AN ENEMY CALLED AVERAGE

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(UPDATED VERSION)

WARNING: TRUTHS IN THIS BOOK CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO AREAS OF MEDIOCRITY IN YOUR LIFE

INTRODUCTION:

Mediocrity is a region bound on the north by compromise on the south by indecision, on the east by past thinking, and on the west by a lack of vision.

One morning as I woke up, the first thought that came to my mind before my feet hit the floor was the phrase "an enemy called average." At that moment, I knew that God had given me the title for the book that had been stirring within me for so long.

The purpose of this book is to address areas in your life that need improvement and to stir up the God-given gifts and call within you. People have been endowed with mixture of opportunities that makes them unique. No mixture is insignificant. There is something that God has place within each of us that causes us to cry out to be above average and extraordinary.

In Genesis 3:9, God asks Adam, "Where are you?" He is still asking that question of each of us today. Where are we in regard to God"s plan "for our lives? Where are we concerning the gifts and talents He has given us?

It is my prayer that as you read this book, you will allow the Holy Spirit to reveal God „s plan for you and to inform, exhort and correct you so that you will bound past every area of mediocrity and find total fulfillment in your life.

PART 1

LOOKING INWARD

NUGGET #1

YOUR LEAST FOVOURITE COLOR SHOULD BE BIEGE

*Never try to defend your present position and situation. Choose to be a person who is on the offensive, not the defensive**. People who live defensively never rise above being average.** Instead take the initiative. Lukewarm, indecisive people are never secure, regardless of their wealth, education or position.*

Don"t ever let your request for balance become an excuse for not taking the unique, radical, invading move that God has directed you to take. Many times the attempt to maintain balance in life is really just an excuse for being lukewarm, In Joshua 1:6-7,9, the Lord says three times to Joshua, "Be strong and courageous," I believe that He is saying the same thing to all believers today.
When you choose to be on the offensive, the atmosphere of your life will begin to change. So if you don"t like the atmosphere of your life, choose to take the offensive position. Taking the offensive is not just an action outside a person: it is also a decision made within.

When you do choose to be on the offensive, keep all your conflicts impersonal. Fight the issue, not the person. Speak about what God in you can do, not what others are incapable of doing. ***You will find that when all of your reasons are offensive, you cause almost never succeeds.***

Being on the offensive and taking the initiative are master keys that open the doors of opportunity in your life. Learn to create a habit of taking the initiative, and ***don"t ever start your day in neutral.*** *Every morning when you feet hit the floor, you should be thinking of the offensive, taking control of your day and your life. Don"t become like some people who lose an hour in the morning and spend the rest of the day trying to recover it.*
By pulling back and being defensive, you usually enhance the problem. Intimidation always precedes defeat. If you are not sure which way to go, pray and then move toward the situation if faith.

Be like the two fishermen who got trapped in a storm in the middle of a lake. One turned to the other and asked, "Should we pray or should we row?" His wise companion responded, "Let"s do both!"

That"s taking the offensive.

NUGGET #2

THE ONLY PLACE TO START IS WHERE YOU ARE

Start with what you have, not whit what you don"t have. ***Opportunity is always where you are never where you were.*** *To get anywhere you must launch out for somewhere, or you will get nowhere. Hamilton Mabie said, "The question for each man to settle is not what he would do if he had the means, time, influence, and education advantages, but what he will do with the things he has.." God will always give us an ability to create what we need from something that is already here.*

Each person tends to either underrate or overrate that which they do not possess. Ed Howe, "People are always neglecting something they can do and trying to do something they can"t do." I agree with Teddy Roosevelt when he said, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." The only way to learn anything thoroughly is by starting at the bottom (except when learning how to swim.) To be successful, do what you can.

Ken Keys Jr. said, "To be upset over what you don't have is to waste what you do have". The truth is that many are successful because they didn't have the advantages others had. Successful people accomplish more that others because they go ahead and to it before they are ready."

Epicurus said, "Do not spoil what you have by desiring by what you have not; but remember that what you now have was once among the things only hoped for." Henri Amiel observed, "Almost everything comes from almost nothing."

*No improvement is as certain as that which proceeds from the right and timely use of what you already have. Mike Murdock said, "Whatever God has already given to you will create anything else. He has promised to you." **Everyone who has arrived had to begin where they were.***

The truth is you can't know what you can do until you try. The most important thing about reaching your dream is starting right where you are. Edward Hail said," I cannot do everything, but I still can do something; and because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something I can do."

"NO LONGER, FORWARD NOR, BEHIND

I LOOK IN HOPE OR FEAR;

BUT GRATEFUL, BUT TAKE THE GOOD I FIND,

THE BEST OF NOW AND HERE"

(John Greenleaf Whittier)

NUGGET #3

GROWTH COMES FROM BUILDING ON TALENTS, GIFTS, AND STRENGTHS NOT BY SOLVING PROBLEMS

One of the most neglected areas in many lives is the gift that God has placed within them. It is amazing how some people can devote their entire life to a field of endeavor or a profession that has nothing do with their inborn talents. In fact, many people spend their lifetime trying to change how God has made them. They ignore their God-given abilities while constantly seeking to change their natural makeup. As children of God, we need to recognize our innate fits, talents and strengths and do everything in our power to build on them.

One good thing about God"s fits and calling is that they are permanent and enduring. Romans 11:29 says, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. The Greek word translated repentance in this verse means irrevocable. God does not take away His gifts and calling in your life. Even if you"ve never done

anything with the, even if you„ve failed time and time again, *God"s* ***fits and calling are still resident*** *within you. They are there this day, and you can choose to do something with them, beginning right now.*

Critics and talents are really God"s deposits in our personal accounts, but we determine the interest on the. The greater the amount of interest and attention we give to the, the greater their value becomes. ***God"s gifts are never loans; they are always deposits****. As such, they are never used up or depleted. In fact, the more they are used, the greater, stronger, and more valuable they become. When they are put to good use, they provide information, insight, and revelation that cannot be received in any other way or from any other source.*

As Christians we need to make full use of all the gifts and talents that God has bestowed upon us so that we do not abound in one area while becoming bankrupt in another. There is a saying, "If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to treat everything like a nail." Don"t make that mistake; use all of the gifts God has given you. If you choose not to step out and make maximum use of the gifts and talents in your life, you will spend your day on this earth helping others reach their goals. Most people let others

control their destiny. Don"t allow anyone to take over the driver"s seat in your life. Fulfill your own dreams and determine you own life"s course.

Never underestimate the power of the fits that are within you. ***Gifts and talents are given to us not only so that we can fulfill to the fullest the call in our won lives, but also so that we can reach the souls who are attached to those gifts.*** *There are people whose lives are waiting to be affected by what God has placed within you. So evaluate yourself. Define and refine your fits, talents, and strengths. Choose today to look for opportunities to exercise your unique, God-endowed, God-ordained gifts and calling.*

NUGGET #4

DO MORE…

Do more that exist. Live.

Do more that hear. Listen.

Do more that agree. Cooperate.

Do more that talk. Communicate.

Do more that grow. Bloom.

Do more that spend. Invest.

Do more than think. Create.

Do more than work. Excel.

Do more than share. Give.

Do more than decide. Discern.

Do more than consider. Commit

Do more than forgive. Forget.

Do more than help. Serve.

Do more than coexist. Reconcile.

Do more than sing. Worship.

Do more than think. Plan.

Do more than dream. Do.

Do more than see. Perceive.

Do more than read. Apply.

D more than receive. Reciprocate.

Do more than choose. Focus.

Do more than wish. Believe.

Do more than advice. Help.

Do more than speak. Impart.

Do more than encourage. Inspire

Do more than add. Multiply.

Do more than change. Improve

Do more than ponder. Pray.

Do more than just live. Live for Jesus.

NUGGET #5

TODAY A READER, TOMORROW A LEADER-(W. FUSSELMAN.)

Have you ever noticed there are people you know who are literally at the same place today as they were five years ago? They still have the same dream, the same problems; the same alibis, the same opportunities, and the same way of thinking. They are standing still in life. It"s like their watch stopped five years ago, and so did they. God"s will for us is to grow, to continue to learn and improve. The biggest room in our house is always the room for self-improvement.

A famous saying reads: " It„s what you learn after you know it all that counts." . I must admit that I am somewhat of a fanatic about this. I hate to have idle time in which I am not learning anything. Those around me know what I must always have something to read or write during any idle moment that might arise. In fact, I try to learn from everyone. I learn what to do. Learn from the mistakes of others. You won"t live long enough to make all the mistakes

yourself. ***You can learn more from a wise man when he is wrong that a fool who is right.***

Goethe said, "Everybody wants to be nobody wants go grow." I agree with Van Crouch: "You will never change your actions until you change your mind." An important way to keep growing is to never stop asking questions. The person who is afraid of asking is ashamed of learning. ***Only hungry minds can grow.***
We should learn as if we will live forever and live as if we are going to die tomorrow. Harvey Ullman said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether this happens at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps on learning not only remains young, but becomes consistently more valuable regardless of physical capacity." Timothy is instructed: "Study to show thyself approved unto God…" (2 Timothy 2:15). It"s fun to keep learning. Learning brings approval to your life.

Learn from others. Learn to see in the challenges of others the ills you should avoid. Experience is a present instructor that keeps us from repeating the past in the future. ***Life teaches us by giving us new problems before we solve the old ones.*** *Think education is expensive or difficult? Listen to Derek Bok: "If you think education is expensive- try ignorance."*

NUGGET #6

A MAN WITH ONE WATCH KNOWS WHAT TIME IT IS; A MAN WITH TWO IS NEVER QUITE SURE. – (ANONYMOUS)

*Indecision is deadly. Have you ever noticed that some of the most miserable people you know are those who can never make a decision**? When the mind is in doubt, it is easily swayed by slight impulses, opening the door to many wrong decisions.** Many times indecision causes things to go from bad to worse. The middle of the road is the most dangerous place to be.*

*We believers should be the most decisive of all people. Christian leaders should have wills not wishes. In James 1:8 the Bible says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." An indecisive person allows instability to creep into every area of life. If we don"t decide what is important to others**. The greater degree of wishful thinking, the greater degree of mediocrity.** Being decisive, being focused, and committing ourselves to the fulfillment of a*

dream greatly increase our probability of success, while closing the door to wrong options.

The challenge is to be decisive dreamers. Harry Truman once said, "Some questions cannot be answered, but they can be decided." Even when we do not have all the facts available, we usually have all the facts needed to make a decision. The Bible says to let the peace of God rule in our hearts (Colossians 3:15). The Amplified version tells us to let the peace that comes from Christ act as an umpire in our hearts. His peace can literally say "out" to that relationship. His peace can say "safe" to that business idea.

Of all matters, we should be most decisive in spiritual matters. If we're neutral in spiritual matters, we'll eventually find ourselves operating against heaven. Thank God we serve a decisive Lord. He has given us His peace and His Word so that we can make wise decisions. We should not be the kind of people who claim that God has told us one thing this week, and the very opposite next week God does not change His direction that dramatically; nor does He ever direct anyone to act contrary to the good sense and sound judgment shown in His Word.

God wants us to be decisive. As His children, we would be like our heavenly father, with whom there is "no variableness, neither shadowing of turning" (James 1:17). We should be people of great wills. ***If the devil controls our will, he controls our destiny. But if God controls our will, then He controls our destiny.***

The choice is ours. Let's be decisive. Let's make the right decision. Don't be a person who says, "My decision is may be, and that's final".

NUGGET #7

GET AHEAD OF YOURSELF

"Our business in life is not to get ahead of others, but to get ahead of ourselves – to break our own records, to outstrip our yesterdays by today, to do our work with more force than ever before" (Stewart Johnson). If you would like to know who is responsible for most of your troubles, take a look in the mirror. If you could kick the fellow responsible for most of your problems, you wouldn"t be able to sit down for three weeks. It"s time for us to stay out of our own way.

Most of the stumbling blocks people complain about are under their own hats. Louis XIV commented, "There is little that can withstand a man who can conquer himself." The Bible"s wisdom counsels, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls (Proverbs 25:28)

Your future depends on many things, but mostly on you (Frank Tyger). You many succeed if nobody else believes in you, but you will never succeed if you don"t believe in your mind, you mind will

go to work to accomplish. When you change your pictures, you automatically change your performance." Whatever you attach consistently to the words "I am," you will become.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "It is impossible for man to be cheated by anyone but himself." Gain control of your mind, or it will gain control of you. Your imagination dictates your openness to positive direction. As Norman Vincent Peale remarked, "Do not build up obstacles in your imagination. Remind yourself that God is with you and that nothing can defeat Him."

"Our best friends and our worst enemies are the thoughts we have about ourselves" (Dr. Frank Crane). Stop looking only at where you are, and start looking at what you can be. The Bible declares, "As (a man) thinketh in his heart (Proverbs 23:7). Be careful of your thoughts. They may become words at nay moment and actions very soon. Wrong thinking almost leads to misery.

No one can defeat you unless you first defeat yourself. *Self-image sets the boundaries and limits of each of our individual accomplishments. Charles Cotton said, "We are sure to be losers when we quarrel with ourselves; it is civil war. "If you doubt yourself, listen to Alexander Dumas: "A person who doubts*

himself is like a man who enlists in the ranks of his enemy and bears arms against himself." Tim Redmond observed, "Don't commit treason against your own life and purpose."

Your word first exists within you. Marriane Crawford said, "Every man carries with him the world in which he must live." Having trouble hearing "from God? "When God speaks, your mind will be your biggest enemy". (Bob Harrison). Facing major obstacles in life? James Allen answered, "You are the handicap you must face. You are the one who must choose your place." Remember you are your own doctor when it comes to curing cold feet, a hot head, and a stuffy attitude.

NUGGET #8

THE BEST TIME OF DAY IS NOW

Do you put off until tomorrow what you should have done yesterday?

When you kill time, you kill those callings God has placed within you. *The living Bible's version of Ecclesiastes 11:4 says, "If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done."*

The first step to overcoming procrastination is to eliminate all the reasons and excuses for not taking immediate action.

Everyone is on the move. People are moving forward backward, and sometimes nowhere at all as though they are on a treadmill. The mistake most people make is thinking that the main goal of life is to stay busy. Such thinking is a trap. What is important is not whether you are busy, but whether you are progressing. The question is once of activity versus accomplishment.

A gentleman named John Henry Fabre conducted an experiment with processionary caterpillars. They are so named because they have a habit of blindly following each other no matter how they are lined upon where they are going. In this experiment, Fabre placed these tiny creatures in a circle. For twenty-four hours, the caterpillars dutifully followed one another around and around and around.

Then Fabre placed the caterpillars around a saucer full of pine needles (their favorite food). For six days the mindless creatures moved around and around the saucer, dying from starvation and exhaustion even though an abundance of choice food was located less than two inches away.

They confused activity with accomplishment.

Christians need to be known as those who accomplish great things for God-not as those who simply talking about. Procrastinators are good at talking, not doing. Mark Twain said: "Noise produces nothing. Often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as though she has laid an asteroid."

We need to be like the apostles. They were not known for their policies, procedures, theories, or excuses. They were known for their acts. Many people say that they re waiting for God, but in most cases God is waiting for the. Together with the psalmist, we need to say," Lord, my times are in your hands" (Psalm 31:15 NIV). The cost of growth is always less than the cost of stagnation. As Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

The longer we take to act on God"s direction, the less clear it becomes. *Procrastination is a tool of the devil to hold us back and to make us miss God"s timing in our lives. "The desire of the slothful, killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour" (Proverbs 21:25).*

Occasionally you may see someone who doesn"t do anything yet seems to be successful in life. Don"t be deceived. Remember the old saying, "Even a broken clock is right twice a day." Let"s make progress-not excuses.

NUGGET #9

SAFETY LAST!

For many years, according to Herbert Casson, "Safety first" has been the motto of the human race… but it has never been the motto of leaders. A leader must face danger. He must take the risk and the blame and the brunt of the storm." If you want to be successful, you must either have a chance or take one. You can't get your head above water if you never stick your neck out.

