

BELIEVER'S VOICE OF



VICTORY

December 2008

Merry Christmas

the joy of celebration



DEAR PARTNERS AND FRIENDS,

Joy to our world! The day Jesus was born into the earth was the day our heavenly Father's great plan for the fullness of THE BLESSING—blessing without measure—went into the final phase!

This Christmas Day, we celebrate THE BLESSING. We celebrate Jesus. We celebrate love. That's what Christmas is all about—the joy of celebration! If we could measure our joy, I believe this year we would be off the charts!

What is the great joy? It is simple. God our Father gave us Jesus, and in Jesus He has freely given us *all things* (Romans 8:32)! Because we have believed Him and accepted Him as our Lord and Savior, He has provided everything we would ever need to open our hearts to THE BLESSING and to do our part to be THE BLESSING in action wherever we go!

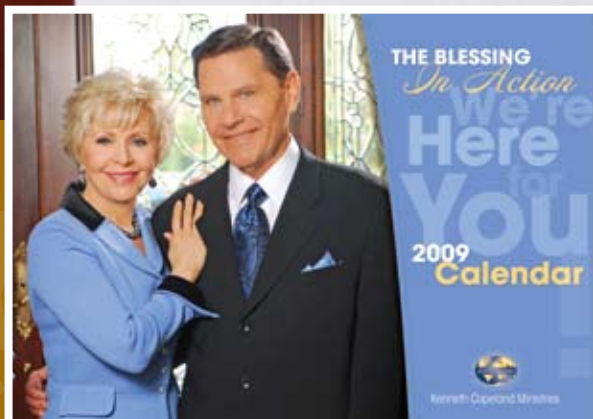
We trust this special issue of *Believer's Voice of Victory*, filled with stories and articles from our family, will bless you. Our prayer is that it will expand your love and joy during this blessed season.

As our family gathers this Christmas, we *will* celebrate! We will joyfully celebrate all God has provided for us in THE BLESSING. And we will celebrate YOU, our Partners in ministry—our extended family.

We love you and thank the Lord for you. With great joy, we celebrate you as an invaluable part of THE BLESSING in our lives every day!

Merry Christmas!

Kenneth & Gloria



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2009
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Because of your prayers and generous support of Kenneth Copeland Ministries, we're changing the world—one life at a time. Now, celebrate all the work God is doing with our NEW 2009 wall calendar demonstrating *THE BLESSING in Action!*

Our gift to you, this special calendar features snapshots of God's work through KCM, quotes from Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, reminders of important dates, including KCM meetings, powerful scriptures, points of prayer and more.

THE BLESSING is in action and working in our ministry and the lives of Partners like you. Commemorate this blessing all year long by requesting your complimentary 2009 wall calendar today!

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When the Lord first spoke to us about starting the *Believer's Voice of Victory* magazine, He said: *This is your seed. Give it to everyone who ever responds to your ministry, and don't ever allow anyone to pay for a subscription to it.* For 35 years it has been our joy to bring you good news through the teachings of ministers who write out of living contact with God, and the testimonies of believers who took God at His Word and experienced His victory in everyday life.

—Kenneth and Gloria Copeland

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We don't have to depend on this fallen world's system for our support, or ride the roller-coaster economy of boom and bust, recession and depression.

BY KENNETH COPELAND

The Joy of Financial Rest

If your confidence has been rocked by recent talk of recession, I have a headline that will encourage you. If you've been concerned about how the current economic climate will affect your financial future, I have a report based on the Bible that can help put your mind at rest and free you from every financial care. | *There is no recession in the kingdom of God!*

Notice I didn't say there's no recession in heaven. Although that's true, the riches we'll enjoy in heaven don't help us at the gas pump today. They don't put food on the table and a roof over our heads while we're living on planet Earth.

Heaven is in our future.

The kingdom of God, however, is a present-day reality.

