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Why Division Before Unity is Necessary

“Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division…” (Luke 12:51).

Many are saying that America has never been more divided, but that is because they do not know history. The first ten years after the Constitution was ratified and we became a republic was said to be one long (ten year) shouting match. Then we had the worst division of all, which resulted in the Civil War. There will always be division, but the issue is how we handle it.

I’m not saying that division is good, but it is often necessary before there can be true unity. Division is necessary so that differences can be expressed. It would be helpful if the dialogue about the differences was a real dialogue, not just a shouting match. However, the present lack of civility is also a revelation of the lack of maturity, or confidence, in our position. So a goal should be to gain maturity and confidence. We can only do this for ourselves, but the side that does this first will ultimately win the debate on the issues.

So how do we gain maturity and confidence in our position? How do we go from a shouting match to real dialogue that could lead to mutual respect and understanding, or even agreement on some of the issues?

As Christians, we must keep in mind what Jesus taught about how Satan cannot cast out Satan—we could say the lack of civility will not be cast out by those who lack civility. We are called to be of a different spirit. Being reactionary does not help (I’m preaching to myself about this too). When someone yells at us or says things about us or our position that are not true, it is hard to be patient and respond with grace and dignity. However, this will likely be required of us before we will be allowed to win the debate. Why?

The Lord is often not as concerned about us winning the debate as He is about working His character into us. For this reason He often uses situations to change us, and He can be more interested in this than in us gaining political or policy points. The Lord is above all rule and authority and dominion, and He will ultimately win on every point. If we are going to win we must maintain our position in Christ, who will ultimately win every debate. We abide in Him by abiding in His Spirit, and the fruit of that is love, joy, peace, and patience.

Why is character so important? Because The Lord is seeking to change hearts, not just minds. He wants us to believe the right things, but to do so because we understand and agree with them. We can put people in shackles and make them behave, but forcing compliance will not change...
hearts. Take the shackles off and they will revert to their former behavior. Granted, the shackles may be required at times for the protection of others from bad behavior, but we must keep in mind that is seeking to change hearts, and not just minds.

In this time of such a lack of civility, good manners stand out to the point of even being shocking. This can be a huge advantage as it can be very disarming and even spiritually tranquilizing. We need to do this for ourselves as well as others. Few minds, much less hearts, are changed when there is enmity or rage.

Good manners have been described as how to honor and show respect for others. This does not mean that we are honoring or showing respect for their position, which we may not respect. However, we can honor and respect people without respecting or honoring their position on a matter. One of the first things we need to learn is to separate the two. Every soul is worth the most precious commodity in the universe or eternity—the blood of The Son of God. When we go into any dialogue, especially when we expect disagreement, we should consider this first and keep it in mind.

All relationships are built on trust. You can have love, but if you do not have trust, a relationship will be superficial at best. It is the same with true dialogue. True dialogue is only possible to the degree that there is mutual trust and respect. Understanding comes from the words “stand under,” and we must be able to stand under someone else’s place to really understand where they are coming from. Seeing the willingness of someone else to do this can start to build the trust that is required for true dialogue.

This is not to imply that we need to lay aside our own beliefs or convictions to understand others. We do not need to agree with others to understand them. Here’s another issue we need to consider: even if we patiently listen to others, this does not mean that they will give us the same grace. It will likely be rare that they will listen to us, and maybe they never will. We need to accept this and use it to grow in grace and patience.

One time when I accepted an invitation to dialogue with someone, I remember how shocking it was when after I had sat patiently listening to and processing what they were saying, they got up and left after they had finished. One person even started telling people they had convinced me of their position, but the opposite was the case—and they had not even heard my side.

While participating in a documentary on climate change, I was determined to listen and hear everyone’s position. I guess they had never met anyone who actually listened because in the documentary, they said something to the effect that I was silenced by the arguments of these scientists, when in fact I was astonished by their ignorance of some basic factors that affect climate. I’m not a scientist but having studied the subject a great deal when I was a pilot to understand weather better, I was profoundly disappointed by their shallowness. Even so, as the Book of Proverbs declares over and over, the truly wise are those who listen and are not quick to reveal their own thoughts.