A dream that does not include risk is not really worthy of being called a dream. Halifax said, "The man who leaves nothing do chance will do, few things badly, but he will do few things." If you'll never take risks, you'll never accomplish great things. ***Everybody dies, but not everyone has lived.***

C.S. Lew is said, "The safest road to hell is a gradual one the gentle slope, soft under foot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts." Elizabeth Kenny reflected. "It is better to be a lion for a day than a sheep all, your life." If you dare for nothing, you need hope for nothing.

If you don"t risk anything, you risk even more. *John Newman wrote, "Calculation never made a hero." Every person has a chance to improve himself, but some just don"t believe in taking chances. I agree with Lois Platford when she said, "You have all eternity to be cautious, and then you"re dead." Being destined for greatness requires you to take risks and confront great hazards.*

You"ll always miss 100 percent of the shots that you don"t take. Stemmons once said," When your chances are slim and none… go with slim." Morris West remarked, "If you spend your whole life inside waiting for the storms, you"ll never enjoy the sunshine." No one reaches the top without daring.

Listen to Conrad Hilton: "I encourage boldness because the danger of seniority and pension plans tempt a young man to settle in a rut named security rather than find his won rainbow." Chuck Yeager advised, "You don"t concentrate on risk. You concentrate on results. No risk is too great to prevent the necessary job from getting done."

Whenever you see a successful person, I guarantee that person took risks and made courageous decision. ***Success favours the***

bold. *The world is a book in which those who do not take risks read only one page. David Mahoney said, "Refuse to join the cautious crowd that plays not to lose. Play to win."*

Metastasis observed, "Every noble acquisition is attended with its risk; he who fears to encounter the one must not expect to obtain the other." Listen to Tommy Barnett: "Many people believe that you are really walking by faith when there is no risk, but the truth is the longer you walk with God… the greater the risk." If you have found throughout life never scared, embarrassed, disappointed or hurt; it means you have never taken any chances.

David Viscot wrote, "If your life is ever going to get better, you"ll have to take risks. There is simply no way you can grow without chances." You have a chance to improve yourself. Just believe in taking chances.

NUGGET #10

DON'T ASK TIME WHERE IT'S GONE; TELL IT WHERE TO GO

All great achievers, all successful people, are those who have been able to control their time. All human beings have been created equal in one respect: each person has twenty-four hours each day. We must give our best time to our most challenging situation. It's how much we do that matters; it's how much we get done. I remember my dad always telling me." Don't spend a dollar's worth of time for ten cent's worth of results. "We should choose to watch our time, not our watch.

Make sure to take care of the vulnerable times in your day. These vulnerable times are the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night. I've heard a minister say that what a person is like alone at midnight and alone in the morning reveals that person's true self. These are the most potent times of the day, when productivity and idea generation are at their maximum.

If you are saying, "I could be doing big things if I weren't so busy doing small things," then you need to take control of the time. ***The***

greater control you exercise over your time, the greater freedom you will experience. *The psalmist prayed, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). The Bible teaches us that the devil comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy (John 10:10), and this verse applies to time as well as to people.*

I often hear people saying; "I'd give anything to be able to …" If you have said this, you should adopt the "6 x 1 = 6" leadership principle. If you want to write a book, learn to play a musical instrument, become a better tennis player, or do anything else that is important, then you should devote one hour a day, six days a week, to the project. Sooner than you think it will, what you desire will become reality. There are not many things that a person cannot accomplish in 313 hours a year! Just a commitment of one hour a day, six days a week, is all it takes.

We all have the same amount of time each day. The difference between people is determined by what they do with the amount of time at their disposal. Don't be like the airline pilot flying over the Pacific Ocean who reported to his passengers, "We're lost, but we're making great time!" Remember that the future arrives an hour at a time. ***Gain control of your time, and you will gain control of your life.***

NUGGET #11

THE NOSE OF THE BULLDOG IS SLANTED BACKWARDS SO HE CAN CONTINUE TO BREATHE WITHOUT LETTING GO- (WINSTON CHURCHILL)

Persistent people begin with their success where most others quit. We Christians need to be known as people of persistence and endurance. ***One person with commitment, persistence, and endurance will accomplish more than a thousand people with interest alone.*** *In Hebrews 12:1 (NIV) we read: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." The more diligently we work, the harder it is to quit. Persistence is a habit-so is quitting.*

Never worry about how much money, ability, or equipment you are starting with; just begin with a million dollar"s worth of determination. Remember: ***It"s not what you have; it"s what you***

do with what you have that makes all the difference. *Many people eagerly begin "the good fight of faith," but they forget to add patience, persistence, and endurance to their enthusiasm. Josh Billings said, "Consider the postage stamp. Its usefulness consists in its ability to stick to something until it gets there. "You and I should be known as "postage stamp" Christians.*

In 1 Corinthians 15:58, the Apostle Paul writes, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. For as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Peter tells us, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14). And wise Solomon points out, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before Kings" (Proverbs 22:29)

In the Far East the people plant a tree called the Chinese bamboo. During the first four years, they water and fertilize the plant with seemingly little or no results. Then the fifth year, the again apply water and fertilizer-and in five weeks time the tree grows ninety feet in height! The obvious question is whether the Chinese bamboo tree grew ninety feet in five weeks or five years? The answer is that it grew ninety feet in five years. If at any time during

those five years the people had stopped watering and fertilizing the tree, it would have died.

Many times; our dreams and plans appear not to be succeeding. We are tempted to give up and quit trying. Instead, we need to continue to water and fertilize those dreams, nurturing the seeds of the vision God has placed within us; because we know that if we do not quit, if we display perseverance and endurance, we will also reap a harvest. Charles Haddon Spurgeon said, "By perseverance the snail reached the ark" We need to be like that snail

NUGGET #12

WE CAN GROW BY OUR QUESTIONS AS WELL AS BY OUR ANSWERS.

Here are some important questions we should ask ourselves:

1. *What one decision would I make if I knew that it would not fail?*
2. *What one thing should I eliminate from my life because it holds me back from reaching my full potential?*
3. *Am I on the path of something absolutely marvelous or something absolutely mediocre?*
4. *If everyone in the United States of America were on my level of spirituality, would there be a revival in the land?*
5. *Does the devil know who I am?*
6. *Am I running from something, or to something?*
7. *What can I do to make better use of my time?*
8. *Would I recognize Jesus if I met Him on the street?*
9. *Who do I need to forgive?*
10. *What is my favourite scripture for me, my family, and my career?*
11. *What impossible thing am I believing and planning for?*

12. *What is my most prevailing thought?*
13. *What good thing have I committed to do that I have quit doing?*
14. *How have the people I respect earned that respect?*
15. *What would a truly creative person do in my situation?*
16. *What outside influences are causing me to be better or worse?*
17. *Can I lead anyone else to Christ?*
18. *In what areas do I need personal development?*
19. *What gifts, talents, or strengths do I have?*
20. *What is one thing that I can do for someone who has no opportunity to repay me?*

NUGGET #13

LIVING A DOUBLE LIFE WILL GET YOU NOWHERE TWICE AS FAST

Character is something you either have or are. Some people try to make something for themselves. Others try to make something of themselves. Tryon Edwards said, "Thoughts lead on to purposes; purposes go for in action; actions form habits; habits decide character; and character fixes our destiny." The Bible asserts in Proverbs in 22:1, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."

Character is the real foundation of all worthwhile success. ***A good question to ask yourself is, "What kind of world would this world be if everybody likes me?"*** *You are simply a book telling the world about its author. John Morely remarked, "No man can climb out beyond the limitations of his own character."*

Never be ashamed of doing right. Marcus Aurelious exhorted. "Never esteem as of advantage to thee that which shall make thee

break thy word or lose thy self-respect." W. J. Dawson counseled, "You need not choose evil; but only to fail to choose good, and you drift fast enough towards evil. You do not need to say, „I will be bad" You only have to say, „I will not choose God"s choice; and the choice of evil is already settled." There is no such thing as a necessary evil. Philips Brooks said, "A man who lives right and is right has more power in his silence than another has by his words."

Many a man"s reputation would not recognize his character if they met in the dark. To change your character, you must begin at the control center- the heart. Spiritual bankruptcy is inevitable when a man is no longer able to keep the interest paid on his moral obligations.

Henry Ward Beecher said, "No man can tell whether he is rich or poor by turning to his ledger. It is the heart that makes a man rich. He is rich according to what he is, not according to what he has." Live so that your friends can defend you, but never have to do so. Consider what Woodrow Wilson said: "If you think about what you ought to do for people, your character will take care of itself." Excellence in character is shown by doing unwitnessed what we would be doing with the whole world watching.

Let me pose this question for you: ***Would the boy you were be proud of the man you are?*** *You're called to grow like a tree, not like a mushroom. It's hard to climb high when your character is low. The world's shortest sermon is preached by the traffic sign: Keep Right.*

NUGGET #14

OBEY THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

The Ninth Commandment can be summarized in one statement. "Thou shall not lie." Each Christian should be a person of unquestionable integrity. Gray is never right; it must be either black or white.

Hope built on a lie is always the beginning of loss. *Never attempt to build anything of a foundation of lies and half-truths. It will not stand.*

It has been said that it should be easy to make an honest living because there is so little competition. ***Only a person with honesty and integrity can be accurately motivated or directed.*** *Lying will always distort your ability to see God's guidance in your life. It will cause you to take steps that are not right for you: Lying will cost you more in the long-term than you think it saves you in the short-term.*

Lying easily becomes a habit. A person who lies once will lie again with less effort the next time. Lying is a trap. No one has good enough memory to be successful liar.

T.L Osborn says, "Always tell the truth, and you never have to remember what you said."

In Proverbs 12:22 we read, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight." Proverbs 19:9 says," A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish." In Colossians 3:9-10 the Apostle Paul admonishes us:

Lie not to one another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds: and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.

The Bible mentions seven results of lying. If you lie:

1. *You will attract liars into your life (Proverbs 17:4)*
2. *You will lack understanding (Psalm 119:104)*
3. *You will never enjoy permanent results (Proverbs 12:19; 21:28)*
4. *You will end up in a bondage (Galatians 2:4)*

5. *You will be punished (Proverbs 19:5)*
6. *You will become a fool (Proverbs 19:5)*
7. *Your lies will come back upon you (Psalm 7:14-16)*

Little white lies grow to be big black lies. Determine to be free from the bondage of breaking the Ninth Commandment; determine to always tell the truth.

NUGGET #15

STATUS QUO (LATIN FOR "THE MESS WE'RE IN)

Change. I Hope this word doesn"t scare you, but rather inspires you. Herbert Spencer said, "A living thing is distinguished from a dead thing by the multiplicity of the changes at any moment taking place in it." Change is an evidence of life. It is impossible to grow without change. Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. ***The truth is, life is always at some turning point.***

What people want is progress, if they can have it without change. Impossible! You must change and recognize that change is your greatest ally. ***The person who never changes his opinion never corrects his mistakes.*** *The fact is the road to success is always under construction.*

Yesterday"s formula for success is often tomorrow"s recipe for failure. Consider what Thomas Watson, the founder of the IBM

Corporation, said, "There is a world market for five computers." Where would IBM be today if Mr. Watson had not been willing to change?

You cannot become what you are destined to be by remaining what you are; John Patterson said, "Only fools and dead men don't change their minds. Fools won't. Dead men can't." If you don't respect the need for change, consider this: How many things have you seen that have changed just in the past year? When you change yourself, opportunities will change. The same kind of thinking that has brought you to where you are will not necessarily get you to where you want to go.

Do not fear change, for it is an unchangeable law of progress. ***The man who uses yesterday's methods in today's world won't be in business tomorrow.*** *A traditionalist is simply a person whose mind is always open to new ideas, provided they are the same old ones. Odell Shepard observed, "There are people who not only strive to remain static themselves, but strive to keep everything else so… their position is almost laughably hopeless.*

Mignon McLaughlin said, "It's the most unhappy people who most fear change." ***When patterns and tradition are broken, new***

opportunities come together. *Defending your faults and errors only proves that you have no intention of quitting them. All progress is due to those who were not satisfied to let well enough alone. They weren't afraid to change. Change is not your enemy – it is your friend.*

NUGGET #16

DON'T WASTE YOUR TOMORROWS WANDERING ON YOUR YESTERDAYS

Get rid of any "loser"s limps" you„re still carrying from your yesterdays. As you do, you"ll break the power of the past domination of your present and its influence over your future.

In Luke 9:62, Jesus said, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit of the kingdom of God." If we are not careful, we will allow the past to hold us. ***The more we look backward, the less we are able to look forward.*** *The past is not the only determining factor of what God can do for us today.*

That is the beauty of the Christian life. Even when we fail, we can ask for forgiveness and be totally cleansed of and released from our past actions. Whatever hold the past may have on us can be broken; it is never God who holds us back. We hold ourselves back by allowing the past to keep us from living to the fullest in the present and future. Failure is waiting around the corner for those

who live off of yesterday's successes and failures. ***We should choose to be forward-focused, not past-possessed.*** *We should learn to profit from the past and to invest in the future.*

In Philippians 3:13-14, the Apostle Paul writes:

"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. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The key here is "forgetting those things which are behind" in order to reach for "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." To fulfill our calling in Christ, we must first forget that which lies behind us. The most common stronghold in people's lives is probably their past failures and mistakes. Today is the day to shake off the shackles of the past and to move forward.

The past is past; it has no life.

NUGGET #17

NOAH DIDN'T WAIT FOR HIS SHIP TO COME IN- HE BUILT ONE

Seize the moment! Oral Robert once said, "Miracles are coming by you or to you everyday." Today was once the future from which you expected so much in the past. Horatio Dresser said, "The deal never comes. Today is ideal for him who makes it so." Live for today. ***Don"t let what you have with in your grasp today be missed entirely because only the future intrigued you, and the past disheartened you.***

Doing the best at this moment puts you I the best place for the next moment? When can you live if not now? All the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today. Seneca said, "Begin at once to live." Ellen Metcalf remarked, "There are many people who are at the right place at the right time but don"t know it." It is okay to take time to play, but when the time of action has arrived, stop thinking and go for it!

The Bible says, "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). Marie Edgeworth said, "There is no moment like the present. The man who will not execute his resolutions when they are fresh on him can have no hope from them afterwards; for they will be dissipate, lost and perished in the hurry and scurry of the world, or sunk in the slough of indolence.

John Burroughs said, "The lesson which life repeats and constantly reinforces is, Look under foot: You are always nearer than you think… The great opportunity is where you are. Do not despise your own place and hour." The most important thing in our lives is what we are doing now.

Know the real value of today. I agree with Jonathan Swift when he said, "May your live all the days of our life." The future that you long and dream for begins today. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Write it on your heart that everyday is the best day of the year."

The regrets that most people experience in life come from failing to act when they have an opportunity. *Albert Dunning said, "Great opportunities come to all, but many do not know that they have met them. The only preparation to take advantage of them is*

to watch each day brings." Heed 2 Corinthians 6:2: "Now is the accepted time." I agree with Martial when he said, "Tomorrow life is too late; live today." Wayne Dyer observed, "Now is all we have. Everything that has ever happened, anything that is ever going to happen to you, is just a thought." Today, well lived will prepare you for both the opportunities and the obstacles of tomorrow.

Few know when to rise the occasion. Most only know when to sit down. ***Many spend too much time dreaming of the future, never realizing that a little of it arrives everyday****. I agree with Ruth Schabacker when she said, "Everyday comes bearing with its own gifts. Untie the ribbons."*

NUGGET #18

FEAR AND WORRY ARE INTEREST PAID IN ADVANCE ON SOMETHING YOU MAN NEVER OWN.

Fear is a poor chisel for carving out tomorrow. Today, if you are viewing your future from a position of fear or worry. I want to let you know that view is not accurate or correct. Instead, view your future from a position of faith. That's the truth. Worry is simply the triumph of fear over faith.

There is a story about a woman crying profusely and standing on a street corner. A man came up to her and asked why she was weeping. The lady shook her head and replied: "I was just thinking that may be someday I would get married. We would later have a beautiful baby girl. Then one day this child and I would go for a walk along this street, and my darling daughter would run into the street, get hit by a car, and die."