It doesn't only exist in heaven, it exists on earth wherever Jesus is King. So, as believers, we can enjoy

the benefits of God's kingdom and draw on its resources not just in the sweet by-and-by but in the challenging here and now. We don't have to depend on this fallen world's system for our support, or ride the roller-coaster economy of boom and bust, recession and depression. We can live in abundance in any economy, because in the kingdom of God "THE BLESSING of the Lord, it *[always!]* maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22).

"But Brother Copeland," someone might say, "if

that's true, why do so many of us have to wear ourselves out working two jobs just to meet our needs?"

Because, like everything in God's kingdom, the financial part of THE BLESSING functions by faith—and when we're striving to meet our own needs, we're not in faith. We're trusting our own efforts. Instead of operating in the kingdom of God, we're operating in the world's system of finance.

In that system, people function as their own god. They act as their own source of supply so they are always trying to take care of themselves. They spend their lives following money. Jesus called that system "mammon," and He bluntly said: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise [care little and lightly esteem] the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

A Sorry Way to Live

No true believer would purposely serve the world's god of mammon. Yet when we worry about finances and struggle to meet our own needs, that's exactly what we're doing. We are binding ourselves to the world's sorry system with all its shortcomings. In that system, we work harder and still fall behind. If we do find a way to get ahead, we pay a high price for it by sacrificing time in God's Word, our family relationships or our health. While it looks like we're getting richer, in reality we're getting poorer.

That's the way the world's economic system works. One way or another, there's always sorrow with it.

How do we escape that system? It's simple. We trust God and do what Jesus told us to do in Matthew 6:26-33:

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

That's a familiar passage of Scripture to most of us. But it often seems impractical to our natural minds. *How can*

we stop worrying about our financial future when the world's experts are forecasting doom and gloom? we ask ourselves. How can we believe God will provide for us when Momma and Daddy and Grandma and Grandpa always told us we have to provide for ourselves?

There's only one way. If it's our desire to enjoy THE BLESSING of the kingdom, we must ignore every voice that contradicts God's Word. We must admit that Momma and Daddy and Grandma and Grandpa were wrong. They meant well, but their counsel was not based on the principles of God's kingdom—it was based on the fallen system of the world.

Free From the Curse

In that sin-cursed system people do have to look out for themselves. They do have to worry about the ups and downs of the world's economy. They must earn their living in toil and sorrow because they are bound to the effects of the Fall of Adam recorded in Genesis 3:17-19 where God said: "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (*New King James Version*).

Before the Fall, when God released THE BLESSING on Adam and told him to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion" (Genesis 1:28), Adam had been given an exciting, worldwide assignment. He'd been divinely commissioned to bless the whole earth and expand the Garden of Eden until it filled the planet. Along with that commission, God had given him "every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat" (verse 29).

Adam didn't have to worry about going hungry. Food was all around him. He didn't have to earn it. He just received it and enjoyed it.

When he lost THE BLESSING through sin, however, everything changed. Adam had to forget his worldwide mission for God and focus on his own provision. He never got out of his own backyard because he spent his life trying to keep food on the table and clothes on his back. He had to toil and sweat for a living because he was under the curse.

But here's the good news: As believers, we aren't under that curse anymore! Jesus has redeemed us from it "being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13).

Thank God, through Jesus we've been set free. We are living in THE BLESSING again.

Working on Assignment for God

"Brother Copeland, surely you aren't saying that because

I'm a Christian I don't have to work for a living anymore?"

I'm not saying you don't have to work. I'm saying you don't have to work *for a living*.

You don't have any more business sweating and toiling to make a living than Adam did before the Fall. Making money is not your job. That's the job of THE BLESSING. "It maketh rich" with no sorrowful side effects.

Your job is to seek the kingdom of God—to report to your heavenly Father every day and say, "Father, I'm here to receive Your assignment. What would You like me to do for You today? I am at Your service."