It is better to be treated unfairly this way than to get pulled down into the muck. If Satan can pull us down from our position of being seated with Christ, he will have won the round. We win if we abide in The Lord’s peace and patience, even if we did not get to say a word. If we become strong enough in our position in Christ, He may then be able to use us to present His position when it will be heard, and it will count for more than just winning a debate.

So if we are seated with Christ on His throne in the heavenly places, no amount of being misunderstood, or being treated with disrespect, should disturb us. How does The Lord respond to the folly of the nations? As we are told in Psalm 2, He sits in the heavens and laughs! That is an important point. Even when “the heathen rage,” He does not lose His sense of humor and neither should we.

So present divisions can be for our training as much as for winning the debate. This does not mean that it is not important to win the debate and win the battle for the hearts and minds of the people, but we will fail if we do not do this in the right spirit.

In His Service,

Rick Joyner

1 Corinthians 15:58
Overcoming Hopelessness

BY ROBIN MCMILLAN

The Bible emphasizes faith, hope, and love as three essentials. Each is necessary for a vibrant faith. They are different from each other, but they are also related. They are like three sisters. Hope says, “I know things will work out, I just don’t know how or when!” Her sister Faith says, “Things have already worked out” (even before they do in actual experience). Love says, “even if they don’t work out, even if I don’t understand what’s going on, nothing can separate me from the affection God has for me!”

We should note that Paul states that of the three, love is the greatest because it has the capacity to generate the other two attributes. Faith works by love (see Galatians 5:6). Hope increases as we receive God’s love, which energizes our faith since faith is the substance of things hoped for!

Today let’s look at hope. Hope securely built upon the “better promises” of God fueled the fire of faith that has produced every major spiritual breakthrough down through the ages. It is essential. Hope is defined as the confident expectation of good and is based on believing the promises of God. There is no consistent strong faith apart from having a living hope in our hearts for “faith is the substance of things hoped for” (see Hebrews 11:1)! 

All of us have the capacity to be filled with hope, and it is much closer to us than we often recognize: When we were born again, we were translated into a brand new kingdom—into a “sphere of hope.”

For we were saved in the sphere of hope. But hope that has been seen is not hope, for that which a person sees, why does he hope for it? But if that which we do not see, we hope for, through patience we expectantly wait for it (Romans 8:24-25 Wuest).

Hope is like a spiritual bubble or sphere. Abiding in that sphere creates attitudes of confidence. It becomes the inward spiritual environment that fortifies our patience and sustains the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Because Paul the apostle lived in that hope atmosphere, he boldly proclaimed, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Let me give you an example of the power of hope from contemporary history. Dean Smith coached the University of North Carolina basketball team for thirty-six years. He once owned the record for the most victories in NCAA history with 879. He was a highly innovative strategic thinker and had a reputation for being loyal to each of his players. He continued to send regular notes and encouragements to many of them years after they played for him. His positive hope-filled attitude permeated every aspect of his life.
“Hope is like a spiritual bubble or sphere. Abiding in that sphere creates attitudes of confidence. It becomes the inward spiritual environment that fortifies our patience and sustains the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.”

Dean Smith’s hope was contagious and proved to be the deciding factor in great victories on the court. March 2, 1974, his fourth ranked Carolina Tar Heels trailed the Duke University Blue Devils by 8 points with 17 seconds left in the game. Coach Smith called time out, gathered his players around him, looked them in the eye and said, “We’re in great shape. We’ve got them right where we want them. Isn’t this fun?!”

With that kind of confidence Coach Smith sent his players back on the court into a seemingly impossible situation. Carolina picked up two quick points when Bobby Jones hit two foul shots. They scored on a steal and scored again on a turnover of a Duke inbound pass, shortening the gap to two points. After Carolina rebounded on a missed Duke foul shot, Walter Davis hit a last second 30-foot bank shot to tie the game sending it into overtime. The Tar Heels claimed a 96-92 overtime victory that day. Carolina’s win is regarded by many as the greatest comeback victory in college basketball history, inspired by Dean Smith’s unshakeable hope.