It sounds like a pretty ridiculous situation-weeping because of something that will probably never happen. Yet we act this way when we worry. We blow a situation out of proportion that might not ever come to pass.

An old Swedish proverb says, "Worry gives a small thing a big shadow." ***Worry is simply the misuse of the creative imagination that God has placed within each of us.*** *When fear rises in our minds we should learn to expect the opposite in our lives. The opposite of fear is faith.*

The word worry is derived from an Anglo-Saxon term meaning to strangle or to choke off. There is no question that worries and fears to choke off the creative flow from God. The less you worry, the more ideas, insight, and revelation you will have.

Things are seldom as they seem, "Skim milk masquerades as cream," said W.S. Gilbert. As we dwell on and worry about matters beyond our control, a negative effect begins to set in. Too much analysis always leads to paralysis. ***Worry is a route that leads from somewhere to nowhere. Never let it direct your life.***

In Psalm 55:22 the Bible says, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Never respond out of fear, and never fear to respond. Action attacks fear; inaction reinforces it.

Don"t worry and don"t fear. Instead, take your fear and worry to the Lord, "casting all your care upon Him; for he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7)

NUGGET #19

OUR WORDS ARE SEEDS PLANTED IN OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES

What we say is important. The Bible states that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matthew 12:34). We need to change our vocabulary; we need to speak words of life and light. Our talk should always line up with the Word of God.

Christians should be known as those who speak positively-those who speak the Word of God into situations, those who speak forth words of life. When we speak wrongly, it diminishes our ability to see and hear the will of God.

We should not be like the man who joined a monastery in which the monks were allowed to speak only two words every seven years. After the first seven years had passed, the new initiate met with the abbot, who asked him, "Well, what are your two words?"

"Food's bad," replied the man, who then went back to his silence.

Seven years later the clergyman asked, "What are your two words now?

"Bed"s hard," the man responded

Seven years later-twenty-one years after his initial entry into the monastery- the man met with the abbot for the third and final time. "And what are your two words this time?" the abbot asked.

"I quit."

"Well, I"m not surprised," the cleric answered disgustedly. "All you"ve done since you got here is complain!"

Don"t be like the man; don"t be known as a person whose only words are negative.

If you are a member of the "murmuring grape Vine," you need to resign. In John 6:43 our Lord instructed his disciples, "Murmur not among yourselves." In Philippians 2:14-15 the Apostle Paul exhorted the believers of hi day:
"Do all things without murmurings and disputtings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the

midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

Contrary to what you may have heard, talk is not cheap. Talk is expensive! Our words are powerful. What we say affects what we get from others and what others get from us.

NUGGET #20

VERSUS

We make decisions every day. We are confronted daily with options. ***We must choose one or the other****. We cannot have both. These options may include many of the following:*

Being better versus being bitter

Decisiveness versus indifference

Enthusiasm versus being lukewarm

"How we can" versus "if we can" statements

Saying "Get up" versus saying "give up"

Security versus risk

Overcoming evil versus coping with evil

Standing out versus blending in

How much we get done versus how much we attempt to do

Opposite darkness versus coexisting with darkness.

Development versus destruction.

Obtaining versus complaining.

Committing versus trying

Peace versus strife

Choice versus chance

Determination versus discouragement

Growing versus dying

Demanding more of ourselves versus excusing ourselves.

Doing for others versus doing for ourselves.

Progress versus drifting

Priorities versus drifting

Accountability versus irresponsibility

Solutions versus problems

More of God versus more of everything else

Being in Who's Who versus asking "Why me?"

NUGGET #21

KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE ROCK WHEN YOU REACH THE END OF YOUR ROPE

Don"t quit. There is a big difference between quitting and changing however. ***I believe that when God sees someone who does not quit, He looks down and says, "There is someone I can use."***

In Galatians 6:9 (NIV) we are told, "Let us not become weary in doing good , for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give lip. "Look at this verse carefully. It urges us not to become weary, assuring us that we will not might, will-reap a harvest if we do not give up.

God does not quit. It is impossible for him to do so. In Philippians 1:6 (NIV) the Apostle Paul writes about "Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." There are several important pints in this verse. The most crucial is the fact that God does not quit. Therefore, we can have great confidence that He will

complete the good work He has begun in us. He will see us through every step until we reach our ultimate destination.

One of the best scriptural examples of a person who did not quit is Joseph. He had many reasons to justify giving up. When he was trapped in the pit where his brothers had thrown him because of their jealousy, I am sure he said to himself, "This is not the way I dreamed my life would work out!" Later, he had a marvelous opportunity to become discouraged and quit when he was thrown into prison for a crime he did not commit. Again he could have said to himself, "This is not right; I'm not supposed to be here." Although Joseph did not understand the steps through which the Lord would lead him, he remained true to his God. Despite the trials he faced, he did not quit. Eventually the dream that God has given Joseph became reality. He was elevated from a prisoner to a prime minister.

There is no greater reward than that which comes as a result of holding fast to the Word and to the will of God. *Only you can decide not to lose. Most people quit when they are on the verge of success. Often, success was at their fingertips. There is only one degree of difference between hot water and steam.*

In Luke 18 (NIV) Jesus told the parable of the persistent widow. The Bible reveals His purpose in relating this story. Verse 1 says, "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them they should always pray and not give up." The psalmist tells us, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

The only way we can lose is to quit. Quitting is the only decision we can make that can keep us from reaching God"s goals in our lives.

NUGGET #22

A GOAL IS A DREAM WITH A DEADLINE

In Habakkuk 2:2 the Lord tells the prophet, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it." This scripture reveals the key to successful goal setting.

The vision must be written. When you keep a vision in your mind, it is not really a goal; it is nothing more than a dream. There is power in putting that dream on paper. When you commit something to writing, commitment to achievement naturally follows.

God wrote His vision for us in the form of the Bible. He does not rely only on the Holy Spirit to guide us; He put His directions in writing. We are told to make the Word of the Lord plain upon "tables" (tablets) so that the vision is clear and "so that he may run that reads it."

The keyword is "run." God desires that we run with the vision in our lives. As long as we are running with the vision, we will not

turn around. When you walk with a vision, it's easy to change directions and go the wrong way. ***You cannot stroll to a goal.***

In Proverbs 24: 3-4 (TLB) we read: "Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts." Simply stated, effective goal setting provides an opportunity to bring the future to the present so that you can deal with it today. You will find that achievement is easy when your outer goals become inner commitment

Even though we have the Holy Spirit, we still need to prepare; He just makes us better equipment to do so. God does not desire for us to be disorderly or to waste funds. That's why proper planning is so important. Plan for potential. Believe for God's biggest dreams. When you plan, look to the future-not to the past. You will not drive forward effectively when you are looking out the rear window.

Always involve yourself with something that's bigger than you are because that's where God is. *In the beginning every great success seems impossible. We all have opportunity for success. Having a bad life requires as much energy as having a good life,*

yet most people live meaningless lives because they never decide to write their vision through. If you cannot see the mark, you cannot press toward it.

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established" (Proverbs 4:26). You will find that what you learn on the path to your goals is actually more valuable than achieving the goal itself. Columbus discovered America while searching for a route to India. Be on the lookout for the "Americas" in your path. Put God"s vision for your life on paper and begin to run with His plan.

NUGGET #23

SMILE. IT ADDS TO YOUR FACE VALUE

Christians should be the happiest, most enthusiastic people on earth. In fact, the word enthusiasm comes from the Greek word entheous, which means "God with" or "full of God".

Smiling proves that you are happy and enthusiastic. It is always a choice, not result. *It is a decision that must be consciously made. Enthusiasm and joy and happiness will improve your personality and people"s opinion of you. It will help you keep a proper perspective on life. Helen Keller said, "Keep your face to the" sunshine, and you cannot see the shadow"*

The bigger the challenge you are facing, the more enthusiasm you need. Philippians 2:5 (NIV) says, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." I believe that Jesus was a man who had s a smile oh His face and a spring in His step.

Our attitude always tells others what we expect in return.

A smile is a powerful weapon. It can break the ice in tough situations. You will find that enthusiastic is like having a head cold; both are very contagious. A laugh a day will keep negative people away. As enthusiasm increases, stress and fear decrease. The Bible says that the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

Many people say, "Well, no wonder those people are happy, confident, and positive; if I had their job and assets, I would be happy too!" Such thinking falsely assumes that successful people are positive because they have a good income and lots of possessions. But the reverse is true. Such people probably have a good income and a lot of possessions as a result of being positive, confident, and happy.

***Enthusiasm always inspires action. No significant accomplishment has ever been made without enthusiasm**. In John 15:10-11 (NIV) we have a promise from the Lord that says, "If you obeyed my father"s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you- and that your joy may be complete."*

The Lord"s joy and love are yours- so smile!

NUGGET #24

AN ALIBIS IS JUST A LIE

Quitting, giving up, failing, judging- all of these begin with an excuse. Never allow an obstacle in your life to become an alibi. "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment to the same things." (Romans 2:1 NIV). We Christians should be people who make progress, not excuses.

There have always been people who have tried to make excuses to the Lord. Some knew that their alibis were not true. And there were those who made excuses and actually believed them.

In Luke 14:18-20 (NIV) Jesus told a parable of the great end time banquet and the men who were invited to the Lord"s Table:

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, "I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me:

Another said, "I have just bought five yoke of oxen and I'm on my way to try them out.

Please excuse me: Still another said, "I just got married, so I can't come.

These men made excuses and missed out on salvation. All of them made the mistake of believing their alibis rather than God.

Moses and Gideon made excuses to the Lord, yet they recognized that their excuses were not the truth. In Exodus 4:10-12 (NIV), Moses said:

"O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue." The Lord said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go, I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

In Judges 6:15-16 (NIV), Gideon argued: "But LORD … how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the

least in my family: The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together."

Do not hide behind an excuse. In John 15:22 (NIV), Jesus said, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin."

An alibi is egotism turned inside out. It puts you first and takes God out of the picture. That's not the place to be.

NUGGET #25

DON'T QUIT AFTER A VICTORY

There are two times a person stops; after a defeat and after a victory. Successful people understand that there is greater opportunity right on the other side of the victory.

Robert Schuller says: "Don't cash in; cast into deeper water." Do not stop after a success; keep the forward momentum.

One of the great prizes of victory is the opportunity to do more. *The trouble is that we have often inoculated ourselves with small doses of success, which keep us from catching the big victory.*

Picture a large boulder at the top of a hill. This boulder represents our lives. If we rock the boulder back and forth and get moving, its momentum will make it almost unstoppable. The same is true for us.

The Bible promises us God's divine momentum. In Philippians 1:6 the Apostle Paul, writes: "Being confident of this very thing, that

he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." God's momentum always results in growth.

There are five ways to have divine momentum in your life:

Be fruitful (2 Corinthians 9:10)

Speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15)

Be spiritually mature (Hebrews 6:1)

Crave the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2).

Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus (2 Peter 3:18)

God's definition of spiritual momentum is found in 2 Peter 1:5-8 (NIV):

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control, and perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let go of whatever makes you stop.

NUGGET #26

THE BEST HELPING HAND YOU WILL EVER FIND IS AT THE END OF YOUR OWN ARM

One of the greatest lies people like to believe is that we are not responsible for own actions. We blame our mother, employer, our neighbor, the government, or society. But in Romans 14:12, the Bible clearly indicates who is responsible and accountable for our deeds: So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

We may attempt to shift the blame to others, but there is not escaping the truth: every time we point the finger at someone else, three fingers point back at us.

Throughout my career as a consultant, I met many businessmen who were looking for answers. It was amazing to me to see how many were anxiously searching for help, from other people when they had everything they needed to succeed. They were willing to give up control of their vision to others in exchange for money or

even Companionship. Their mistake was in looking to others instead of looking to God.

The false sense of security they found in others led them to unbalanced relationships, which eventually resulted in destruction of people and their dreams.

God sends people across our paths to bless and help us, but we should be directed by God and be very cautious when entering into any partnership. We must be sure that the reason for the relationship is right, and be sure that we are not merely looking for a shortcut.

For every successful partnership, there are hundreds of disasters. Exercise great caution when you are affiliated with someone else. In Exodus, God gave Moses some good advice that is applicable to us today. He said, "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you." (Exodus 34:12 NIV)

I believe that God want us to learn most things for ourselves. Mark Twain wrote, "A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn no other way."

Decide for yourself. Learn for yourself. Answer for yourself.

NUGGET #27

WHEN YOU GET KNOCKED DOWN, GET BACKED UP

How we respond to failures and mistakes is one of the most important decisions we make every day. How do you respond to failure? Failure does not mean that nothing has been accomplished. There is always the opportunity to learn something.

We all experience failure and make mistakes. In fact, successful people always have more failure in their lives than average people do. Great people throughout history have all failed at some point in their lives. ***Those who do not expect anything are never disappointed; those who never try never fail****. Anyone who is currently achieving anything in life is simultaneously risking failure. It is always better to fail in doing something than to excel at doing nothing. A flawed diamond is more valuable than as perfect brick. People who have not failures also have few victories.*

*People get knocked down; it is how fast they get up that counts. There is a positive correlation between spiritual maturity and how quickly a person responds to failures and mistakes. Individuals who are spiritually mature have a greater ability to get up and go on than people who are spiritually immature. The less mature the person, the longer he or she holds onto past failures***. *God never sees any of us as failures; He only sees us as learners.***

We truly fail only when we do not learn from an experience. The decision is up to us. We can choose to turn a failure into a hitching post or a guidepost.

*Here is the key to being free from the stranglehold of past failures and mistakes***. *Learn the lesson and forget the details*. *Have you ever noticed that he devil reminds you of the lesson? He only wants you to remember the details. Gain from the experience, but do not roll the minute details of it over and over I you mind. Build on the experience, and get on you're your life.*

Remember that the call is higher than the fall.

NUGGET #28

THOSE WHO DON'T TAKE CHANCES DON'T MAKE ADVANCES

People whose faith ran ahead of their minds have made all the great discoveries. *Significant achievements have not been obtained by taking small risks on unimportant issues. Do not ever waste time planning, analyzing, and risking on small ideas. It is always wise to spend more time on decisions that are irreversible and to spend less time that is reversible.*

Learn to stretch and reach out to where God is. Aim high and take risks. The World's approach is to look for the potential, not be restricted by the past. Those who make great strides are those who take chances and plan towards the challenges of life.

Don't become so caught up in the small matters that you cannot take advantage of important opportunities. Most people spend their entire lives letting down buckets into empty wells and then waste their days trying to pull them up again.

Choose to dream big, to strive to reach the full potential of your calling. Choose to major on the important issues of life, not on the unimportant. H. Stern said," If you're hunting rabbits in tiger country, you are hunting tigers, you can ignore the rabbits." There are plenty of tigers to go around. Do not be distracted by the rabbits of life. Set your sights on bigger game. If you want to see if you can really swim, don't frustrate yourself with shallow water.

Security and opportunity are total strangers. If an undertaking does not include faith, it is not worthy of being called God's direction. I do not believe that God would call any of us to do anything that would not include an element of faith in Him.

A famous old saying goes like this: "Even a turtle doesn't get ahead unless he sticks his neck out. ***" Dream big because you serve a big God.***

NUGGET #29

REMEMBER THAT THE FAITH TO MOVE MOUNTAINS ALWAYS CARRIES A PICK (ANONYMOUS)

Rising above mediocrity never just happens; it is always a result of faith combined with works.

Faith without works is like gold within the earth. It is of no value until it is mined out. ***A person who has faith but not actions is like a bird that h as Wings but no feet.*** *In James 2:17 the Bible says, "Even so faith, if it hath no works, is dead, being alone."*

Biblical principles multiplied by nothing equal nothing.

We need to be people who put our faith into action. One individual with faith and action constitutes a majority. Do not wait for your ship to come in; swim out to it! Thomas Edison said it best: "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." True faith has hands and feet; it

takes action. It is not enough to know that you know. It is more important to show that you know.