I can tell you from the Word and from experience, if you'll do that, God will keep you busy. He's kept Gloria and me running

as fast as we can for more than 40 years now. I can also tell you, He will pay you far more than you could ever earn. He'll not only meet your needs; He'll satisfy your wants (Psalm 23:1), and "make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

I don't care how hard you work, there is no way you can come close to earning that kind of wealth. The only way to receive it is to trust and obey your heavenly Father, enter the rest of faith and let THE BLESSING do its job.

Why don't more believers do that?

Primarily because the belief that we must earn our own prosperity is so ingrained in most of us it's hard to overcome.

I wrestled with that idea myself until the Lord helped free me from it by directing me to Romans 4:3-4. It says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."

Once when I was fellowshiping with the Lord over those verses, He pointed out to me that they refer to receiving THE BLESSING. And they declare that *any part of it we earn is not by grace*. Then He said, *Kenneth, is it possible to earn the new birth?*

"Of course not," I answered. "We could never work hard enough to earn salvation. Working for it just gets in the way. The new birth can only be received by faith through grace."

Is it possible to earn healing?

"No, divine healing is a gift of grace that was purchased for us by the stripes of Jesus. We can't earn it. Like the new birth, it must be received by simple faith."

What about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

"The same thing is true there. People struggled and tried to be good enough to earn the Baptism in the Holy Spirit for years and they found it didn't work. They discovered like every other part of THE BLESSING, it is received by faith through grace."

Kenneth, if you didn't earn your salvation, and you didn't earn your healing, and you didn't earn the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, why do you think you could earn your prosperity?

Don't Live on It, Give on It

For me, that settled the issue forever. I knew without a doubt that I would never have to toil for a living again...and neither do you!

If we'll leave the world's mammon-mentality

THE BLESSING doesn't care what the economic conditions are, if the stock market is up, down or sideways, or if the prognosticators are proclaiming recession. It just keeps on working—**making us rich and adding no sorrow with it.**

behind and stop trying to meet our own needs, we can get busy with our Garden-of-Eden assignment and start enjoying THE BLESSING that goes with it. We can spend our lives doing the will of our Father and being a blessing everywhere He sends us. If He sends us over to the school to work as a janitor, we can do it—not to earn a living but because God has assigned us to take His kingdom into that place.

"But I couldn't make ends meet on a janitor's salary!" someone might say.

Who said anything about living on a janitor's salary? Don't expect to live on it. Expect to give on it! Use that janitorial income to minister financial blessing to someone. Invest it in the kingdom of God. The Bible says when you do that, the Lord Jesus, your heavenly High Priest, will multiply that seed and increase the fruits of it until you are "enriched in every thing to all bountifulness" (2 Corinthians 9:11).

A janitor who is enriched in everything to all bountifulness isn't a poor man. He's a rich man! He can have a jet if he wants one.

"Why would a janitor want a jet?" you might ask.

It depends on what he does on his weekends. I know a farmer named Charles Capps who decided years ago he wanted an airplane so he could preach the gospel all over the place when he wasn't working his farm. That airplane enabled him to bless so many folks his preaching finally took over his farming. Now he flies around preaching full time.

Let Down Your Nets

Even if you're not called to preach the gospel full time, God wants to do the same thing for you. He wants to bless you in every way, including financially. He can get the job done, too, in any economy. He can multiply your resources when every economic indicator says it can't be done. He can bring you supernatural increase in the most unlikely situations.

Jesus proved that on the Sea of Galilee. After He preached from Peter's boat He said to him, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught" (Luke 5:4). Talk about unlikely conditions for increase! Every fisherman on the Galilee knew you couldn't catch fish with a net in the daytime. What's more, Peter and his partners had been fishing all night and they hadn't caught anything. So when the sun came up, they'd given up, washed their nets and prepared to go home.

Even so, because Peter was a Jew—a seed of Abraham—he should have known what Jesus was about to do for him. He should have had a revelation of THE BLESSING that

belonged to him, but he didn't. He had a "toiling" mentality so he answered Jesus by saying, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net" (verse 5).