OVERCOMING HOPELESSNESS

Hopelessness is a delusion, the consequence of an inaccurate belief system. For many in our generation it is an enormous enemy, but it is an imposter that is the result of believing a lie. Jesus said, “You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Truth is transformational. It has the power to make you free!

Lies have an opposite detrimental effect. How do you know that what you believe is not true? You are not free! It can be just that simple.

The Apostle Paul identified the relationship between what you believe and how it affects you. He wrote, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13). Accurate believing produces joy and peace and an abundance of hope. Acknowledging the truth is not sufficient to bring freedom; the truth you believe is the only truth that liberates you. In some cases you may have your facts straight, but still be bound because your understanding is inaccurate. Jesus warned, “take heed how you hear” (see Luke 8:18). If you have drawn inaccurate conclusions, you “heard wrong.” Allow the Holy Spirit to interpret reality for you.

JEREMIAH’S DILEMMA

Jeremiah, one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament, walked close to the Lord and was one of His spokesmen in his generation to the nation of Israel. Yet the great prophet was prone to periods of hopelessness and depression. Jeremiah 15:18 details his complaint against the Lord. In despair he questioned, “Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable, which refuses to be healed? Will You surely be to me like an unreliable stream, as waters that fail?”

Jeremiah accused the Lord of being unreliable, like “waters that fail,” meaning “waters that cannot be trusted.” God's response is illuminated in The Amplified Translation:

Therefore thus says the Lord to Jeremiah: “If you return and give up this mistaken tone of distrust and despair, then I will give you again a settled place of
quiet and safety, and you will be My minister; and if you separate the precious from the vile cleansing your own heart from unworthy and unwarranted suspicions concerning God's faithfulness, you shall be My mouthpiece. . . for I am with you to save and deliver you, says the Lord. And I will deliver you out of the hands of the wicked, and I will redeem you out of the palms of the terrible and ruthless tyrants” (Jeremiah 15:19-21).

Jeremiah was affected by a common delusion that the Lord identified as “a mistaken tone of distrust and despair.” His solution was simple and profound: give it up! Stop believing the lie, reconsider your conclusions, and change your mind.

David the Psalmist declared: “I would have despaired, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living” (Psalm 27:13, NASU). David knew what destroys despair: having an accurate understanding that God is good, and a deep conviction that he would experience that goodness while he lived. Our human tendency is to allow how we feel to affect what we believe. True humility refuses to believe what we think or feel when it contradicts the truth and the revealed nature of God. Having a renewed mind is the key that brings this breakthrough.

Circumstantial deliverance is often preceded by an internal heart attitude—deliverance based on changing our beliefs. Jeremiah’s circumstantial freedom was contingent on first walking in an inner freedom. The Lord promised him a new settled place of quiet and safety on the other side of rejecting his mistaken tone. The term “mistaken tone” reveals how easy it is to misinterpret reality. The prophet’s inaccurate thought process caused him to feel depressed and it distorted his understanding of the nature of God. The Lord also instructed Jeremiah to cleanse himself from suspicions of God’s motives. If Jeremiah made those two internal adjustments, God promised to make him His mouthpiece and would not allow Jeremiah’s ever present enemies to prevail against him. God would deliver and redeem him.

This generation desperately needs to “give up” our “mistaken tones of distrust and despair” and “suspicions concerning God’s faithfulness.” Don’t let hopelessness steal your joy! Identify the lies that you believe. Replace them with the truth and send despair running for its life.

Eventually, Jeremiah changed his mind about what the Lord thinks. Fifteen chapters later Jeremiah discovered the redemptive thoughts of the Lord revealed in this prophetic statement: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:10-11).