Work is not a vague spiritual concept. The word work appears 564 times in the Bible. When faith and works operate together, the result is a masterpiece. We should choose to keep our faith working all the time. George Bernard Shaw said, "When I was young, I observed that nine out of every ten things I did were failures. So I did ten times more work."

The founder of Holiday Inn, Kemin Wilson, replied to those who asked him how he became successful by saying, "I really don't now why I'm here. I never got a degree, and I've only worked half-days my entire life. I guess my advice is to do the same, work half-days every day. And it doesn't matter which half. The first twelve hours or the second twelve hours. "Tap into the power that is produced when faith is mixed with action, and then watch God move in your situation.

PART II

LOOKING OUTWARD

NUGGET #30

YOUR BEST FRIENDS ARE THOSE WHO BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOU

Misery wants your company. But, you don"t have to let it in the door. In Proverbs 27:19 (TLB) we read, "A mirror reflects a man"s face but what he is really like is shown by the kind of friends he chooses." Proverbs 13:20 tells us, "He that walk with wise men shall be wise but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." We become like those with whom we associate.

We need to be careful of the kind of insulation we use in our lives. We need to insulate ourselves from negative people and ideas. But we should never insulate ourselves from Godly counsel and wisdom.

A number of years ago I found myself at a stagnation point in a life. I was unproductive and unable to see God"s direction clearly. One day I noticed that almost all of my friends were in the same situation. When we got together, our problems were all we talked

about. As I prayed about this matte, God showed me that I needed "foundational level" people in my life. Such people bring out the best in us and influence us to become better people. They cause us to have greater faith and confidence and to see things from God"s perspective. After being with them, our spirits and our sights are raised.

I have found ***that it is better to be alone than in the wrong company.*** *A single conversation with the right person can be more valuable than years of study.*

The Lord showed me that I needed to change my closest associations and that I needed to have contact with the right people on a regular basis. These were men of strong faith, people who made me a better person when I was around them. They were the ones who saw the gifts in me and could correct me in a constructive, loving way. My choice to change my closest associates was a turning point in my life.

When you surround yourself with the right kind of people, you enter into the God-ordained power of agreement. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (TLB) states:

Two can accomplish more than twice as much as one, of the results can be much better. If one falls, the other pulls him up, but if a man falls when he is alone, he is in trouble. And one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer; three is even better, for a triple braid cord is not easily broken.

You need to steer clear of negative-thinking experts. ***Remember: in the eyes of average people, average is always considered outstanding.***

Look carefully at your closest associations, because it"s an indication of the direction you"re heading.

NUGGET #31

DON'T MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS BY WHAT OTHERS HAVE AND HAVEN'T DONE

Several years ago I met with a friend who I have known for over ten years. He looked at me and said, "John, I see all the great things that God has done in your life, and how He has caused you to increase in every way. But as I began to look at your life, I became full of doubt as to what God was doing in my life. He said, I saw what God was doing in my life. He said, I saw what He had done in yours, and I began to doubt that God was really working in mine, because I had not had the same success that you have."

I looked at him and said, "Well, if it's true that you feel bad because God has been good to me, then would it be true that your world feel better if I had had terrible failure and had been doing much worse over the past several years? He gave me a quizzical look and responded, "No that would not be true."

I said, well, if it is true for one it is true for the other. Really, it shows how inaccurate your thinking is. What happens in my life has nothing to do with what God is doing in my life.

You will find that God rarely uses people whose main concern is what others are thinking. *I believe that Jesus saw judging others halt progress. Judging others will always inhibit your forward motion.*

Some are inclined to measure their achievements by what others have done. Never measure your success by what others have or haven"t done. You are either a thermometer or a thermostat. You either register someone else"s temperature or your own. Pat Riley said, "Don"t let other people tell you what you want." No one can build a personal destiny upon the faith or experience of another person. Jacqueline Briskin advises, "Don"t take anybody else"s definition of success as your own.

Your faults will never vanish by calling attention to the faults of others. Many people have the mistaken idea that they can make themselves great by showing how small someone else is. It isn"t necessary to blow out the other person"s light to let your light

shine. Instead of letting their own light shine, some people spend their time trying to put the lights of others. What a waste?

If you think you are doing better than the average person, you„re an average person.

Why would you want to compare yourself with someone average? Too many people seem to know how to live everybody"s life but their own. We need to stop comparing ourselves to others.

NUGGET #32

TODAY IS THE DAY TO GET THROUGH WHAT YOU'VE BEEN GOING THROUGH

Stop talking constantly about the situation you are going through. Decide to get through. it! ***Do not accept your present, temporary situation as your permanent condition.*** *Make up your mind to get on with your life and to fulfill your divine purpose despite your current circumstances.*

God wants each of us to come through whatever situations we face. We are not to be moved by what we see but by what we do not see. This is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote that we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Today is the day to begin to walk by faith-right out of your present circumstances.

If you have been saying "I'm going through this situation," for years, you need to change your story. Begin to declare, "I've had enough! Now is the time I'm going to get through this mess!"

The Bible contains many promises that can deliver you today. If you will believe and appropriate these promises, you will begin to see your circumstances line up with the Word and will of God – eventually, if not immediately.

The devil tells us that we will never be victorious that will never get through what we are going through. The enemy wants us to think that there's nothing more permanent than our temporary situation. In 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV) we are told the truth.

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

You should take hold of this verse and us it as scriptural grounds to stand on. God is faithful. He will provide a way for you. You can take your stand of faith and boldly proclaim, "I'm going to get through what I've been going through!" Natural circumstances may still remain unchanged, but between your efforts and God's you are already through that situation.

Some people stay in the same hopeless situation their whole lives, never making a firm decision to see God and His power in order to

get through the circumstances they face. The commandment that tells us to be longsuffering does not require us to stay in a miserable situation one second longer than is absolutely necessary. Here is how we poise ourselves to break through: "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). Be transformed by renewing our mind with the Word of God. Then you will know the good and perfect will of the Lord, and you will be able to get through- once and for all what you have been going through for so long.

NUGGET #33

HAVE

Have peace enough to pass all understanding
Have hope enough to keep your heart looking forward.
Have strength enough to battle obstacles and overcome them
Have commitment enough to not give up too soon.
Have faith enough to please God
Have fun enough to enjoy every aspect of life.
Have patience enough to let faith complete its work in you
Have love enough to give to those who deserve it the least but need it the most
Have focus enough to say no to many good ideas.
Have forgiveness enough to never let the sun go down your wrath
Have honesty enough to never have to remember what you said
Have character enough to do in the dark what you would do in the light
Have gratitude enough to say "thank you" for the small things.
Have purpose enough to know why, not just how
Have perseverance enough to run the entire race that is set out before you

Have wisdom enough to fear God and obey Him

Have responsibility enough to be the most dependable person you know

Have confidence enough to know that you and God make a majority

Have kindness enough to share what you have and who are with others

Have mercy enough to forgive and forget

Have devotion enough to do the right things on daily basis

Have courage enough to face and fight any opposition to what you know is right

Have optimism enough to know that God"s plans are blessed

Have trust enough to know that God"s plans are blessed

Have expectancy enough to be on the lookout for miracles everyday

Have enthusiasm enough to show that God will direct your steps

Have obedience enough to do what is right without thinking twice

Have direction enough to know when and where to go

Have knowledge enough to know when and where to go

Have credibility enough to cause others to want to work together with you

Have generosity enough to give before being asked

Have compassion enough to be moved by the needs of others

NUGGET #34

EVEN POSTAGE STAMPS BECOME USELESS WHEN THEY GET STUCK ON THEMSELVES

*If you are only looking out for yourself, look out! Wesley Huber said, "There is nothing quite as dead as a self centered man- a man who holds himself up a self made success, and measures himself by himself and is pleased with the result***." *Is your favorite letter "I"?** *Listen to Ed Cole's words: "The core of sin is „I" no matter how you spell it." The only reason pride lifts you up is let you down.*

Norman Vincent Peale observed, "The man who lives for himself is a failure. Even if he gains much wealth, power or position he still a failure." Conceit makes us fool:. "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him" (Proverbs 26:12 NIV). The man who believes in nothing but himself lives in a small world. The best way to be happy is to forget yourself and focus on other people. ***Henry Courtney said, "The bigger a man's head gets, the easier it is to fill his shoes."*** *A swelled head always proves there is plenty of room for improvement.*

Alexander Pope observed, "The greatest magnifying glasses in the world are a man"s own eyes when they look upon his own person." Egotism is the only disease where the patient feels well while making everyone else around him feel sick. Egotism blossoms but bear no fruit. ***Those who sing their own praises seldom receive an encore.*** *Charles Elliot intones, "Don"t think too much of yourself. Try to cultivate the habit of thinking of others. Try to cultivate the habit of thinking of others; this; will reward you.*
Selfishness always brings its own revenge.

While gazing upon selfish accomplishments, the arrogant often miss God by failing to see what He is doing. Rick Renner said, "Don"t miss the plan of God by self-consumption.

When you are on a high horse, the best thing to do is to dismount at once. You can"t push yourself forward by patting yourself on the back. Burton Hills remarked, "It"s fine to believe in ourselves, but we mustn"t be too easily convinced. An egotist is his won best friend. The fellow who is deeply in love with himself should get a divorce.

Folks who boast of being self-made usually have a few parts missing. You can recognize a self-made man his head is oversized,

and he has arms long enough to pat himself on the back. ***A conceited person never gets anywhere because He thinks he is already there.*** *Change your favorite word from "I" to "You".*

NUGGET #35

WHEN YOU REFUSE TO CHANGE YOU END IN CHAINS

People are custom-built for change. *Inanimate objects like clothes, houses and buildings do not have the ability to truly change. They grow out of style and become unusable. But at any point in time, at any age, anyone of us is able to change. To change does not always mean to do the opposite. In fact, most the time, it means adding on or slightly adjusting what already exists.*

When the Lord calls us change, we often continue to reach toward the same goal but perhaps in a lightly differently way. When we refuse to cooperate with the change that God is requiring of us, we make chains that constrain and restrict us.

There are three things that we know about the future: First, it is not going to be like the past. Second, it is not going to be exactly the way we think it is going to be. Third the rate of change will take place faster than we anticipate. The Bible indicates that in the

end times in which we are now living – changes will occur more quickly than ever before in history.

In 1803 the British created a civil service position that required a man to stand on the Cliffs of Dover with a spy galls. His duty was to be a lookout against invasion. He was to ring a bell if he saw Napoleon Bonaparte"s armies approaching. This job was appropriate at the time, but that job was not eliminated until 1945! How many spyglasses on the Cliffs of Dover are we still holding onto in our lives? We should not let the way we are accustomed to doing things interfere with the opportunities God is providing for us today. There is nothing that remains as constant as change.

Even the most precious of all gems needs to be chiseled and faceted to achieve it best luster. ***Do not end up like concrete –all mixed together and permanently set.***

In Isaiah 42:9 the Lord declares: " Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them ." The Bible is a book that tells us how to respond to change ahead of time. You see, I believe that we can decide in advance how we will respond to most situations. When I was coaching basketball many years ago, I told by players that they

could prepare for most situations so they would know how to respond today when they got into the actual situation in the future. ***One of the main reasons the Bible was written was to prepare us ahead of time, to teach us how to respond in advance to many of the situations that we still encounter in life.***

Choose to flow with God's plan. Be sensitive to the new things He is doing. Stay flexible to the Holy Spirit and know that our God directs, adjusts, moves and corrects us. He is always working to bring us into perfection.

NUGGET #36

KEEP YOUR TEMPER
NOBODY ELSE WANTS IT

Don"t fly into a rage unless you are prepared for a rough landing. Anger falls one letter short of danger. ***People constantly blowing fuses are usually left in the dark. If you lose your head, how can you expect to use it?***

A Filipino saying advises: "Postpone today"s anger until tomorrow." (Then apply this rule the next day and the next.) When you are upset, take a lesson from modem science: Always count down before blasting off. Seneca quipped, "The best cure for anger is delay." Proverbs counsels, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirits than he that take a city (16:32). Blowing your stack always adds to the air pollution. You"ll never get to the top if you „keep blowing yours.

One of the worst fruits of anger is revenge. ***No passion of the human heart promises so much and pays so little as that of***

revenge. *The longest odds in the world are those against getting even with someone.*

Instead of revenge, consider what the Bible says: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, say the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in doing so thou shall reap coals of fire on his head" (Romans 12:19-20). Francis Bacon adds, "In taking a revenge a man is but even with his enemies; but in passing it over, he is superior."

Time spent in getting even is better used in trying to get ahead. *Revenge is like biting a dog because the dog has bitten you. When you trying to get even, you will always do odd things, "Vengeance is a dish that should be eaten cold" (An Old English Proverb).*

Marcus Antonius reflected, "Consider now much more you often suffer from your anger and grief, than from those very things for which you are angry and grieved." David Hume said, "He is happy whose circumstances, suit his temper; but he is more excellent who can suit his temper to any circumstances." Anger is a boomerang that will surely hit you harder than anyone or anything at which you throw it.

NUGGET #37

BEING A SEVANT WON'T MAKE YOU FAMOUS, JUST RICH

Some time ago, I received a phone call. When I answered the phone the voice on the other end said: "Bang, You're dead!" I paused. I did not know what to think about what had been said to me. Then I heard the familiar voice of James Campbell, a friend of mine. He said, "John, just calling to remind you that we need die to ourselves every day."

This is true. There is always room at the top for anyone who is willing to day, "I'll serve," and means it.

Several years ago I was listening to a Zig Ziglar tape. In his presentation he says, "You'll always have everything in life that you want if you'll help enough other people get what they want." When I hear that statement, something went off on the inside of me. Right then, I made an absolute decision to live that concept everyday. My life has not been the same since. ***True leadership always begins with servanthood.*** *Selfishness always ends in self-*

destruction. John Ruskin said, "When a man is wrapped up in himself he makes a pretty small package."

Being a servant is not always the most natural thing to do. We are all conditioned to think about ourselves. That is why 97 percent of people will write their own names when they are offered a new pen to try. Despite our tendency toward self-promotion, it is always true that more is accomplished when nobody cares who gets the credit.

God has always called us to serve those whom we lead. Be wiling to serve without trying to reap the benefits. Before looking for a way to get, look for a way to give.

No one is truly a success in life until he or she has learned how to serve. The old saying is true: "The way to the throne room is though the servant"s quarters." One of the most powerful decisions you can make in your life is to do something for someone who does not have the power or resources to return the favor. In Matthew 23:11 our Lord says, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." And in Matthew 20:26-27, He declares: "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among, let him be

your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

When you give of yourself to help other people, you cannot help; but be abundantly rewarded. The rewards and blessing of being a servant always extend far beyond the scope of what you can see or hear. The give always gets.

NUGGET #38

ADVERSITY HAS ADVANTAGES

The door to opportunity swings on the hinges of opposition. Caleb Colton said, "Times of general calamity and confusion have ever been productive of the greatest minds. The purest ore is produced from the hottest furnace, and the brightest thunderbolt is the one elicited from the darkest storm." Problems are the price of progress. The obstacles of life are intended to make us better, not bitter.

Obstacles are merely a call to strengthen your resolve to achieve worthwhile goals. Bob Harrison says, "Between you and anything significant will be giants in your path." Oral Roberts reflects, "You cannot bring about renewal or change without confrontation." ***The truth is, if you like things easy, you will have difficulties. If you like problems, you will succeed.***

If you have a dream without aggravations, you don"t really have a dream. Have the attitude of Louisa May Alcott: "I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ships." Samuel Lover said,

"Circumstances are the rulers of the weak; but they are the instruments of the wise." The Chinese have proverb that says, "The gem cannot be polished without friction, not man perfected without trials." It seems that great trials are the necessary preparation for greatness.

For every obstacle you face, God provides a scripture for your answer. Mike Murdock says, "If God"s cushioned your every blow, you would never learn to grow." Instead, don"t let your problems take the lead. You take the lead. The problem you face is simply an opportunity for you to do your best. ***Conflict is good when you know how to move with God.***

What attitude do we need to have toward difficulties? William Boetcker said, "The difficulties and struggles of today are but the best price we must pay for the accomplishment and victory of tomorrow." Lou Holtz advised, "Adversity is another way to measure the greatness of individuals. I never had a crisis that didn"t make me stronger."