It didn't even occur to Peter that he was about to be blessed. Because of his mentality, all he could think about was how much work it would be to wash those nets again.

If he hadn't respected Jesus as a minister and a teacher, he might have refused His request. But Peter honored Jesus' spiritual status even though it was obvious He knew nothing about the fishing business. So he did his religious duty. He cast out one old, rotten net thinking that after he hauled it back in—empty, no doubt—he wouldn't bother washing it again.

Bad choice.

That's the problem with a toiling mindset. It blinds you to God's blessings. If you're still living under the work-for-a-living curse mentality, your blessing can be staring you in the face and you'll miss it. Even when you're trying to be respectful of God's Word, you will make bad decisions right in Jesus' presence.

That's what Peter did. He went out fishing with Jesus assuming he wasn't going to catch anything, put out one rotten net and when the fish started piling into it, it broke. Then he was stuck. He'd left all his good nets on the shore. So he called to his partners in the other ship to come help. "And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink" (verse 7).

We usually think about that as a miracle. But actually it was THE BLESSING in operation. Fish run from toil but they come thrashing toward THE BLESSING, and since THE BLESSING was on Jesus they jumped into Peter's net even when the sun was shining.

The same BLESSING is upon us, as believers, today and it will work for us—anytime, anywhere—just like it did in Peter's day. THE BLESSING doesn't care what the economic conditions are, if the stock market is up, down or sideways, or if the prognosticators are proclaiming recession. It just keeps on working—making us rich and adding no sorrow with it.

If we'll put faith in that BLESSING, report to our heavenly Father for our assignment every day and become cheerful givers, we can stop worrying about the world's shortages and start rejoicing that there is no recession in the kingdom of God. We can get up every morning and say, "Praise God, my financial fish are coming in faster than I can string them. I'm on my way to a boat-sinking load of abundance. I am BLESSED!" **VICTORY**

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Expect a Miracle this Christmas

Do you remember the feeling of waking up Christmas morning with a level of expectancy that was higher than on any other day of the year? As a kid, it didn't matter how much money you did or didn't have. Economic status wasn't even a factor. You just knew your mother and father had done something extra special for you on this day and you couldn't wait to get out of bed to discover the surprise.

BY DR. STEPHEN AND KELLIE COPELAND SWISHER

We had that experience growing up with loving, faithful parents. Christmas was and still is a big deal in both our families. And it should be! We have been given the greatest gift that has ever been given.

It is sad to see the world forget what we are really celebrating. And sadder still to find that even many Christians don't really know what it's all about. Christmas isn't just the "holiday" some would like to reduce it to, but the celebration of a tremendous transfer of heaven's wealth.

Expression of His Love

God had this plan before the foundation of the world: to transfer all the wealth of heaven and make it available to be drawn on by the people of earth. He longed for His people to know and receive all the power of His love. It wasn't enough to just pour riches on His people. The challenging part of this plan was how would God in heaven express His great love? This is the miracle of Christmas. He sent Himself in the form of His Son to anyone who would receive Him. You and I can now be rich because of God's gift of His Son, Jesus. You've heard all this before, but what keeps people from living this rich life every day? Too many folks focus on receiving the riches when it is the love of God that is the real gift.

There was a very wealthy man from Dayton, Ohio, who received Jesus into his heart late in life. As he studied the Bible, prayed and sought God, he began to grow in his faith. His heart was so full of the love of Jesus he could hardly contain it. One day, as he lay on his bed, knowing he had only moments left on this earth, he asked for prayer. "I've turned over all my wealth to my two children," he said. "Everything I have is now theirs, but, oh, how I long to share with them the richness of my heart."

This man had the same difficulty God has had with His children. Giving things and money was simply a legal matter, but sharing your heart doesn't do any good if it isn't received. So many people ask God for things but they have never really believed He loves them. Before we can receive all the Father has for us, we *must* believe His love for us.