What does God think of us? His thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give us a future and a hope. Hope is built into the DNA of the Gospel. Though human hope may have died the day Jesus was crucified, transcendent unconquerable hope emerged from the tomb in the person of the resurrected man, Christ Jesus. The empty tomb of the risen Jesus makes this bold proclamation: there is no hopeless situation. Let that hope arise in your hearts right now. It is already there ready to spring into living faith!

ROBIN McMILLAN is the Senior Pastor of Queen City Church in downtown Charlotte, NC. He previously served MorningStar Fellowship Church as director of the Fellowship of Ministries and Pastors and also as Senior Pastor of the Fort Mill congregation. Robin’s passion is to awaken the church to the power of the Spirit and enable believers to discover how they can access the realm of the heavens, enjoy the presence and power of God, and be empowered to live a supernatural life. Many are impacted by Robin’s unique preaching style and prophetic gifts. He and his wife Donna have four children and four grandchildren.
God Restores and Refreshes

BY BOBBY CONNER

We have entered a new season. It is the season of a fresh start! We are in a divinely appointed time of refreshing and restoring.

“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the crawling locust, the consuming locust, and the chewing locust, my great army which I sent among you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be put to shame” (Joel 2:25).

Do not let the pains of the past keep you from embracing the victories of your future! My friend Bob Jones would say; “The past is just that”—the past. This is a new day in which you may boldly declare, “Old things have passed away!” (see Isaiah 48:6-7)

GOD OFFERS FORGIVENESS

One of the sweetest words in any language is the word forgiven! God promises that even if your sins are red like crimson—bright, obvious, glaring, unmistakable—they have been forgiven, washed white as snow, because of the crimson blood of Christ (see Isaiah 1:18).

I am not talking about just a few sins or a handful of mistakes, but each and every betrayal, sin, and offense is under the blood of Christ—every sin and mistake is forgotten and erased! Beloved, it makes no difference how twisted and tangled your life has been or is right now. Through the shed blood of Christ at Calvary, God made all forgiveness and grace abound toward you. Heaven and earth may pass away, but “His compassions fail not” (see Lamentations 3:22 KJV). Why? Because Christ Jesus already bore our sins and iniquities (see Isaiah 53:12)!

GOD FORGETS YOUR PAST

Through our repentance, God always makes a way to free us from our past. Scripture states that God removes our sins as far as the east is from the west (see Psalm 103:12). Brothers and sisters in Christ, take this encouragement to heart: shake off your past failures and set your focus on the fresh new day. Begin experiencing your victories!
REMEMBER THIS IMPORTANT PROMISE:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2).

The Lord has already lavished you with abundant, extravagant forgiveness and grace to empower you to leave behind every past sin and failure. Over are the days of regret, doubt, and fear, along with the many missed opportunities and failed relationships. The seasons of backsliding and passivity, the detours of the works of the flesh, are finished!

As we believe His Word of forgiveness and set our heart to seek the Lord, we will find overwhelming grace and mercies for each day (see Jeremiah 29:12-13). Never give up. Never give in again to a mindset of guilt and failure (see Hebrews 10:35). You were created by your Maker to carry His glory and presence into a lost and dying world. God has confidence in you (see Deuteronomy 28:13). Remember, you are His choice (see Ephesians 2:10)—chosen for “such a time as this” (see Esther 4:14).

GOD REDEEMS YOUR WOUNDS

It is by the stripes of Jesus Christ that we are healed (see Isaiah 53:5). Take comfort in this, dear Believer: any wounds that you have suffered will become significant avenues of healing for others. When we are healed from our wounds, then we receive the needed grace for healing others! We bring Christ’s healing and comfort to others in the areas in which we personally have been afflicted (see I Thessalonians 5:11).

GOD BRINGS BREAKTHROUGH

God is even now releasing divine favor to us for accomplishing great exploits for His glory. In Psalm 84:11 (NLV), we learn how He lavishes His blessings of grace and glory:

“For the LORD God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The LORD will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.”