When you encounter obstacles you will discover things about yourself that you never really knew. Challenges make you stretch; they make you go beyond the norm. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands in moments

of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. "Turning an obstacle to your advantage is the first necessary step towards victory.

God promises a safe landing, but not a calm voyage. Life is as uncertain as a grapefruit"s squirt. Consider what Sydney Harris said, "When I hear somebody day that Life is hard: I am always tempted to ask, Compared to what?" We might as well face our problems. We can"t run or fast or far enough to get away from them. Rather, we should have the attitude of Stan Musial, the famous Hall of Fame baseball player. Commenting on how to handle a spitball, he said, "I"ll just hit the dry side of the ball."

Charles Kettering said, "No one would have crossed the ocean if he could off the ship in the storm." The breakfast of champions is not cereal, it"s obstacles.

NUGGET #39

STAND OUT; DON'T BLEND IN

The majority, many times, is a group of highly motivated snails. If a thousand people say something foolish, it is still foolish. Truth is never dependent upon consensus of opinion.

In Peter 2:9 the Bible says of us Christians, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Romans 12:2 exhorts us, "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

One of the greatest compliments that anyone can give you is to say, "You're different!" *Christians live in this world, but we are aliens. We should talk differently, act differently, and perform differently. We should stand out.*

There should be something different about you. If you do not stand out in a group, if there is not something unique or different in your life, you should re-evaluate yourself.

One way to stand head-and-shoulders above the crowd is to choose to do regular, ordinary things in an extraordinary and supernatural way with great enthusiasm. God has always done some of His very best work through "ordinary" people when the circumstances appeared to be stacked against them. In fact, God sided with the underdog in every battle described in the Bible-the minority.

Majority rule is not always right. It is usually those people who do not have dreams or visions of their own who want to take a voice on everything. People who are part of a group tend to agree on courses of action that they as individuals know are not right.

Don"t be persuaded or dissuaded by group opinion. It does not make any difference what anyone else believes; you must believe. ***Never take direction for your personal life from a crowd. Never choose to quit just because somebody disagrees with you.*** *In fact, the two worst things you can say to yourself when you get an idea are: "That"s never been done before," and "That"s been done*

before!" Someone else"s failure in a certain area does not guarantee your failure.

Be a pioneer and stand out! Do not be afraid to get hit with a few arrows!

NUGGET #40

IF ENVY HAD A SHAPE, IT WOULD BE A BOOMERANG

Envy is the most ridiculous of ideas, for there is no single advantage to be gained from it. Consider this famous old saying: "When you compare what you want with what you have, you will be unhappy. Instead, compare what you deserve with what you have, and you'll discover happiness." It's not trying to keep up with the Joneses that causes so much trouble. It's trying to pass them. Washington Allston reflected, "The only competition, worthy of a wise mind is within himself." ***Nothing gets you behind faster than trying to keep up with people who are already there.***

If envy were a disease, everyone would be sick. Frances Bacon said, "Envy has no holidays. It has no rest." The envy that compares us to others is foolishness." But they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12)

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). Envy is one of the subtlest forms of judging others. Richard Evans said, "May we never let the things we can't have or don't have spoil our enjoyment of the things we do have and can have." ***What makes us discontented with our personal condition is the absurd belief that others are so much happier than we are.*** *Thomas Fuller said, "Comparison more than reality, makes men happy or wretched."*

Helen Keller says, "Instead of comparing our lot with those who are more fortunate than we are, we should compare it with the lot of the great majority of our fellow men. It then appears that we are among the privileged." Envy consumes nothing but its won heart. It is a kind of admiration for those whom you least want to praise.

An Irish proverb said, "You've got to do your own growing, no matter how tall grandfather was." *You'll find it's hard to be as happy as others if you believe others to be happier than they are. Worry about what people think of you, and you'll have more confidence in their opinion than you have in your own. Poor is the one whose pleasures depend on the permission and opinion of others.*

Saint Chrysoston reflected, "As a moth gnaws a garment, so doeth envy consumes a man." Envy provides the mud that failure throws at success. ***There are many roads to an unsuccessful-life, but envy is the shortest of them all.***

NUGGET #41

SAY NO TO MANY GOOD IDEAS

One of the devil"s tricks is getting us to say yes to too many good things. Then we end up being spread so thin that we are mediocre in everything and excellent in nothing. ***There is one guaranteed formula for failure, and that is to try to pleas everyone.***

Something that is good and something that is right are not always the same thing. A good idea is not necessarily a "God idea." Our responsibility as Christians is always to do the right things.

There comes a time in every person"s life when he/she must learn to say no to many good ideas. In fact, the more an individual grows, the more opportunities he or she will have to say no. One key to getting results is being focused. Perhaps no other key to growth and success is as overlooked as this is. The temptation is always to do a little bit of everything.

Remember, saying no to a good idea does not always mean saying never. No may mean not right now.

There is power in the word no. No is an anointed word. It can break the yoke of over-commitment and weakness. No can be used to turn a situation from bad to good, from wrong to right. Saying no can free you from burdens that you don't need to carry now. It can also free you to devote the correct amount of attention and effort to God's priorities in your life.

As you read the title of this nugget, past experiences and present situations probably come to mind. You probably recall many situations in which no or not right now would have been the right answer. Learn from them, and keep yourself from a multitude of mistakes and distractions.

Yes and no are the two most important words that you will ever say. These are the two words that determine your destiny in life. *How and when you say them affects your entire future.*

Saying no to lesser things can mean saying yes to priorities in your life.

NUGGET #42

THERE IS ALWAYS FREE FOOD ON A FISH HOOK

Did you know that the best shortcut you can ever take is to do what God says in His timing? *Shortcuts outside the will God invite compromise and create strife and confusion.*

Believers need to understand that we are doing distance runners. We are marathoners. We are not in a sprint, and we do not need to look for shortcuts that open the door to compromise.

There is an old saying that is absolutely true: "If you keep your attention on learning the tricks of the trade, you will never learn the trade." Watch out for fads-even for spiritual fads-because of the letters of the word fad stand for "for a day."

There is a story about a beautiful bird that was known for its greatest singing. It would sit at the top of a tree and make lovely melodies. One day a man walking through the woods passed by the

tree and heard the beautiful bird singing. The bird saw the man that he was holding a box.

"What do you have in the box?" the bird asked the man

The man replied that he had large, juicy earthworms in the box. "I will sell you a worm for one for your beautiful feathers." He offered

The bird pulled out a feather and exchange if for a worm. He reflected to himself, " Why should I work hard to get worms when it is so easy to get them this way?"

The bird and the man repeated the process over the course of many days, and soon the bird no longer had more beautiful feathers with which to pay for worms. Furthermore, he could no longer fly, nor was he still pretty. He did not feel like singing beautiful songs, and he was very unhappy.

Like the foolish bird, we are always tempted to look for shortcuts, ways to get ahead and obtain the results that we desire. But as the foolish bird learned, there is a price for taking shortcuts.

Eventually we still learn that there is no shortcut of success. One of the hidden truths of life is that the path to the prize is always more valuable than the prize itself. Shortcuts rob us of those valuable lessons that we need to learn along the way. When you are presented with a shortcut- a way that is not of God- say no. Be persistent and stick to the path on which the Lord has placed you.

NUGGET #43

DO WHAT OTHERS SAY CAN'T BE DONE

Conservative talk radio show host Rush Limbaugh has a great name for his outlandish tie collection- No boundaries. What a great slogan this makes for living our lives. We should do that which takes us out of our comfort zone. Be like David. Find a giant and slay it. ***Always pick an obstacle big enough to matter when you overcome it.***

Until you give yourself to some great cause, you haven"t really begun to fully live. Henry Miller commented, "The man who looks for security, even in the mind, is like a man who would chop off his limbs in order to have artificial ones which would never give him pain or trouble." ***Nothing significant is ever accomplished by a realistic person.***

Tradition offers no hope for the present and makes no preparation for the future. Day by day, year by year, broaden your horizons. Russell Davenport remarked, "Progress in every age results only

from the fact that there are some men and women who refuse to believe that what they knew to "be right cannot be done."

Know the rules and then break some. Take the lid off. Melvin Evans said, "The men who build the future are those who know that greater things are yet to come and that they themselves will help bring them about. Their minds are illumined by the blazing sun of hope. They never stop to doubt. They haven't time."

Be involved in something bigger than you. God has never had anyone qualified working for him yet. *"We are the wire, God is the current. Our only power is to let the current pass through it" (Carlo Carreto). Be a mind through which Christ thinks, a heart through which Christ loves, a voice through which Christ speaks, and a hand with which Christ helps.*

If you really want to defend what you believe, live it. *Dorothea Brand stated, "All that is necessary to break the spell of inertia and frustration is this act as if it were, impossible to fail." Do an about face which turns you from failure to success. Keep this formula in mind: always act as if it's impossible to fail.* ***One of the greatest pleasures you can find is doing what people say you cannot do.***

NUGGET #44

EVERYTHING BIG STARTS WITH SOMETHING LITTLE

All of God"s great people in the Bible were faithful in the small things. In Matthew 25, Jesus told the parable of the talents. He referred to the one servant who had taken his master"s money and multiplied it. In verse 23, his master said to that man, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." In Zechariah 4:10, the Lord asks the prophet, "For who has despised the day of small things?" There is power in taking small steps.

***Many people are not moving with God today simply because they were not willing to take the small steps He placed before them**. If you have received a call into any, particular area, you should leap at the opportunity no matter how small to move in the direction in which the Lord has called. If you are called to be a youth pastor and are sitting at home waiting for an invitation from some large church, you should know that it will never come. You need to find*

the first young person you can, put your arm around him or her, and begin to minister.

Don"t be afraid to take small steps. The Bible promises us that if we are faithful in small matters, one day we will be rulers over many larger things,

Many times the impossible is simply the untried *(unknown). This old proverb is filled with truth.*

I can remember a time in my life when I was frozen with fear at what God had called me to do. It seemed so huge a task that I was unable to bring myself to face it. A friend came to me and spoke tow words that broke that paralysis in your life because of what God wants you to do, the word today is "Do something!" Don"t worry about the goal; just take the steps that take you past the starting point. Soon you"ll get to a point of no return. As you climb higher, you"ll be able to see much farther. ***Grow wherever you"re planted.***

As you begin, don"t be afraid. Eric Hoffer said, "Fear of becoming a has-been keeps some people from becoming anything." Every great idea is impossible from where you are starting today. But

little goals add up, and they add up rapidly. Most people don"t succeed because they are too afraid to even try. They don"t begin due to the fear of failure.

Many times the final goal seems so unreachable that we don"t even make an effort: But once you"ve made your decision and have started, you are more than halfway there. God will begin with you today what your circumstances. "Winning starts with beginning." said Robert Schuller.

NUGGET #45

THE CHIP ON THE SHOULDER WEIGHS A TONE

Forgiveness is essential for human good human relationship. You cannot give a hug with your arms folded.

Our forgiveness for others assures us of God"s forgiveness for us. In Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)" Jesus said, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. The weight of unforgiveness greatly drags a person down. It is a tremendous load to carry in the race we"re called to run.

When faced with the decision of whether to forgive and forget, never make the excuse, "But you don"t know what that person did to me!" That may be true, but instead know what unforgiveness will do to you.

What really matters is what happens in us, not to us.

Unforgiveness leads to bitterness, and bitterness to thoughts of revenge. Great amounts of brainpower are used up when you ponder a negative situation and plot how to get even. This kind of thinking is totally unproductive. You can't get ahead while you're trying to get even.

Build bridges, don't burn them. People who burn bridges end up isolated, alone and end up only dealing with neutrals and enemies the rest of their lives. Vengeance is a poor traveling companion. Is there anything more pathetic than a person who has harbored a grudge for many years? Every Christian is called a ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). Getting even always causes imbalance and unhappiness.

Working with churches and businesses throughout America, I have found unforgiveness in every stagnating situation. And conversely, I have found that growing organizations rarely talk about past problems.

Never underestimate the power of forgiveness to free you to fulfill your calling. Forgiveness is the one power you have over a person who slanders or criticizes you. ***The farther you walk in***

forgiveness, the greater the distance you put between yourself and the negative situation.

Forgiveness gives you a spring in your spiritual walk and a second wind in the race of life.

NUGGET #46

NEVER SURRENDER YOUR DREAMS TO NOISY NEGATIVES

Nobody can ever make you feel average without your permission. Ingratitude and criticism are going to come; they are part of the price you pay for leaping past mediocrity. ***When you make your mark in life, you'll always attract erasers.***

Jesus Himself, after healing the ten lepers, was thanked by only one of them (Luke 17:11-19). Learn to expect ingratitude.

If move with God, you will be criticized. The only way to avoid criticism is to do nothing and be nothing. Those who do things inevitably stir up criticism.

*The Bible offers this great promise concerning criticism****: The truth always outlives a lie****. This fact is backed by Proverbs 12:19. "The lip of truth shall be established forever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment." Also, Hebrews 13:6 we are told that we may boldly*

say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Never judge people by what is said about them by their enemies. Kenneth Tynan has provided the best description of a critic I have ever heard. "A critic," he said "is a man who knows the way but can"t drive the car."

We are not called to respond to criticism; we are called to response to God. *It"s the still small voice we should heed, not the deafening blasts of doom. Often criticism will present the best platform from which to proclaim the truth.*

Most of the time, people who are critical are either jealous or uninformed. They usually say things that have no impact whatsoever upon truth. There"s a famous anonymous saying that describes this situation perfectly: "It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favor of vegetarianism while the wolf remains of a different opinion." If what you say and do is of God, it will not make any difference if every other person on the face of the earth criticizes you. Likewise, if what you are doing is not of God, nothing other people say will make it right.

Pay no attention to negative criticism. "Trust in the Lord, and do good" (Psalm 37:3), knowing that in the end what you do in the Lord will be rewarded.

NUGGET #47

YOUR PROBLEM IS YOUR PROMOTION

Every obstacle introduces a people to themselves. How we respond to those obstacles is important.

The greatest example of the right response to an obstacle in the Bible is the giant Goliath, who confronted and intimidated the armies of Israel, including the brothers of a young shepherd named David. David's brothers chose not to do anything about the obstacle before them, but David did. What was the difference? The way each viewed the problem. The brothers looked at the obstacle and figured it was too big to miss.

The way you look at any obstacle in your life makes all the difference. Let each new obstacle force you to go to the next level in God. ***No obstacle will ever leave you the way it found you. You will be better, or you will be worse.***

Keep in mind this important fact about obstacles, every obstacle has a limited span. We worried about things last year that we can't

even remember today. Don"t believe the devil when he tells you that things will not change that they will not pass.

Obstacles subdue mediocre people, but great leaders rise above them. You and I need to be like the great man who, when asked what helped him overcome the obstacles of life, responded, "The other obstacles." We should be like a kite that rises against the wind. Every problem has a soft spot; there is an answer.

Someone said that obstacles are what we see when we take our eyes of the goal. Keep your eyes on the goal and remember that you are not alone in your struggle ; for "we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28 NIV)

In times of adversity, you don"t have an obstacle; you have a choice. In the midst of unbelievable circumstances, believe. God has a promotion for you.

NUGGET #48

IF IN DOUBT, DON'T

One day a hunter came across a bear in the woods. The bear said to the hunter, "I want a full stomach."

The hunter responded. "I want a fur coat."

"Let's compromise," suggested the bear. Then he ate the man. As a result, they both got what they wanted. The bear went away with a full stomach, and the man went wrapped in fur.

The hunter learned the lesson of compromise. ***When deciding the lesser of two evils, choose neither.***

In Deuteronomy 30:19 (NN) the Lord says to His people, "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live." You and I have a choice. Everyday we must choose between life and death. We should never settle for anything; we should always seek the best. It is rarely the

strong man who urges compromise. A compromise is often more expensive than either of the negatives.