Knowing how important this would be, Jesus prayed in John 17:23 that we would "experience such perfect unity that the world will know that You sent me and that You love them as much as You love me" (*New Living Translation*).* That's a very powerful statement! Jesus is saying that God loves us as much as He loves Jesus. It may take a moment to get your head around that concept—especially if you are just hearing it for the first time. So take a moment and receive that from the Lord.

Once you begin to believe that He loves you, the Word of God will open up to you in a new and exciting way. He loves you. He cares for you. All that He has, He has placed in your hands. This is what Matthew 6:28-30 is all about.

"And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, He will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?" (*NLT*).*

Do you see the connection between understanding His love and the ability to believe that He would take care of you? Let's read on:

"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need" (verses 31-33, *NLT*).*

These are the very words that changed Gloria Copeland's life forever. Sitting in a small house with very little hope of things changing, she came across this scripture. She had never heard such a



God had this plan before the foundation of the world: to transfer all the wealth of heaven and make it available to be drawn on by the people of earth.

thing, but she believed it and gave her life to the Lord. Faith for a different kind of life came when she believed His Word that He loved her. As she began to seek, run after and know God, she found out He truly did love her.

Maybe you are hearing this for the first time. Perhaps you’ve been taught what Kenneth Copeland calls “genetically altered Bible,” or you’ve had a misplaced sense of humility or self-effacing spirituality. Or maybe you just didn’t know this gift of His love existed. For whatever reason you haven’t believed or received the love of God, the result is the same. You cannot have faith for His promises.

But the good news is that now, knowing how much He loves and cares for you, things can change for you, too. *You* can seek first the kingdom of God.

The Word of God says faith works by love. That makes sense now, doesn’t it? Faith in His Word is active when you believe He loves you. Say it out loud this time, “God loves me as much as He loves Jesus.” Is that beginning to settle in your heart? Some of you may still be struggling with this idea. It isn’t difficult for folks to believe there is a God who sits in heaven, but that is the very point at which so many people draw back. They have no problem believing God exists, but to believe He loves you personally is another matter. A religious mind-set will stop right there and not allow you to go deeper.

Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that it is impossible to please God without faith. It goes on to give us the qualifications to come to Him. You must believe not only that God exists but that He *rewards* those who sincerely seek Him. This requires a new level of expectancy on our part—that same kind of eager excitement, the Christmas morning kind of expectancy we talked about earlier.

Raise Your Expectations

There is a marvelous Bible passage that shows us how to have this kind of expectancy every day of our lives. Romans 8:29-32 perfectly expresses God’s love for us. Don’t read these words in a religious sense, but catch the realization that this can and should change your everyday life:

For God knew His people in advance, and He chose them to become like His Son, so that His Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, He called them to come to Him. And having called them, He gave them right standing with Himself. And having given them right standing, He gave them His glory. What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since He did not spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, won’t He also give us everything else? *(NLT).**

What a gift! What a scripture! Allow this thought to be with you this Christmas season and every day throughout the new year. Say it, affirm it, write it down and put it on your refrigerator or your bathroom mirror: “God gave His only Son, won’t He also give me everything else?”

What do you need this Christmas? Whatever it is, can you imagine God saying, “Well, you can have My Son, but that other thing is just asking too much.” No! He said it Himself. What would He withhold from you? His Son is the gift of His love, the gift of Himself. He is not holding back any part of Himself from us. All of His mercy, all of His riches, were all poured out when He sent Jesus into this earth. God is in the midst of us now, no longer distant. Remember the famous Christmas scripture, “Peace on earth, good will toward men”? No matter what your needs are, understanding and believing the love of God for you opens the door to God’s tremendous treasures. And that’s not just money. It’s joy, health, love, freedom from fear...it’s everything you could ask or think and more. The exciting part about that is once you can ask or think it God takes you to a whole new level to make sure it remains beyond what you can even imagine! Isn’t that awesome?