“Even if you have not succeeded in previous days and years, do not lose heart. God is saying, ‘Try again!’ It is time to regroup and try again, knowing that failure is never God’s plan (see Jeremiah 29:11). You will see doors open that were closed to you previously. God is granting breakthrough.”

Even if you have not succeeded in previous days and years, do not lose heart. God is saying, “Try again!” It is time to regroup and try again, knowing that failure is never God’s plan (see Jeremiah 29:11). You will see doors open that were closed to you previously. God is granting breakthrough.

I pray that your entire family will experience the overwhelming love and favor of God as you leave the past behind and boldly take hold of the blessings and promises of God!

BOBBY CONNER and his wife, Carolyn, are founders of Eagles View Ministries (EVM), a global outreach that focuses on revealing a demonstration of God’s awesome power. They pastored two Southern Baptist churches for over twenty-six years, and they have been ministering for almost five decades in numerous nations across the earth. Their goal is to prepare an overcoming generation that transcends gender and age, raising the standard of purity and power to transform nations. Bobby has authored numerous books, and for over four decades, he has averaged five speaking events a week. Bobby and Carolyn have been married for over fifty years.
Meditation: The Five Phases

BY STEVE SCROGGS

It was a bright day in Statesville, North Carolina. As I sat in the living room of my mentor and friend, I asked him a question. “How do I get the truth from my head to my heart?” He put his finger on his forehead and then on his heart and said, “Keep thinking and speaking the truth over and over again until you know it is coming from your heart.” In other words, meditate.

The ancient practice of biblical meditation is not just a state of mental or emotional stillness; rather it is a continuous focus on the name, personality, word, and ways of God. When Moses interacted with God in face-to-face meditation, he descended Mt. Sinai with his face glowing like a brilliant sun. When God engaged Joshua, preparing him to lead Israel into the Promised Land, he gave this instruction:

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth; but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

God’s ultimate goal is relationship. The process of nurturing relationship unlocks a natural pathway for meditation. Do you remember the beginning of your most satisfying relationship? I have found five observable phases that produce a mutually satisfying bond. The sequence may differ, but this pathway charts a course for meditation.

PHASE ONE: ADORATION

The first phase in relationship and meditation is adoration—the romance of seeing life through a fresh set of eyes. This inspiration cycles with a new person, mystery, or set of stories that inspire. Partakers share a state of near-constant bliss and invest time to know one another. The psalmist David said,

“I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.
Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.
My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me” (Psalm 63:6-8 KJV).

Through adoration of God, praise will fill your mouth and a new glory will enter your life (see Psalm 1). The Father made your soul to process through meditation, starting with adoration.

PHASE TWO: ADAPTATION

The second phase of meditation moves across the adaptation of your life to the one you love and pursue. Every time you meditate, you see a facet of His personality that challenges your status quo, calling you in. As the newness of inspiration wears thin, the reality of life settles in with the disciplines required for meaningful interchange. Adaptation merges God’s life into the human life through agreement. King David chose meditation and scripted his adaptation in the book of Psalms:
“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.
“I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.
“I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word” (Psalm 119:9, 15-16 KJV).

As you adapt to Him, you will discover that He created you to be like Him. He is a dreamer and gave you the dreams you possess. He glorifies you so you will glorify Him (see John 17:1-5).

PHASE THREE: SUBMISSION

Submission, the choice to hand over control of your decision-making to the one you love, is the third phase of meditation. For the first time, individual motives will be challenged. As the meditation deepens, God reveals His purposes as well as your minor disagreements, the belief system arguments, and the self-will motivations. This once tender loving and effortless relationship evolves into a power struggle.

Meditation tunes your soul-spirit experience to the frequency of heaven. Therefore, you will recognize that God is love and has your best interests at heart (see Romans 8:28). The psalmist cried out,

“I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, and that in faithfulness, You have afflicted me.
“Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to Your servant.
“Let the proud be ashamed; for they treated me wrongly with falsehood; but I will meditate on Your precepts” (Psalm 119:75-76, 78).