The call of God is a call to excellence, not to mediocrity. If anything is worth doing. It is worth doing well. If you can"t do with excellence don"t bother. Someone asked, " if you don"t have time to do it right, when you will have time do it over?"

When compromise is allowed in one area, it always leaks out and begins to affect other areas. It also allows lies, deceit, and error to creep into a life and take over. I know people who have turned from the Lord completely. Their troubles started with compromises. They began to give in on little things, which soon became bigger things. It wasn"t long before compromise had begun to infiltrate their personal life. Eventually, it overtook and overwhelmed them.

In Proverbs 4:26-27, the writer warns us: "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn neither to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."

Don"t allow the compromise to creep in and destroy. You can"t say, "Well I"ll compromise in this one area, and everything else

will be okay" Once it has a foothold, compromise grows and spreads.

Be a person of integrity. Guard your reputation and the reputation of Jesus Christ and His church. If the only way others can tell that you are a Christian is the symbol of the fish on your business card, do us all a favor and leave it off. Take a stand today against compromise.

NUGGET #49

AN ARMY OF SHEEP LED BY A LION WOULD DEFEAT AN ARMY OF LIONS LED BY A SHEEP (OLD ARABIC PROVERB)

What are the actions and attributes of leaders?
What is it that makes them different from others?

1. *Leaders are always full of praise*
2. *Leaders learn to say "thank you" and "please" on the way to the top.*
3. *Leaders are always growing*
4. *Leaders are possessed with dreams*
5. *Leaders launch forth before success is certain.*
6. *Leaders are not afraid of confrontation*
7. *Leaders talk about their own mistakes before they talk about someone else's.*
8. *Leaders are people of honesty and integrity*
9. *Leaders have a good name*
10. *Leaders make others better*

11. *Leaders are quick to praise and encourage the smallest amount of improvement*
12. *Leaders are genuinely interested in others.*
13. *Leaders look for and praise someone doing something right*
14. *Leaders take others up with them*
15. *Leaders respond to their failures before others have to reveal them.*
16. *Leaders respond to their failures before others have to reveal them*
17. *Leaders never allow murmuring from themselves or others.*
18. *Leaders are specific about what is expected*
19. *Leaders hold others accountable.*
20. *Leaders do what is right rather than what is popular*
21. *Leaders are servants.*

A LEADER IS A LION, NOT A SHEEP

NUGGET #50

MAKING OTHERS BETTER IS A BOOMERANG

A famous old poem goes like this:
When days re not and flies are thick, use horse sense-cooperate
This is a truth all horses know; they learned it many centuries ago.

One tail on duty at the rear can reach that fly behind the car
But two tails when arranged with proper craft can do the job fore and aft.
Your decision to launch past mediocrity will pull others up with you. Choosing God"s will in our lives affect others and makes them better. William Danforth said, "Our least valuable possessions are those which when divided are diminished."

We should look for opportunities to invest in others and to help make them better. Somebody did that for you once. Somebody saw something in you and reached out to help you. That act of kindness determined where you are today. The person may have been your pastor , a parent, a friend, a teacher, a coach, a neighbor, or just

someone who gave you extra money , prayers, good advice, or equipment and supplies. That individual had the foresight and the resources to invest in you and to take a risk on your future.

I have a challenge for you. Take a few minutes this week and send a note to people who greatly affected your life. Also, take a few minutes to help someone else get ahead. You will find this to be one of the most satisfying experiences you've had in a long time.

Proverbs 3:27 says, "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Invest in somebody today. Believe in that person. Offer support and encouragement. Help that person come up to another level.
Try it: You'll like it! You'll also benefit from it!

NUGGET #51

PEOPLE ARE BORN ORIGINALS BUT MOST DIE COPIES

The call in your life is not to be a copy. *In this day of peer pressure, trends, and fads, we need to realize that each person has been custom-made by God" the creator. Each of us has a unique call. We should be ourselves.*

Because I do a lot of work with churches, I come into contact with many different types of people. One time I talked over the phone with a pastor whom I had never met that I would visit his church as a consultant. As we were closing our conversation and were setting a time to meet at the local airport, he asked me, "How will I know you when you get off the plane?"
"Oh, don"t worry, Pastor; I"ll know you," I responded jokingly. "All pastors look alike."

The point of this humorous story is that you ***must be the person God has made you to be.***

The call of God upon our lives is the provision of God in our lives. We do not need to come up to the standard of anyone else. Average people compare themselves with others, but we should always ourselves with what God has called us to be. Our standard is God's unique call and design for our lives. How the Lord chooses to deal with others has nothing to do with His call for us.

You and I can always find someone richer than we are, poorer than we are, or more or less able than we are. But how other people are, what they have, and what happens in their lives have no effect upon our call. In Galatians 6:4 (TLB) we are admonished, "Let everyone be sure that he is doing his very best, for then he will have the personal satisfaction of work well done, and won't need to compare himself with someone else."

God made you a certain way. You are unique. You are one of a kind. To copy others is to cheat yourself out of the fullness of what God has called you to be. Imitation is limitation.

So choose to accept: and become the person God has made you to be. Tap into the originality and creative genius of God in your life. If you're not you, then who are you going to be?

NUGGET #52

TRUISMS THAT AREN'T TRUE

1. *The way to guaranteed success is to work smarter, not harder. This is a losing idea. You will find that effective leaders do both. They work smarter, and they work harder.*
2. *Activity equals accomplishment.*

Activity is not accomplishment. Hard wok is not results. We should not ask ourselves whether or not we're busy, but what we're busy about. We serve a God who is interested in results. Each of us will give an account of our own actions, not someone else's.

3. *Take care of things, and they will take care of you. We should not take care; we should take control. If you don't take control of your own life, somebody else will.*
4. *Don't waste (kill) time. Although this truism expresses a good thought, it is really not accurate. When you waste your time, you waste your life.*
5. *If it's not broke, don't fix it. Even when things are working, they still can be improved.*

6. *What you see is what you get. Christians are not to be moved by what we see but by the Word of God. We are to see the unseen in every situation. The unseen is really more real than the seen.*
7. *He is a self-made man. There is no such thing. A person can succeed only with the help of God and others.*
8. *Talk is cheap. Talk is very expensive. What people say is ultimately what they get and is what they pay for.*
9. *Practice makes perfect. No perfect makes perfect. Wrong practice leads to wrong habits. Perfect practice leads to productive action. Make sure that whatever you do on a regular basis is right.*

PART III

LOOKING UPWARD

NUGGET #53

IDEAS GO AWAY, BUT DIRECTION STAYS

How do you know the difference between ideas that come to your mind and direction from God?

There is persistency to direction. The Bible says in Proverbs 19:21 (NIV), "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." In Psalm 32:8 the Lord promises, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shall go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

Direction is a stream with banks. When we know what God wants us to do, then we can have total confidence that what we are attempting is right and that God is on our side. The most far-reaching, challenging direction is them most significant because God is in it.

Direction is a matter of fact; ideas are a matter of opinion. *Direction from God is impossible to follow without Him.*

Direction is the mother of divine discomfort, something we should have at all times. Divine discomfort is a sensing that God wants to direct us, a stirring so that we never totally satisfied with where we are in God or what we're doing for Him. If you think you've "arrived" with God, beware. There is always room for growth.

We should be known as a people with a mission not as a people just fishing". Evangelist R.W. Shamback puts it this way: "Be called and sent, not up and went." We are a people with a purpose, not a problem.

One way to follow God is to understand that He calls us from something and to something. In Colossians 1:12-13, the apostle Paul wrote, "Giving thanks unto the father, which has made us, meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son."

Be sure to look for areas out of which God is calling you and into which He is calling you. There is a difference between God's will in our lives and God's will for our lives. God's will for our lives includes those things that He intends for every person- salvation, strength; health, peace, joy, etc. But God's will in our lives is

unique to each individual. One person may be called to live in one place for life while another is called to move six times within ten years.

Never be afraid of the light of God's direction. Maurice Freehil asked; „Who is more foolish, a child afraid of the dark or the man afraid of the light?" Wherever God guides, He provides. And whom God calls, He appoints and anoints to do the work. Lay hold of those persistent directions in your life, and tap into the power of God's will for you.

NUGGET #54

PRAY UNTIL YOU PRAY

Amazing things start happening when we start praying. Prayer time is never wasted time. Charles Spurgeon taught, "Sometimes we think we are to busy to pray. That is a great mistake, for praying is a savings of time." A.J Gordon added, "You can d more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."

John Bunyan once observed, "The best prayers have often more groans than words." I experienced this kind of prayer when I had many pressing needs all around me. Honestly, I reached a point where I could hardly pray about my needs because they were so many. The only prayer I could manage was, "Help!" and I remember passionately praying it to God over thirty times until I experienced a breakthrough. Psalms declares, "O, LORD, attend unto my cry" (17:1). One of the smartest things I ever prayed was, "Help!" When you take one step toward every count, He moved to meet my needs.

Prayer alone proves that you trust God. *Oswald Chambers, said, "We look upon prayer as a means of getting things fro ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God himself." Follow Dwight L. Moody"s advice: "Spread out your petition before God and then say, "Thy will, not mine be done: The sweetest lesson I have learned in God"s school is to let the Lord choose for me." Do deep praying before you find yourself in a deep hole.*

Prayers can"t be answered until they are prayed. *Nothing significant happens until you fervently pray; pray until you pray! F.B. Myer said, "The greatest tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer." Byron Edward said, "True prayer always receives what it asks for –ore something better." God"s answers are wiser than your answers. Ann Lew is said, "There are four ways God answers prayer: no, not yet: no, I love you too much; yes, I thought you"d never ask; yes, here"s more.*

"Every time we pray our horizon is altered, our attitude to change is altered, not sometimes, but every time. The amazing thing is that we don"t pray more" (Oswald Chambers). Unfortunately, nothing is discussed more and practiced less than prayers. Pray with your eyes toward your problems. Martin Luther said, "The less I pray,

the harder it gets; the more I pray the better it goes." ***Frequent kneeling will keep you in good standing with God.*** *Margaret Gibb said, "We must move from asking God to take care of the things that are breaking our hearts, to praying about the things that are breaking His heart." It is impossible to be prayerful and pessimistic at the same time. E.M. Bounds said, "Prayer is our most formidable weapon; the thing which makes all else we do efficient."*

Mark Littleton said, "Turn your doubts to questions; turn your questions to prayers; turn your prayers to God." ***When you pray for victory, God will give you a strategy.*** *Phillips Brooks said, "Prayer is not conquering God"s is not a gadget we use when nothing else works. Rather I agree with O. Hallesby when he said, "Begin to realize more and more that prayer is the most important thing you do. You can use your time to no better advantage than to pray whenever you have an opportunity to do so, either alone or with others; while at work, while at rest, or while walking down the street. Anywhere!"*

NUGGET #55

IT'S AS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHAT GOD CAN'T DO AS TO KNOW WHAT HE CAN DO

1. *God cannot life*
2. *God cannot change*
3. *God cannot recall our sins after we've asked for forgiveness.*
4. *God cannot be the author of confusion*
5. *God cannot leave us or forsake us.*
6. *God cannot go back on His promises*
7. *God cannot revoke His gifts.*
8. *God cannot be pleased without faith*
9. *God cannot be defeated*
10. *God cannot be too big for out problems*
11. *God cannot be too little for our problems*
12. *God cannot prefer one person over another.*
13. *God cannot break His covenant*
14. *God cannot revoke His calling*
15. *God cannot be unjust*
16. *God cannot be anything contrary to the Scripture*

17. *God cannot bless a life*
18. *God cannot love sin.*
19. *God cannot give anything to a double-minded person*
20. *God cannot be forced into an impossible situation*
21. *God cannot ignore the praises of His people*
22. *God cannot be our problem*
23. *God cannot be overcome by the world*
24. *God cannot be late*
25. *God cannot be neutral*
26. *God cannot be weak*
27. *God cannot bless doubt*
28. *God cannot withhold wisdom from those who ask in faith.*
29. *God cannot be against us.*

HE IS ABLE!

NUGGET #56

DO YOU COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS OR THINK YOUR BLESSINGS DON'T COUNT?

If the only prayer you say in your whole life is" Thank you: that would suffice" (Miester Eckhart). Do you have an attitude of gratitude? If we stop to think more, feelings, gratitude has the shortest memory

Cicero said, "A thankful heart is not only the greatest, virtue, but the parent of all other virtues." ***The degree that you are thankful is a sure index of your spiritual health.*** *Max Lucado wrote, "The devil doesn"t have to steal anything from you, all he has to do is make you take it for granted:" When you count all of your blessings, you will always show a profit.*

Replace regret with gratitude. *Be grateful for what you have, not regretful for what you have not. If you can"t be thankful for what you have, be thankful for what you have escaped. Henry Ward Beecher said, "The unthankful… discovers no mercies; but the*

thankful heart… will find in every hour, some heavenly blessings." The more you complain, the less you'll obtain.

Vernon Luchie is said, "If we get everything we want, we will soon want nothing that we get." If you don't enjoy what you have, how could you be happier with more? Francis Schaeffer stated, "The beginning of men's rebellion against God was, and is, the lack of a thankful heart." The seeds of discouragement will not grow in a thankful heart. Erich Fromm remarked, "Greed is a bottomless pit which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction.

Epicurus reflected, "Nothing is enough for the man to whom enough is too little." It's a sure sign of mediocrity to be moderate with our thanks. Don't find yourself so busy asking God for favors that you have to time to thank Him. ***I related to what Joel Budd said, "I feel like I'm the one who wrote Amazing Grace."***

Maxim Gorky said, "Happiness always looks small while you hold it in your hands, but let it go, and you learn at once how big and precious it is." I believe we should have the attitude of George Hubert, when he said, "Thou a Lord has given so much to me, give me one more thing- a grateful heart:" The Bible says in

Psalms, "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving." Our thanks to God should always precede our request of Him. The Bible challenges us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, "Pray without ceasing in everything give thanks."

Robert Woods once commented, "We don't thank God for much he has given us. Our prayers are too often the beggar's prayer, the prayer that asks for something. We offer too few prayers of thanksgiving and of praise." Don't find yourself at the end of your life saying, "What a wonderful life I've had! I only wish I'd appreciated and realized it sooner."

THANK GOD FOR DIRTY DISHES; THEY HAVE A TALE TO TELL

WHILE OTHERS FOLKS GO HUNGRY, WE'RE EATING PRETTY WELL

WITH HOME, AND HEALTH, AND HAPPINESS, WE SHOULDN'T WANT TO FUSS; FOR BY THIS STACK OF EVIDENCE, GOD'S VERY GOOD TO US

NUGGET #57

GOD'S CALL IS HEARD NOT SEEN

Every good opportunity that presents itself is not necessarily God's will for us. Many times circumstances line up, and everything looks good; yet it doesn't seem right. In such cases, we need to hear from God. That's why I say that divine direction is really heard and not seen. We should be more interested in the unseen than in the seen.

The only safe way to decide which direction to go is to distinguish between the voices we hear. There are always three voices: God's, our own, and the devil's. We must learn to distinguish among these three.

We must eliminate all foggy areas in our lives. This is the key to being able to see and think dearly. Fog, especially spiritual fog, is very dangerous go drive into.

We should build on what we hear on the inside, not on what we seen on the outside. There's a big difference between having an

ability to do something and being called and anointed to do it. You may have seen someone in church who has an ability to sing, but that is not necessarily evidence that the person has been called by God to the life of a singer. A gift is not a call.

I am not suggesting that God isn"t directing us to use our abilities. But ability should not be the only criterion for deciding whether or not we make a particular choice. Not only does the Lord gives us a road map; He also provides direction signals, information signs, a vehicle ,fuel , and time to get to our destination.

We need to be sensitive to what lies in the unseen. Not realizing what lay just beneath their feet, many people have walked right over rich pools of oil or veins of gold. Their vision was too limited. They saw only the ground, not the treasure hidden in it.

Look beyond what you see with your natural eyes. Listen with your spiritual ears. Keep your antenna up for God"s perfect direction in your life.