Why then live as a pauper in the midst of this kind of wealth? Dear friends, you’re not poor. With Jesus Christ you are a joint heir. You’re rich when you make Jesus the Lord of your life and receive His Holy Spirit.

Whatever happened in your distant or recent past...today is your day to discover how very much the Lord loves you and wants you to be all He created you to be. In His love, you are empowered to *expect* and *receive* your miracle this Christmas. He is ever that giving parent, with something great and exciting all planned out for His kids. We believe it and we are standing with you for God’s master plan to unfold in your life. How about that for raising your expectation level to the Christmas kind of joy? God really does believe in you and because of that, your future is bright and full of His favor as you accept this truth in everyday life.

We love you, and send to you and those you love the merriest Christmas blessings and a new year full of God’s very best. **VICTORY**

* Added capitalization in all verses by preference of the authors.

Kellie Copeland Swisher is the senior associate pastor over student ministries at Eagle Mountain International Church and guides Kenneth Copeland Ministries’ children and youth departments. Dr. Stephen Lowell Swisher serves as senior manager over the Associate Ministers/Ministerial Relations, Emergency/Disaster Relief, Christians United for Israel and Media/Public Relations Departments at KCM and is integrally involved with many aspects of the national and international outreach of KCM. Dr. and Mrs. Swisher also supervise the Believers Stand United ministry and travel extensively, speaking on the issues of faith and values that our nation was founded upon.



Mark your calendar today for your moment of breakthrough...at the 2009 KCM Meetings

The Word of His Power Conference
February 8-15

Words of Life Fellowship Church | 20051 N.E. 16th Ave. | North Miami Beach, FL 33179

Branson Victory Campaign
March 5-7

Faith Life Church | 3701 W. Highway 76 | Branson, MO 65616

Sydney Victory Campaign
May 21-23

Sydney Entertainment Centre | Sydney, Australia

Brisbane Victory Campaign
May 28-30

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre | Brisbane, Australia

Word of Faith Conference
June 19

Word of Faith International Christian Center | 20000 W. Nine Mile Road | Southfield, MI 48075

West Coast Believers’ Convention
June 29-July 4

Long Beach Convention Center | 300 E. Ocean Blvd. | Long Beach, CA 90802

Southwest Believers’ Convention
August 3-8

Fort Worth Convention Center | 1201 Houston St. | Fort Worth, TX 76102

Prayer Mountain Conference
October 26-November 2

Hilton Convention Center | 200 E. Main St. | Branson, MO 65616

Washington, D.C. Victory Campaign
November 12-14

Hylton Memorial Chapel | 14640 Potomac Mills Road | Woodbridge, VA 22192

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Join Gloria Copeland for
HEALING SCHOOL

Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. at conventions and Victory Campaigns.

take it to the Shepherds



Several years ago I was pondering the story of Christmas, looking to see past the images imposed by tradition reducing the whole event to a Christmas card. Those kinds of impressions can become so established in your thinking that it takes a thought from the Holy Spirit to shake you loose. It's kind of like having to sing one song to yourself to get rid of another that is stuck in your head (Disney's "It's a Small World" always works for me!). I wanted a Christmas thought that was outside the usual worldly or even Christian perspective. In short, I wanted a heavenly thought. Asking the Lord for insight into Him, followed by praying in tongues, is a sure way for opening doors to mysteries. Oh, how the Lord loves to share His heart with those who are hungry to see into it!

I wanted a Christmas thought that was outside the usual worldly or even Christian perspective. In short, I wanted a heavenly thought.