Through contemplation, you learn to appeal to authority and develop the negotiation skills of bargaining, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

PHASE FOUR: ASCENSION

In phase four, the heart ascends from the position of evaluation to a desire for connection. At this juncture, you recognize the link between what you learned in your family of origin and how that imprint colored your interaction with God. As your perspective matures and you see your loved one with new eyes, a sympathetic re-awakening emerges. David experienced this,

“I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.
“I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
“I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds.
“You are the God that does wonders: you have declared your strength among the people.
“You have with Your arm redeemed Your people . . . Selah” (see Psalm 77:10-15).

As you encounter the Word and Spirit in meditation, an invitation to the throne of grace appears. God becomes more than a truth to study or a being to read about.

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace” (see Hebrews 4:16).

“You will show me the path of life: in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11).

As you focus attention and affection on His presence, you will experience the realm of His Spirit (see Revelation 22:17-19) and walk as a child of light (see Ephesians 5:8).

PHASE FIVE: COMMUNION

The fifth phase in meditation is face-to-face communion. Communion integrates the needs of self with the God’s favor was not affirming the shadow of the ritual but the reality of the relationship. Meditation requires time, focus, and discipline.”

“God’s favor was not affirming the shadow of the ritual but the reality of the relationship. Meditation requires time, focus, and discipline.”

All Scriptures are NIV.
needs of another. You maintain equilibrium between individuality and unity. You take responsibility for your own life and provide support for the one you love. Conflicts will arise from time to time, but as a result of the struggles from the previous stages, you resolve them quickly. King David meditated on this reality:

“I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.”

“I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.”

“I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word” (Psalm 119:14-16 KJV).

As you integrate your heart, soul, mind, and strength with the presence of God (see Galatians 5:16-26), communion emerges with a passion that enraptures the soul. Earthly treasures become shadows in the love of His magnificent glory.

CONCLUSION

The brightness I sensed that day in my mentor’s living room was God’s excitement for His children coming to Him in meditation. God’s favor was not affirming the shadow of the ritual but the reality of the relationship. Meditation requires time, focus, and discipline. Those who walk in the Spirit and absorb His love will be His sons and daughters, sharing the secrets of eternal truth (see Romans 8:1-6).

STEVE SCROGGS believes that being a friend of God is life’s greatest achievement. He and his wife, Melinda, reside in the beautiful mountains of western North Carolina. He loves family, enjoys people, and encourages the body of Christ all over the world to walk in their God-given destiny. Steve and Melinda have three married sons and five grandchildren. For more information about Steve, his ministry, and his published works, visit www.theiamnetwork.net and amazon.com/author/stevenroyscroggs.

Dream
Dreams:
The Joys and Sorrows of Being a Dreamer

BY JIM BUCHAN

Recently I’ve found myself humming “I Dreamed a Dream,” a song from the Les Miserables musical. If you haven’t watched the YouTube video of Susan Boyle singing this song on Britain’s Got Talent, I encourage you do so. It’s inspiring!

However, I’ve never given much thought to the lyrics of the song until today, when I did a Google search. It turns out that the chorus says this:

I dreamed a dream in time gone by
When hope was high
And life worth living
I dreamed that love would never die
I dreamed that God would be forgiving

Yet to my surprise, much of the song is actually a downer, recounting dreams that ended long ago: “Then I was young and unafraid, and dreams were made and used and wasted.” By the song’s end, the circumstances of life have torn the dreams apart, and the author comes to this gloomy conclusion: “Life has killed the dream I dreamed.”

WHAT A BUMMER!

Just as Joseph was labeled by his brothers (see Genesis 39:19), I’ve frequently been described as a “dreamer.” So
this whole matter of “dreaming dreams” has always been
important to me. However, dreaming is a hazardous activity,
and I’ve often struggled to keep my dreams alive. (Someday
I’ll tell you the story of when I dreamed of planning the
“Perfect Church.” It didn’t take long for reality to erode my
lofty dream.)

