, but it is found only in our relationship with God. Our relationship with God gives us the inner strength to overcome the trials and temptations we face in this life. We have no power or strength of our own that can defeat any adversary, discern any deception, or overcome any temptation. As believers, we are to always be dependent on the strength and power of the Almighty God

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 15

Victory Through Contentment

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Philippians 4:11-13 (NLT2) **11 Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.**

Reflection: Paul says regardless of what state his life is in, he's learned to be content. The key word is *learned*. Contentment is a *learned* behavior. Contentment is being satisfied to the point where you are not disturbed or upset with where you are or what you have in life. We learn contentment by trusting and depending on God regardless of what's happening to us or around us. True contentment comes from being at peace with where you are and who you are in Christ Jesus. The secret to contentment is not more things, it is knowing that Jesus Christ gives us the strength we need to do whatever He wants us to do. The word "content" means *enough*. No matter the situation you face, Jesus will supply *enough* of whatever you need, to do whatever is needed at that moment. Why do you think many people have a difficult time being content? In what area have you struggled with contentment? What are some ways you can learn to be content?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 16

Press Your Way to Jesus

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Mark 5:25-29 (KJV) 25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, 26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, 27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. 28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. 29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

Reflection: How determined are you to receive what Jesus has for you? A woman has a 12-year medical condition that has gotten worse instead of better. She has spent all her money on doctors and the laws of the day considered her an outcast to society. She heard Jesus was nearby and *she believed* that if she could just touch Jesus' garment, she would be whole. Despite her illness, violating the laws of the day, and the huge crowd, this woman was going to try to get to Jesus. This determined woman had the faith to *press* her way through the crowd and touched Jesus' robe and *immediately* she was made whole. What does it mean *to press* to get to Jesus today? What do you have to *press through* to get to Jesus? Is it doubt, your past sins, unbelief, fears, or something else?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 17

Total Dedication

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:57-62 (KJV) 57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Reflection: Jesus was headed to Jerusalem despite the fact it would mean persecution and crucifixion. And many said they would follow Him without considering the cost of following Jesus. What Jesus expects of us as His disciples is total dedication. As Christians we must realize the cross comes *before* the crown. There will be times when we experience persecution, problems, and trials in living for Jesus. The cost of discipleship is following Jesus without looking back; no matter what. As a believer, what challenges, persecutions, or temptations have you faced? If you are not a believer, what's keeping you from giving your life to Jesus?

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 18

Same Enemy, Same God, Different Strategy

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: 1 Chronicles 14:13-16 (NLT2) **13** But after a while the Philistines returned and raided the valley again. **14** And once again David asked God what to do. “Do not attack them straight on,” God replied. “Instead, circle around behind and attack them near the poplar trees. **15** When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, go out and attack! That will be the signal that God is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistine army.” **16** So David did what God commanded, and they struck down the Philistine army all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

Reflection: Spiritual victories are wonderful, but many times the enemy you defeated today will retreat and regroup to fight you again another day. That’s what happened to David. He defeated the Philistines once before, but they returned to the same place to battle David again. David did not presume He knew how to handle the enemy this time. He didn’t look at the situation and say the situation appears the same, I’ll fight them like I fought them last time. Nor did He presume God would tell him to fight the enemy the same way he did before. David went to God *again* in prayer for directions. God is the same in His purpose, His promise, and His power, but He is versatile in His strategies to bring you victory. God said, don’t move until you hear the sound of troops in the tops of the mulberry trees. That sound of troops was God going before David defeating the enemy. The battle was won in the same place, over the same enemy, by the same God, but God used a different strategy! If you encounter the same spiritual warfare, do you still consult God, or do you handle things yourself? What are the dangers of trying to defeat a spiritual enemy without consulting God?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 19

Don't Give Up

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 6:9 (NLT2) 9 So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

Reflection: Apostle Paul encourages the Galatian church not to get weary in well doing. Paul is also telling us don't get tired or weary from doing what is right. We may say I have worthwhile dreams and aspirations for my life, my family, my health, my finances, or my career, but I haven't seen any fruit from my efforts. In the season where there are no results, we must fight the urge to become complacent, relax, become lazy, or quit. If we do any of these things, we're assured that we won't get the results we desire. Giving up and quitting is easy. It takes no effort to quit, it takes no strategy to quit, it takes no prayer to quit, etc. We must realize that something is happening when we are doing what's right even when there are no visible results. God is developing *you* for the harvest you desire. God is growing you **internally**, so you can handle the harvest that is coming **externally**. God is developing your character, your patience, your perseverance to push through adversity. Keep going because in it you're growing. Don't be weary in doing what's right because God is doing something in you. What you're doing is not *wasted time*, it's going and growing time! How do you overcome the desire to quit? What have you seen God do in you when you felt like quitting? What would you say to a person who feels like giving up on their dreams?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 20