I really didn't know what to expect, but I was pleasantly surprised by the sweet insight He gave me. The first part of my answer came in the form of two questions: *Who were the first ones to hear the good news? Who was invited to first witness heaven's crowning moment?*

The Shepherds, I thought. The next question it seemed the Holy Spirit asked was *Why?*

Although I am sure there are several theological explanations deeper than my own, the answer that came to me touched me with tenderness from the heart of God. All I can say is there seemed to be a love-light turned on those shepherds and I saw what they represented. In that light there was an outpouring of love toward those shepherds, but not because of mercy or pity. It was because of gratitude. Oh, how love was flowing through that light to them because God was so grateful *to* them. Always the Lord has referred to His people as "His sheep" and to Himself as their "Great Shepherd." Psalm 23 reveals the joy of life that comes to those whom He shepherds and the satisfaction He has in giving it. Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesy with godly anger against shepherds who harm or abandon the sheep instead of leading them to the Great Shepherd. His heart was often grieved when Israel wandered like sheep who had no shepherd, even though He was always there with rod and staff to comfort them.

So, on the night Jesus was born it made perfect sense for the news that the Good Shepherd had been born go first to those who would relate to it the most.

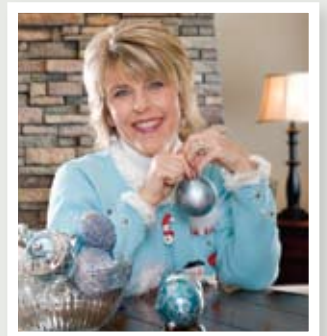
"...Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people. For to you is born this day in the town of David a Savior, Who is Christ (the Messiah) the Lord (Luke 2:10-11, *The Amplified Bible*).

Think about how those words came across to those shepherds, especially while they were actually surrounded by sheep. "...In the town of David" was the birthplace of the Scriptures' most notable shepherd, and no doubt their role model.

They knew what it meant to be Savior; for no doubt they had countless times rescued wandering sheep and brought them into the safety of the fold. They understood Christ—the Anointed One and His Anointing—because they would carefully pour soothing oil on the head of each sheep, anointing them with protection from the stinging bites of flies and the harshness of sun and wind.

But when the angel declared "Who is Christ the Lord" they were shaken to their core. So often they had seen disastrous results of a flock left in the hand of a hireling, one with no true heart for the sheep. The wolves could mingle unnoticed and thieves steal the little ones away. But when the Master of the house comes He is fierce against any enemy and no one dares try to take even one lamb from His hand, for the sheep belong to Him.

As I sensed the depth of God's tenderness toward the shepherds swell in my own heart, I realized that these shepherds of Bethlehem's hills represented all those who truly care for the sheep. First, to those who have given their whole lives to feeding the sheep of His pasture. Hebrews 13:17 says those who teach the Word are responsible to watch over the souls put in their care and will stand a greater judgment (James 3:1). God is very serious about how His flock is handled. On the other hand, 1 Timothy 5:17 says that those who labor in the Word and doctrine are worthy of double honor. Our heavenly Father displayed His esteem for the shepherds by honoring them as the first to hear the news, the first to see the Son of God, and the first to know that God was dwelling among His people.



Take It to the Shepherds

Christmas is a festive season
Filled with joy and love,
A time to jubilantly reminisce
Of God's gift from above.

But no matter how much we celebrate,
Or how many bells we ring,
Nothing we do can quite compare
To the glory angels bring!

Yes, the Lord was plenty excited!
And the angels were as well.
It was such astounding news
That these messengers had to tell.

"But where shall we go first?"
They asked the Lord that night.
"Into the temple? Or maybe the palace?
We're ready to take our flight!"

"No, take it to the shepherds
Tending their flocks so carefully.
They are the ones to seek Him first,
Whose hearts are after Me."

And so it was the shepherds
Who were the *very first* to hear.
The ones who tend the sheep were chosen
To share God's first Christmas cheer!

So may revelations of His Blessed Son
Flow steadily all year through.
For you are one who tends the flock
With the faithful ministering you do!

Merry Christmas with much love,

Terri Copeland Pearsons



Is it possible to inspire an entire army with just one word?

The General's Christmas Challenge

Gen. William Booth is not a familiar name to most. He was a military man—of sorts. His arsenal was not stocked with rifles and cannons, but rather with Bibles, food, clothing and the message of salvation. He was a soldier of the Lord.