What about you? Are you still dreaming dreams, or do
you speak of your dreams only in the past tense?

A LESSON FROM ABBIE

Here is a personal story from two decades ago that
illustrates the challenge of keeping our dreams alive. It was
bedtime at the Buchan household, and I asked my two
young daughters, “What do you want to pray before you
go to bed, girls?”

Molly, seven years old at the time, prayed for the
Dubles, good friends who were missionaries in Kenya.

Then Abbie, who was four, chimed in, “Lord, I pray I
don’t have any bad dreams. No! I pray I don’t have any
dreams at all!”

At first I thought it was humorous that someone would
not only pray against bad dreams, but against having any
dreams at all. Then God pointed out the surprising fact
that I often had similar feelings toward my own dreams.

As you’ve probably already discovered, it’s painful when
our fondest dreams turn into nightmares. Although we
may not be as honest as Abbie was in her prayer, at times it
would seem a great relief to eliminate our dreams altogeth-
er. Wouldn’t it be easier to just become a zombie or a
mind-numbed robot, putting your life on autopilot and
eliminating any new initiatives or risky adventures?

BECOMING A DREAMER AGAIN

If you’ve become a disillusioned dreamer, you’re not
alone. Yet it’s important to see that not all “disillusion-
ment” is bad, for we all have “illusions” in our lives that are
not from God.

Jesus’ death on the cross was the most disillusioning
event in history. His closest followers were devastated, going
from their grandiose expectations at the triumphal entry
into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (see John 12:12-19) to
hiding out in a locked room for fear of the Jews (see John
20:19). Peter, and some of the others, even sought comfort in
turning back to their old occupation of fishing (see John 21).

The pain of disillusionment can also be felt in the words
of the two disciples walking to Emmaus: “We had hoped
that He was the one who was going to redeem Israel” (see
Luke 24:21). How sad! These men “had hoped” they could
count on Jesus to fulfill their dreams, but now their hopes
were past tense.

However, at the very time these discouraged men were
feeling this way, the resurrected Lord Jesus was walking right
beside them! What a great lesson. When our dreams are
dashed to the ground and all hope seems lost, the Source of
ALL hope is right here with us, ready to open our eyes again
to new possibilities.

YOU’RE NEVER TOO OLD

Perhaps you think you’re simply too old to dream. My
generation of fellow Baby Boomers was perhaps the greatest
generation of dreamers to ever live. Yet now we’re getting
old, as my kids can attest to.

So is it time to admit defeat and simply stop dreaming
dreams? No way! In fact, God has a prophetic word just for
us: “In the last days . . . your young men will see visions,
your OLD men will DREAM DREAMS” (see Acts 2:17).
Let it be, Lord!

No matter how old or young you may be, I encourage
you to keep on seeing visions and dreaming dreams. Yes, as
Abbie recognized, dreams sometimes are scary or even
painful. However, we’re entering into days when we’ll need
God to raise up a new army of dreamers—taking bold action
to impact the world for His kingdom.

With more than thirty years of ministry and writing experience,
JIM BUCHAN has a passion to equip Christians for greater
fruitfulness. He has served as an attorney, pastor, church
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information about Jim’s ministry, contact him at buchanJ@aol.com or 704-770-5200.
There is no rite of passage or ceremony where someone says, “It is now time for you to focus primarily on your individual strengths and skills.” I wish there were such a moment.

Initially, your understanding of your unique skills and personal abilities might not be highly defined or even noticeable. However, I guarantee that you will achieve more success in your field and enjoy more of the life that you are destined to live if you can be strongly intentional about identifying and focusing on personal skills with the greatest potential. This focused approach is fundamental as we plan our passion, own our life, and chart our course.

Identifying your individual strengths, skills, and the areas where you have the ability to achieve exceptional mastery can be a significant journey. In fact, it will take purposeful, focused effort on your part. There are several reasons for this.