NUGGET #58

WHEN GOD IS ALL YOU HAVE, THEN HE IS ALL YOU NEED

Billy Joe Daugherty said, "God is not hard to find! But there is a condition… we must seek Him with all our heart." You will always get into trouble whey to try to handle your life without God. 2 Chronicles 32:8 reads: "With us is the Lord our God, to help us and to fight our battles." God, the ultimate warrior lives in you. ***If you are a soldier for Christ, don't worry about public opinion. Only be concerned about your commander's opinion.*** *If you fear God, there is no need to fear anything else.*

I believe we should always follow Mary Lyon's advice: "Trust in God and so something." Satan doesn't care what we worship, as long as we don't worship God. Too many people ask the Lord to guide the, and then they grab the steering wheel. Your relationship with God will last if He is first in your life. Too many people want God's blessings, but they don't want Him.

When you lose God, it is not God who is lost. Some people talk about finding God as if He could get lost. The Bible says, "Come near to God, and He will come near to you" (James 4:8 NIV). Tommy Barnett reflected. "The deeper I dig the deeper He digs." To increase value, get to know God. Pray to God: "I want to be in your will, not in your way." William Law added, "Nothing has separated us from God but our own will, or rather our own will is our separation from God.

Oswald Chambers advises us: "Get into the habit of dealing with God about everything. Unless in the first walking moment of the day you learn to fling the door wide back and let God in , you will work on a wrong level all day; but swing the door wide open and pray to your father in secret, and every public thing will be stamped with the presence of God." Don"t pray by heart, but with the heart.

The Bible finds us where we are, and with our permission will take us where we ought to go. ***Other books were given to us for information, but the Bible was given to us for transformation****. A person who merely samples the Word of God never acquires much of a taste for it. Psalm 35:27 declares that God is always a plus factor. He is never a disadvantage to you. He is always an asset.*

He wants you to succeed, and He has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.

Our heartfelt cry to God ought to be the same as Isaiah's cry: "Here I am, send me" (Isaiah 6:81). Consider the words of W.H. Atken when he said, "Lord take my lips and speak through them; take my mind and think through it; take my heart and set it on fire" We must not only give what we have; we have also give what we are to God.

NUGGET #59

WHEN WISDOM REIGNS, IT POURS

We should expect wisdom to be given to us. The Bible says in James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God that gives to all men liberally, and upbraided not; and it shall be given him."

When you have heard God's voice, you have heard His wisdom. *Thank God for His powerful wisdom. It forces a passage through the strongest barriers.*

Wisdom is seeing everything from God's perspective. Knowing when and how to use the knowledge comes from God. An old adage says, "He who knows nothing doubts nothing." In addition he who knows has a solid basis for his belief.

We have available to us the wisdom of the creator of the universe. ***Yet so few drink at the fountain of His wisdom; most just rinse out their mouths.*** *Many try to live without the wisdom of the Bread of life, but they will die in their efforts.*

The world doesn"t spend billions of dollars for wisdom. It spends billions in search of wisdom. Yet it is readily available to everyone who seeks its divine source.

There are ten steps to gaining godly wisdom:

1. *Fear God (Psalm 111:10)*
2. *Please God (Ecclesiastes 2:26)*
3. *Hear God (Proverbs 2:6)*
4. *Look to God (Proverbs 3:13)*
5. *Choose God"s way (Proverbs 8:10-11)*
6. *Be humble before GOD(Proverbs 11:2)*
7. *Take God"s advice (Proverbs 13:10)*
8. *Receive God"s correction (Proverbs 29:15)*
9. *Pray to God (Ephesians 1:17)*
10. *Know the Son of God (1 Corinthians 1:30)*

NUGGET #60

STAND FOR WHAT'S RIGHT THEN YOU WILL WIN, EVEN IF YOU LOSE

The time is always right to do the right thing. *Richard Huseman said," Be driven by excellence. To be driven by excellence so that at the end of each day, each year, and indeed at the end of life itself we must ask one important question: Have we demanded enough of ourselves, and by our example, inspired those around us to put forth their best effort and achieve their greatest potential? You achieve according to what you believe.*

More harm has been done by weak persons than by wicked person. *The problems of this world have been caused by the weakness of goodness rather than by the strength of evil. The true measure of a person is in his height of ideals, the breadth of his sympathy, the depth of his convictions and the length of his patience. Eddie Rickenbacker encouraged us to "think positively and masterfully, with confidence and faith, and life becomes more secure, more fraught with action, richer in achievement and experience. Thomas Carlyle wisely stated, "Of all the paths a man*

could strike onto, there is, at any given moment a best path… a thing which, here and now, if it were of all things wise for him to do… to find this path and walk in it, is the only thing needful for him" The right train of thought will take you to a better station in life.

To try to do what"s best and to remain essentially ourselves are really one and the same thing. Coach John Wooden said, "Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of being" One secret of success is being able to put your best foot forward without stepping on anybody"s toes.

If you seek greatness, then forget greatness and ask for God"s will. You will find both. *Harold Taylor said, "The roots of true achievement lie in the will to become the best that you can become" Elevate your personal standards of quality. Whatever you thought was good enough for now, add 10% more.* ***Better is better.***

The biggest mistake you can make in life is not to be true to the best you know. George Bernard Shaw remarked. "Keep yourself clean and bright; you are the window through which you must see the world." Follow Ralph Sockman"s advice: "Give the best that you have to the highest you know-and do it now."

NUGGET #61

HEARING TELLS YOU THAT THE MUSIC IS PLAYING; LISTENING TELLS YOU WHAT THE SONG IS SAYING

One of our least developed skills is listening. There are really two different kinds of listening. There is the natural listening in interaction with other people, and there is spiritual listening in interaction with God.

It has been said, "Men ate born with two ears but only one tongue, which indicates that they were meant to listen twice as much as they talk." In natural communication, leaders should always monopolize the listening. ***What we learn about person will always result in a greater benefit than what we tell him or her about ourselves.***

We need to learn to listen and observe aggressively. We must try harder to truly listen and to not just hear. You don"t hear anything while you"re talking.

In regard to spiritual listening, Proverbs 8:34-35 (NN) quotes wisdom, who says, "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors; waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord.

There is great wisdom and favor to be gained by listening. Proverbs 15:31 (NIV) says, "He who listens to a life-giving rebuke will be at home among the wise." Listening allows us to maintain a teachable spirit. Listening increases our "teachability". Those who give us a life-giving rebuke can be a great blessing to us.

The Bible teaches that we are to be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19). We must never listen passively, especially to God. If we resist hearing, a hardening can take place in our lives. Callousness can develop. In Luke 16:31 (NIV), Jesus said of a certain group of people, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." The more we resist listening to the voice of God, the more hardened and less fine-tuned our hearing becomes.

There are results of spiritual hearing, as we seen in Luke 8:15 (NIV). This passage relates to the parable of the sower, "The seed

on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hears the word; retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.” Harvest is associated not only with persevering with good seed in good soil but also with those people who hear the Word of God and retain it.

Fine-tune your natural and spiritual ears to listen and learn.

NUGGET #62

EXPECT SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

Ramona Carol describes faith as "putting all your eggs in God"s baskets, and then counting your blessings before they hatch." And I might add, don"t worry about Him dropping them. Faith is the force of a full life. ***I believe that the primary cause of unhappiness in the world today is a lack of faith.***

Corrie Ten Boom says, "Faith is like a radar that sees trough the fog the reality of things at a distance that a human eye cannot see. " Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible. The Bible challenges us in 2 Corinthians 5:7 to walk by faith and not by sight.

So what is faith? John Spaulding said, "Your faith is what you believe, not what you know." Dr. Alexis Carrel says, "It is faith, and not reason, which impels men to action… intelligence, is content to point out the road, but never drives along it." I agree with Blaise Pascal: "Faith is a sounder guide than reason. Reason can only go so far, but faith has no limits."

Faith releases the miraculous. It is the way to God's divine influence. *I agree with Pastor Tommy Barnett: "Faith is simply when you bring God into the picture." And where do we meet God? Gordon Robinson said, "God meets us at the level we expect, not the level we hope."* ***At times, faith is believing what you see isn't so.*** *That's why the Bible says in Hebrews, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (11:1).*

Put faith to work when doubting would be easier. Faith is the anchor of the soul, the stimulus to action and the incentive to achievement. Faith will never abandon you; only you can abandon it. ***Nothing but faith can accurately guide your life.*** *Faith gives us the courage to face the present with confidence and the future with expectancy. It is usually not so much the greatness of our troubles as the littleness of our faith, which causes us to stop or complain.*

Faith keeps the man who keeps the faith. No one can live in doubt when he has prayed in faith. Faith either moves mountains or it will tunnel through the. Saint Augustine said, "Faith is to believe what we do not see; and the reward of this faith is to see what we

believe." J.F. Clarke said, "All the strength and the force of man come from this faith in things unseen. He who believes is strong; he who doubts is weak. Strong convictions precede great actions."

Faith is necessary to succeed. George Spaulding said, "Life without faith in something is to narrow of space in which to live" You"ll feel cramped your whole life when you don"t live by faith. As your faith grows you will find that you no longer need to have a sense of control. Things will flow as God will, and you will be able to flow with them to your great happiness and benefit. Colin Hightowers said, "Faith is building on what you know is here: so you can reach what you know is there." Listen to Franklin Roosevelt: "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubt of today." Let us move forward with strong and active faith.

NUGGET #63

STOP EVERY DAY AND LOOK AT THE SIZE OF GOD

Who is God? What is His personality? What are His character traits?

According to the Bible, He is everlasting, just, caring, holy, divine, omniscient, omnipresent, and sovereign. He is light, perfection, abundance, salvation, wisdom, and love. He is the Creator, Savior, Deliverer, Redeemer, Provider, Healer, Advocate, and friend. Never forget who lives inside you: "The Lord… the great God, the great king above all gods. (Psalm 95:3 NIV)

John the disciple tells us: "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4) ***God and the devil are not equal, just opposite.***

I often travel by air, and one of the benefits is that I get a glimpse of God's perspective. I like looking at my challenges from 37,000 feet in the air. ***No problem is too large for God's intervention, and no person is too small for God's attention.***

God is always able. If you don't need miracles, you don't need God. Dave Bordon, a friend of mine, said it best: "I don't understand the situation, but I understand God."

The miraculous realm of God involves multiplication, not addition. God likens our life in Him to seedtime and harvest: Do you realize how miraculous that is? Let me give you a conservative example: Suppose one kernel of corn produces one stalk with two ears, each ear having two hundred kernels. From those four hundred kernels come four hundred stalks with 160000 kernels. This huge harvest is a result of one kernel planted only one season earlier.

Our confession to the Lord should be Jeremiah 32:17 (NW) "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

NUGGET #64

DON'T WAIT FOR ALL THE LIGHTS TO BE GREEN BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE HOUSE (JIM STOVALL)

Don"t do anything that doesn"t require faith. *G.C. Lichtenberg said, "Never undertake anything for which you wouldn"t have the courage to ask the blessings of heaven." Ed Cole, focusing on faith, said, "There are three levels of knowledge: God is for me, God is with me. God is in me. Psalm 56:9 reads, "When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back; this I know; for God is for me." Accept and acknowledge only those thoughts that contribute to your success, that line up with God"s Word and His will for your life.*

Wayne Gretsky is, arguably, the greatest hockey player in history. Asked about is secret for continuing to lead the national hockey league in goals year after year. Gretsky replied, "I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been." Dare to go farther

than you can see. As Saint Augustine said, "Seek not to understand that thou may believe, but believe that thou may understand."

Too many people expect little from God, ask little, and therefore receive little and are content with little. *Sherwood Eddie said, "Faith is not trying to believe something regardless of the evidence: faith is daring to do something regardless of the consequences." I sincerely believe that we would accomplish many more things if we did not so automatically view them as impossible.*

God gave man an upright countenance to survey the heavens and look upward toward him. Don"t ever say that conditions are not right. Doing so will always limit God. If you wait for conditions to be exactly right, you will never obey God. The Bible says in Isaiah 1:19 NIV, "If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land."

Those who dare do; those who dare not do not. ***Isak Dinesen said, "God made the world round so that we would never be able to see too far down the road."*** *The person who dares for nothing need hope for nothing. You have reached stagnation when all you ever exercise is caution: Sometimes you must press ahead despite the*

caution: Sometimes you must press ahead despite the pounding fear in your head that says; "Turn back."

If God is kept outside, something must be wrong inside. God will never allow anything to confront you that you and He together can't handle.

God said, "Come to the edge."
We said, "It's too high."
"Come to the edge."
"We said, "We might fall."
"Come to the edge," God said
And we came
And he pushed us.
And he flew.

NUGGET #65

RETREAT TO ADVANCE

Sometimes the most important thing we can do is get way to a peaceful, anointed spot. *This is one of the most powerful concepts I have incorporated into my life. Right now I'm writing this book in a cabin on a hill overlooking a beautiful lake, miles away from the nearest city.*

When we draw away for a time, we can see and hear much more clearly about how to go ahead. *Jesus did this many times during His earthly life, especially just before and after major decisions. The Bible says, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15). There's something invigorating and renewing about retreating to a quiet place of rest and peace. Silence is an environment in which great ideas are birthed.*

There are times when you should not see people, times when you should direct your whole attention toward God. I believe that we should have a place of refuge, a place out of the normal scope of

living, a place where we can retreat to advance and focus on the Lord.

It is important to spend time alone with your highest dreams. In Isaiah 40:31 we react "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." Learn to wait upon the Lord.

Make a regular appointment with yourself; it will be one of the most important appointments you can ever have during the course of a week or a month. Choose to retreat to advance. See how much clearer you move forward with God as a result.

NUGGET #66

THERE IS SOMETHING FOR YOU TO START THAT IS ORDAINED FOR YOU TO FINISH (MYLES MUNROE)

Are you stumbling toward an uncertain future? You can predict your future by the awareness you have of your purpose. Too many people know what they running from, but not what they are running to. Run to find your purpose, then concentrate on fulfilling it. ***Having a powerful why will provide you with the necessary how.*** *Purpose, not money is your real asset.*
Take care of your purpose, and the end will take care of itself. When you base your life on principle, 99 percent of your decisions are already made. Purpose does what it must; talent does what it can. Considering an action? Listen to Marcus Aurelius: "Without a purpose nothing should be done." Robert Byrne said, "The purpose of life is a life of purpose."

"The height of accomplishment will equal the depth of your convictions. Seek happiness for its own sake, and you find it: seek

for purpose, and happiness will follow as a shadow comes with the sunshine" (William Scolavino). As you reach for your destiny, it will be like a magnet that pulls you. Destiny draws.

John Foster said, "It is a poor disgraceful thing not to be able to reply, with some degree of certainty, to the simple questions, "What will you be?" What will you do?" Dr. Charles Garfield added, "Peak performers are people who are committed to a compelling mission. It is very clear that they are deeply about what they do, and their efforts, energies, and enthusiasms are traceable back to that particular mission." ***You're not truly free until you've been taken captive by your supreme mission in life.***

Don't just pray that God will do this or that; rather pray that God will make His purpose known to you. William Cowper said, "The only true happiness comes from squandering ourselves for a purpose." Whatever your plan is just know that nothing else will satisfy you. Know that God is with you and will provide what you need to accomplish your purpose. The God who made the mouth will also provide the food.

As individuals go their right way, destiny accompanies them. Don't part company with your destiny. It is an anchor in the storm. A

purposeless life is an early death. Psalm 138:8 (NIV) reads, "The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever.

Rick Renner commented, "The only thing that will keep you from the will of God is if you look at yourself and say, I'm not so much among so many:" You can't do anything about the length of your life, but you can do something about its width and depth. What you believe is the force that determines what you accomplish or fail to accomplish in life.