No Time to Waste

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: Ephesians 5:15-16 (KJV) 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Reflection: Life is short, as believers we have no time to waste. We must take advantage of every opportunity God gives us. We must:

1. *Be careful how we live* – Personally examine how you live, live purposefully, avoid foolish living, and walk in wisdom
2. *Make the most of your time* – God views times as an opportunity, and we are to make the most of every opportunity God gives us. We are to take advantage of these opportunities and not squander them
3. *Realize the days are evil* – We are living in imperious times; therefore, we are to live life with a sense of urgency. The evil in world will try to deprive you of the opportunities to do good, or attempt to destroy you for doing good

How can you make the most out of every opportunity God gives you? How does the enemy try to waste our time? As a Christian how can you best use your time?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

Day 21

Praise is Your Weapon

Daily Prayer: Thank you God for clarity, revelation and understanding of your Word I will receive today.

Scripture Reading: 2 Chronicles 20:21-23 (NLT2) After consulting the people, the king appointed singers to walk ahead of the army, singing to the LORD and praising him for his holy splendor. This is what they sang: “Give thanks to the LORD; his faithful love endures forever!” 22 At the very moment they began to sing and give praise, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves. 23 The armies of Moab and Ammon turned against their allies from Mount Seir and killed every one of them. After they had destroyed the army of Seir, they began attacking each other.

Reflection: Before going into the battle Jehoshaphat appointed singers that would march out in front of the army. ***They would sing, Praise the Lord for His mercy endureth forever!*** At that very moment, the choir began to sing, and the *Lord caused* the armies of Moab, Ammon, and Mt. Seir to ambush or attack each other. The praise of the choir confused the enemy. ***The devil can't understand how you can praise God during a crisis.*** The enemy was looking for an army with swords and spears and they encountered an *army of praisers!* Praise breaks the stronghold of the enemy. The devil can't stand to hear praises. Jehoshaphat and Judah won the battle and literally took three days to gather all the enemy's valuables! What makes praise an effective weapon in spiritual warfare? How does God respond when we praise Him?

My Action Steps:

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Closing Prayer: Thank you God for the wisdom I received from studying your Word today. I commit to apply your Word to my life, starting right now! Amen.

How You Can Receive Jesus Christ As Your Savior And Lord

If you would like to welcome Jesus Christ into your life, you can do so at anytime, anywhere. Consider these important facts:

God loves you and seeks a personal relationship with you!

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me. Revelation 3:20

The problem is: Everyone has been born into this world spiritually dead because of sin.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

Jesus will forgive us of all sin, assuring us of eternity in Heaven!

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

To receive Jesus, pray in this manner:

Lord Jesus, I'm a sinner. Please come into my life and forgive me of all sin. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. Now, fill me with Your Holy Spirit and guide me from this day forward. Thank You, Lord, for loving me!

Amen.



Bishop Kevin and Pastor Sonjia Dickerson are the *Shepherds* of the Dayspring Family Church located at 618 N. Belt Line Road in Irving, Texas. Since 1994, they have dedicated themselves to leading families to Jesus Christ, equipping them to be available for service in the work of the Lord.

Bishop Dickerson walks under a strong apostolic mantle as he fervently pursues the will of God. He preaches a message that is relevant and applicable to the issues that the world faces today. His ministry assignment is worship, leading others into the presence of the Lord, and teaching God's Word.

Bishop Dickerson also mentors pastors in building spiritually and financially strong churches to accomplish their God-given visions. In 2007 he founded the Vision Fellowship of Churches, a network of pastors working together to do the work of the Lord.

Pastor Sonjia Dickerson is a woman of foresight and capability, accompanied by a great love for the people of God. She serves on various community boards and coordinates the Outpouring Women's Conferences, which continue to impact the lives of many women each year. Pastor Sonjia is the Founder and Executive Director of C.L.A.S.S. Inc., (Cultivating Leaders Achieving Scholastic Success). She established C.L.A.S.S. to address the dropout rate in the state of Texas by annually applauding the accomplishments of students graduating from High School. The program provides students with leadership development training and awards a monetary scholarship to each graduate.

Pastor Sonjia ministers with enthusiasm and captures the heart and mind of the hearer. She speaks a sound word with a lively style that allows for the move of the Holy Spirit.

Bishop Kevin and Pastor Sonjia Dickerson have been married for 38 years and God has blessed their marriage with three wonderful children; Kevin II (Dr. Chante), Cherese (Pastor Rodney) Carter, Jr., and Faith.

Contact Information:

Dickerson Ministries

P.O. Box 154142—Irving, Texas 75015

972.399.7729—dayspringfamilychurch.org

@Bshp_Dickerson and @pastorsonjia

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