As individuals, we can tend to be self-deprecating. We underestimate our skills and think, “If I can do it, anyone can.” There is a built-in tendency towards unpretentiousness and believing others are equally as skilled as we are in any given area. Humility can be a virtue, but a continual self-deprecating mindset that devalues our personal strengths is a detriment to our prosperity and success.

There are skills that you possess and operate at a higher level more than those around you. As you chart your course to a fulfilling and prosperous life, you will recognize areas of strength among your personal traits and recognize that you have the ability to become extraordinary. Sometimes it helps if you realize that you are not prideful; rather you are accepting the gifts that God gave you. I use the question “What can you become the best in the world at?” in executive coaching exercises.

Many people fail to identify their own areas of extraordinary skill, where they have the potential for greatness, because they operate in those areas naturally with little effort and wonder why others are struggling. They are dumbfounded when someone else can’t see it because the solution is so apparent to them or the physical task is so easy for them.

In His service,

Dave Yarnes
Executive Vice President, MorningStar Ministries
THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Happy New Year to our Partners and dear friends of the ministry!
Momentum continues to build at MorningStar, and the heightened spiritual atmosphere is due in part to the desperation and hunger of those who come. Many of our main conference speakers last year were new to MorningStar, and these fresh streams of teaching and revelation greatly enriched the message that went forth.

One of the important MorningStar mantles is education. In 2018, MorningStar University achieved accreditation with the Association of Independent Christian Colleges and Seminaries. This important step allows MSU to offer Associates, Bachelors, and Masters Degrees in Leadership Ministry. If you want to know more, go to MorningStarUniversity.com or call 803.547.8494.

At the 2018 Vision New Year’s Conference, we celebrated and worshiped together to usher in another New Year. Rick Joyner articulated MorningStar’s heart for everyone who came in these words:

“This is a unique conference for seeking a prophetic word for the coming year, as well as personal words of direction for all who come. These words have not only proven accurate, but critical for the times. Each New Year’s Conference has been growing in intensity, excitement, and importance.”

Amber Brooks, Joel and Destiny Khouri, Andrew Williams, and others led worship. They were joined by Daniel Kolenda, John and Carol Arnott, Jeremiah Johnson, Zoro, and Rick Joyner. All offered powerful prophetic and anointed teaching. New connections were made and old ones were strengthened as we heard clear direction from the Lord for the coming year.

LOAN REFINANCING

You may recall that we reached out to our Partners to help us as we were in a position of refinancing the underlying mortgage for MorningStar. Although MorningStar’s loan-to-value is extremely low and our financial position has been good, we were concerned that the underlying mortgage would not be reinstated by our financial institution. That has not been the case. We are now working with them to see the loan move forward on mutually agreeable terms.

That being said, we are continuing to make an appeal to have MorningStar be debt free. To that end, we are asking our like-minded Partners to join with us in this initiative to see MorningStar completely debt free. You can make a year-end contribution by visiting YearEndGift.org or by calling 844-564-6677.

In His Service,

Dave Yarnes
It has been said that the prophetic speaks to your potential. As prophetic people, it is important that we look at this upcoming year having benefited from lessons learned with eyes of expectancy and a clean heart.

I remember a quiet morning when I heard the Lord say, “I need you to listen to your heart.” I had become fairly good at avoiding my heart, especially as a Christian and a minister in the midst of an endeavor “for the Lord.” In that moment, while changing my focus to the place Holy Spirit dwells, I heard His voice of direction clearly and it brought peace (see II Corinthians 1:22).

Scripture tells us, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5). While some are guided solely by their heart, we are told to trust the Lord with our heart. Trust Him to reveal its true nature and trust Him to use it to give you direction, wisdom, and understanding.

As we head into a new year, I intend to allow God to search my heart and lead me. Will you join me? Traditionally, this is a time to assess the past and plan for the future. It is good to take stock of where you have been and what you have done as it allows for lessons to be learned and successes to be celebrated. Let’s go deeper in our assessment from action to motive. Taking note of motivation will allow you to make your next move with a clean heart.
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