The average person's life consists of twenty years of having parents ask where he or she is going, forty years of having a spouse ask the same question, and at the end, the mourners wondering the same thing. *Martin Luther King Jr. said, "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." Abandon yourself to destiny.*

NUGGET #67

HAVE A READY WILL AND WALK, NOT IDLE TIME AND TALK

Acting on God's will is like riding a bicycle; if you don't go on, you go off! *Once we know God's will and timing, we should instantly obey, talking action dearly. When God is telling us to do on whatever God wants us to do, the more unclear His directives become. We need to make sure that we are on God's interstate highway and not in a cul-de-sac.*

Ours is a God of velocity. He is a God of timing and direction. These two always go together. It is never wise to act upon only one or the other. Jumping at the first opportunity seldom leads to a happy landing. In Proverbs 25:8 the writer tells us, "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest, thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame." Even the right direction taken at the wrong time is a bad decision.

A famous saying holds that people can be divided into three groups:

1) Those who make things happen

2) Those who watch things happen

3) Those who wonder what's happening. Most people miss out on God's best in their lives because they're not prepared. The Bible warns us that we should be prepared continually. The apostle Paul exhorts us to "be instant in season (and) out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2)

NUGGET #68

WHAT YOU GIVE LIVES

A good way to judge a man is by what he says. A better way is by what he does. The best way is by those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting." The big problem is not the haves and have nots; it's the give nots. ***The Lord loves a cheerful giver, and so does anyone else.***

The secret to living is giving. Charles Spurgeon said, "Peel for others-in your wallet." An Indian proverb says, "Good people, like clouds; receive only to give away." In fact, the best generosity is that which is quick. When you give quickly, it is like giving twice. R. Browne says, "Whatever God does in your life is not so you can keep it to yourself. He wants you to give to others." When you give only after being asked, you have waited too long.

The Bible says in Acts, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (20:35). Giving is always the thermometer of our love. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die." Getters don't get make a contribution, you begin to

die." Getters don't get happiness. Givers get it. When you live for another, it's the best way to live for yourself. John Wesley advised, "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can, if that's a good formula for successful life.

The Swiss way, "A greedy person and a pauper are practically one in the same." *When it comes to giving, some people stop at nothing. Greed always diminishes what has been gained. Mike Murdock says, "Giving is proof that you have conquered greed."*

A lot of people are willing to give God the credit, but not too many are willing to give Him the cash. Don't cheat the Lord and call it savings. The trouble with too many people who give until it hurts is that they are so sensitive to pain.

If you have, give. If you lack, give, G.D. Bordmen said, "The law of the harvest is to reap more than you sow." It is true: people who give always receive.

Henry Drummond said, "There is no happiness in having or in getting, but only in giving." ***The test of generosity is not necessarily how much you give but how much you have left.*** *Henry Thoreau said, "If you give money, spend yourself with it." The secret to living is giving.*

NUGGET #69

IT IS MORE VALUABLE TO SEEK GOD'S PRESENCE THAN TO SEEK HIS PRESENTS

The Bible gives four benefits of seeking God's presence. *The first benefit is joy. In Psalm 16:11 known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." We cannot help but experience great joy in our lives when we are in the presence of the Lord.*

A second benefit of seeking God's presence is that it provides great light. In Psalm 89:15 (NIV) we read, "Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD." Wherever God is, there is great illumination. If there is a difficulty seeing, invite the presence of the Lord into that area. If you are having problems with your work, invite God to your job. If you are having difficulty at home invite God into your home. The mere presence of God will bring illumination and cause all darkness to leave. It will shed great light on your path.

A third benefit of seeking His presence is God's divine protection. Psalm 31:20 (NIV) says," In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling, you keep them safe from accusing tongues" Thank God for His divine protection and shelter in our lives. Everyone needs a hiding place, a place of safety and refuge. The presence of God provides a shelter to keep us from men and their vain words against us. If you're troubled by other people and by what they are saying, invite God's presence into those circumstances. If you work in a negative atmosphere, one in which what men are saying or doing is creating problems for you, invite the presence of God into that situation. He will be a shelter, a hiding place, for you.

The fourth benefit of seeking God's presence is found in 1 John 3:19 (NIV): "This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence." There is great peace and rest in the presence of God. Trouble, nervousness, anxiety, and unrest all these flee from the presence of the Lord.

Invite God's presence to wherever you are. He will encamp around you every minute and be with you in every situation of life. In His presence you will find great joy and light, divine protection, peace and rest.

NUGGET #70

DO WHAT'S RIGHT THE RIGHT WAY, AT THE RIGHT TIME

Your success has little to do with speed, but much to do with timing and direction. What benefit is running if you're on the right time. Tyron Edwards said, "Have a time and place for everything and do everything in its time and place, and you will not accomplish more. But have far more leisure than those who are always hurrying." The problem is that many a go-getter never stops long enough to let opportunity catch up with him.

Beverly Sills says, "There are no shortcuts to any place worth going." The way to the top is neither swift nor easy. ***Nothing worthwhile ever happens in a hurry-so be patient.*** *Because of impatience, we are driven out of God's will; continued impatience, we are driven out of God's will; continued impatience causes us not to return. Don't be impatient. Remember, you can't warm you hands by burning your fingers. The less patience a person has, the more he loses it.*

God did not create hurry. Lord Chesterfield said, "Whoever is in hurry shows that the thing he is about is too big for him." When you are outside of the right timing, you will sow hurry and reap frustration. There is simply more to life than increasing its speed. ***People who hurry through life get to the end of it quicker.***

Brendon Francis commented, "Failure at a task may be the result of having tackled it at the wrong time." If the time has passed, preparation does not good. Leonardo says, "Time stays long enough for anyone who will use it" The trouble with life in the fast lane is that you get to the other end too soon. Soren Kierkegaard said, "Most men pursue pleasure with such breathless hast that they hurry past it." Haste makes waste. Give time, time. ***Many people overestimate what they can do in a year and underestimate what they can do in a lifetime.***

Bruyere said, "There is no road too long to the man who advances deliberately and without undo haste; not honor is too distant to the man who prepares himself for them with patience." Many times the action that you take at the right time has no immediate relationship to the answer-it"s to get you to the right place at the right time.

We are happiest when we discover that we should be doing and what we are doing are the same things. *You will never be what you ought to be until you are doing what you ought to be doing.*

If you are facing the right direction, just keep on walking. Francis Bacon says, "the lame man who keeps the right road outstrips the runner who takes a wrong one. The more active and swift the latter is, the further he will go astray."

Adopt the right place. If you go too fast, you will catch up with misfortune. If you go too slow, misfortune will catch up with you. The Bible says," Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" Psalm 119:105. Let God be your guide and you will miss all the wrong places.

NUGGET #71

STAND TALL BY FALLING TO YOUR KNEES

The strongest action that you can take in any situation is to go to your knees and ask God for help. *Whatever is worth worrying about is certainly worth praying about. Prayer unlocks God's treasure chest of great ideas and answers.*

I will share with you one of my favorite prayers. It is one word: help.

"Help, help, help!"

When we pray, we must be simultaneously willing to take the action that God directs in an answer to our prayer. That's effective prayer.

There are four levels of prayer:

1. *Level 1 is petition: "Father I need."*
2. *Level 2 is intercession: "God, help."*
3. *Level 3 is praise and thanksgiving: "Thanks Lord!"*

4. *Level 4 is conversation: "Good morning, Father."*

In Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV) the apostle Paul counsels us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, with guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." In Colossians 4:2 (NIV) he says, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

There are twelve benefits to prayer:

1. *Prayer defeats the devil (Matthew 18:18)*
2. *Prayer saves the unbeliever (Acts 2:21)*
3. *Prayer edifies the believer (Jude 20)*
4. *Prayer sends laborers into the harvest (Matthew 9:38)*
5. *Prayer heals the sick (James 5:13-15)*
6. *Prayer overcomes the impossible (Matthew 21:22)*
7. *Prayer changes the natural (James 5:17-18)*
8. *Prayer brings the right things to pass (Matthew 7:7-11)*
9. *Prayer imparts wisdom (James 1:5)*
10. *Prayer brings peace (Philippians 4:5-7)*
11. *Prayer guards against temptation (Matthew 26:41)*
12. *Prayer reveals God"s answers (Luke 11:9-10)*

NUGGET #72

MIRACLES ALWAYS BEGIN IN THE HEART (BILL JOE DAUGHERTY)

When confronted with a new opportunity or tough situation, I usually ask myself "Do I have a pure heart and a right spirit?" We should pray Psalm 139:23-24 often: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be a wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The weapon of the brave resides in his/her heart. Horace Rutledge said, "When you look at the world in a narrow way, how mean it is! But when you look at in a broad, generous friendly spirit, how wonderful you find it!" The Bible counsels us to prove all things, holding fast to those which are good (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

Margaret Mitchell spoke this truth: "There isn"t nothing outside from that can lick any of us." James Allen added, "You will become as small as your controlling desire; as great as your dominant aspiration." Remember this; when you don"t have strength within, you won"t respect without.

If a person's aim in this world, he will misfire in the next. Too many children are afraid of the dark, while too many adults are afraid of the light. William Hazlitt remarked, "If mankind would wish for what is right, they might have had it long ago." ***Roger Babson added, "If things are not going well with you, begin your effort at correcting the situation by carefully examining the service you are rendering and especially the spirit in which you are rendering it."***

To know what is right and not do it is as bad as doing wrong. Invite trouble, and it will show up early. Save yourself a lot of trouble by not borrowing any. Here's more insight about trouble: you don't have to get rid of old problems to make room for new ones. ***Nothing costs more than doing the wrong thing.***

The man who borrows trouble is always in debt. The best way to escape evil is to pursue good. The person who persists in courting trouble will soon be married to it. ***Go straight. Every crooked turn delays your arrival at success.***

Joel Budd said," A hungry heart is like a parachute. When you pull on it, it opens up and saves you." Keep your head and heart going in the right direction, and you won't have to worry about your feet.

NUGGET #73

GOD IS NOT YOUR PROBLEM; HE IS YOUR ANSWER

Some time ago, I was eating at a Mexican fast-food restaurant. As I stood in line for service, I noticed in front of me a very poor elderly lady who looked like a street person. When it was her turn, she ordered some water and one taco. Sitting in the booth right next to her, I couldn"t help but observe her and be moved with compassion for her. Shortly after I had begun my meal, I walked over to her and asked if I could buy some more food for her lunch. She looked at me and angrily asked, "Who are you?"

"Just a guy who wants to help," I responded. She ignored me. I finished my meal about the same time she did, and we both got up to leave. I felt led to give her some money. In the parking lot, I approached her and offered her some cash.

Her only response to me was, "Stop bothering me." Then she stormed off. Immediately the Lord showed me that this is often the many ways of us respond to Him. When He calls out to us, seeking

to bless us, we act as though we don't even know who He is. We respond to His offer of blessing by asking, "Who are You? What do You want from me?" The Lord, being the gracious God He is continues to try to bless us. Yet we reach by saying "Stop bothering me". Missing out on the rich blessings of the Lord, we walk off, just as this lady did.

It's not the absence of problems that gives us peace; it's God presence with us in the problems. *In Matthew 28:20, Jesus sent his disciples into all the world, ordering them to preach the Gospel to every creature. "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

In Romans 8:38-39 (NIV), the apostle Paul wrote, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." In verse 31 he declared, "What, then shall we say in response in this? If God is for us, who can be against us? A paraphrase might be, ***"If God is for us, who cares who is against us?"***

In Psalm 145:18 (NIV), we read, "The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on him in truth," James 4:8 (NIV) admonishes us, "Come near to God and he will come near to you." In Acts 17:28 (NIV) Paul said, "For in him we live in move and have our being."

Thank God that we can, without hesitation and with full confidence, lean on His eternal faithfulness.

NUGGET #74

LEARN THE ALPHABET FOR SUCCESS

A – Action

B-Belief

C- Commitment

D-Direction

E-Enthusiasm

F-Faith

G-Goals

H-Happiness

I-Inspiration

J-Judgment

K-Knowledge

L-Love

M-Motivation

N-Nonconformity

O-Obedience

P-Persistence

Q-Quality

R-Righteousness

S-Steadfastness

T-Thankfulness

U-Uniqueness

V-Vision

W-Wisdom

X-(E)xcellence

Y-Yieldness

Z-Zeal

NUGGET #75

THE MEASURE OF A MAN IS NOT IN WHAT HE DOES ON SUNDAY BUT IN WHO HE IS MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY

You don"t have to come out of the Spirit realm. God intends for you to walk everyday in the same closeness, strength, joy and direction you experience on Sunday. The devil is waiting to ambush you as you leave church. He wants to bring to your mind thoughts of fear, doubt, unbelief, and destruction.

We must guard our minds and hearts. As spiritual creatures, we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). We are commanded to live in the Spirit, not in the natural.

People whose eyes, ears and minds are directed toward the world find it difficult to hear God speaking to them. The Lord wants to talk to you at work, at lunch, at play-everywhere you go. Some of the greatest revelations from God have come not in my prayer closet but in the midst of my everyday life.

Our inner man is always willing, but our natural man resists. That's what Jesus meant when He said to His disciples. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41)

The advantage of walking in the Spirit is that it keeps us on the right path. In Galatians 5:16-18 (NIV), the apostle Paul wrote, "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law."

Thank God that our relationship with Him is not a sometimes affair; it's an all-the-time union. With the words of the old hymn, I say, "He leads me! O blessed thought!" The good news is, God doesn't live in a church. He's everywhere we are.

NUGGET #76

GOD WILL USE YOU RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE TODAY

You don"t need to do anything else for God to begin to use you now. You don"t have to read another paperback book, listen to another cassette tape, memorize another scripture, plant another seed gift, or repeat another creed or confession. You don"t even need to attend another church service before God will begin to make use of you.

God uses willing vessels, not brimming vessels. Throughout the Bible, in order to fulfill His plans for the earthy, God used many people from all walks of life:

1. *Matthew, a government employee who became an apostle*
2. *Gideon, a common laborer who became a valiant leader of men*
3. *Jacob, a deceiver whose name became Israel*
4. *Deborah, a housewife who became a judge*
5. *Moses, a stutterer who became a deliverer*

6. *Jeremiah , a child who fearlessly spoke the Word of the Lord*
7. *Aaron , a servant who became God"s spokesman*
8. *Nicodemus, a Pharisee who became a defender of the faith.*
9. *David, a shepherd boy who become a king*
10. *Hosea, a marital failure who prophesied to save Israel*
11. *Joseph, a prisoner who become prime minister*
12. *Esther, an orphan who became a queen*
13. *Elijah, a homely man who became a mighty prophet*
14. *Joshua, an assistant who became a mighty prophet*
15. *James and John, fishermen who became dose disciples of Christ and were known as "sons of thunder"*
16. *Abraham, a nomad who became the father of many nations.*
17. *Peter , a businessman who became one of the world"s greatest evangelists*
18. *Jacob , a refugee who became the father of the twelve tribes of Israel*
19. *John the Baptist, a vagabond who became the forerunner of Jesus.*
20. *Mary, an unknown virgin who gave birth to the Son of God.*
21. *Nehemiah, a cupbearer who built the wall of Jerusalem*
22. *Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, Hebrew exiles who became great leaders of the nation of Babylon*

23. *Hezekiah, an idolatrous father's son, who became a king renowned for doing right in the sight of the Lord.*
24. *Isaiah, a man of unclean lips who prophesied the birth of God's messiah*
25. *Paul, a persecutor who became the greatest missionary in history and the author of two-thirds of the New Testament.*

ALL GOD NEEDS IS ALL OF YOU!

A FINAL WORD

Be the whole person God called you to be. Don"t settle for anything else. Don"t look back. Look forward and decide today to take steps towards His plan for your life.

And remember 1 Thessalonians 5:24. "Faithful is he that called you, who also will do it."

OTHER BOOKS BY JOHN L. MASON

1. ***KNOW YOUR LIMITS AND IGNORE THEM***
2. ***PROVERBS PRAYERS***
3. ***CONQUERING AN ENEMY CALLED AVERAGE***
4. ***LET GO OF WHATEVER MAKES YOU STOP***
5. ***ASK***
6. ***YOU"RE BORN AN ORIGINAL-DON"T DIE A COPY***
7. ***WHY ASK WHY***
8. ***DON"T WAIT FOR YOUR SHIP TO COME IN, SWIM OUT TO MEET IT***

(TYPED BY ERNEST APPIAH (THE GREAT PALOMA)