In the early days of his ministry, the Rev. William Booth was a prominent Methodist evangelist. He majored on the necessity of repentance and the promise of God's love and redemption for all mankind.

Returning late one cold evening from an evangelistic service, Booth took notice of the poor sleeping under the London Bridge and was overcome with compassion. At that moment, he knew he had to do something to help the homeless.

The Lord called, and Booth answered.

The Salvation Army was born.

In 1865 he and his wife, Catherine, opened The Christian Revival Society in the east end of London. There, they conducted services every evening and on Sundays—ministering to society's most needy, including alcoholics, criminals and prostitutes.

Soon after, they established the "Food for the Million" soup kitchens. Large bowls of soup and bread were offered to the poor. Lodging houses provided the homeless with a safe haven from the bitter winters.

In 1878 the name of the organization was changed to "Salvation Army." It was modeled after the military, complete with its own flag, uniforms and marching bands. The "soldiers" would "put on the armor" for evangelistic meetings and ministry work.

William Booth became known as "The General."

The army grew rapidly. Operations spread all over the world—the United States, France, Switzerland, Sweden, Australia, Canada, India, South Africa, New Zealand and Jamaica—58 countries in all. Booth preached more than 60,000 sermons and traveled some 5 million miles.

No small task for one man. And, certainly no small army to keep motivated and inspired.

Christmas was always the most demanding time of the year. Everyone, it seemed, needed extra help. That is why Booth would send a telegram to his "soldiers" every Christmas Eve. His annual message was always a welcome encouragement to the weary servants of God.

A Word to Encourage

Christmas of 1911 would be Booth's last on earth. He went home to heaven the following year. How significant this final Christmas Eve communication would turn out to be.

He sat down to compose the telegram.

A paragraph of heartfelt words flowed from his pen. Surely, the troops would be uplifted by his Christmas charge. But, upon realizing the cost of the telegram—and driven by his passion to minister to as many as possible, he began to edit his message.

The paragraph became three sentences.

Then, one sentence.

Booth kept writing, editing—struggling to summarize his yearly charge in three words. Even at that, three words were still too many.

Finally, he decided to send only one word—one word that would have to inspire an entire army to win souls, feed the hungry and provide shelter on this Christmas Eve.

Finally, that one word came. The word that would help his troops make it through the night.

It was simply the word...*"others."*

What was born in Booth's heart after seeing the homeless became a lifetime of service to *others*.

The soldiers of the Salvation Army were inspired on that Christmas Eve of 1911. They carried on their work with bravery, courage—and especially compassion. They were able to take their eyes off themselves and meet the needs of...*others*.

As we celebrate this holy season and worship the King of kings, let us reach out to others in a fresh, loving and compassionate way.

Let *others* be our mission.

Let *others* be our purpose.

Let *others* be our passion.

After all, for God so loved *others* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

May your Christmas season be filled with joy, celebration and...*others!* **VICTORY**



Pastor George Pearsons is senior pastor of Eagle Mountain International Church, located on the grounds of Kenneth Copeland Ministries. For information or ministry materials write to Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Fort Worth, TX 76192-0001.

free download
emic.org/free

'Others' Our Mission. Our Purpose. Our Passion.

Inspired by the testimony of Gen. William Booth, Pastor George expounds upon our true mission in life—to serve God and others. Allow your passion for others to be stirred as you listen to this new three-message series, taught at Eagle Mountain International Church.

Titles include:

- *Others—The Story of Gen. William Booth*
- *Used by God to Reach Others*
- *Love Was Born on Christmas Day*

Shouldn't we follow His example and give honor where honor is due? Every faithful pastor, as well as field minister, ought to be thanked and blessed for the spiritual food and guidance they bring into our lives.

Secondly, I believe every person who tends the sheep, young or old, should be openly appreciated and thanked for all they do. Where would we be without Sunday school teachers, ushers or traffic teams? Where would we be without one another?

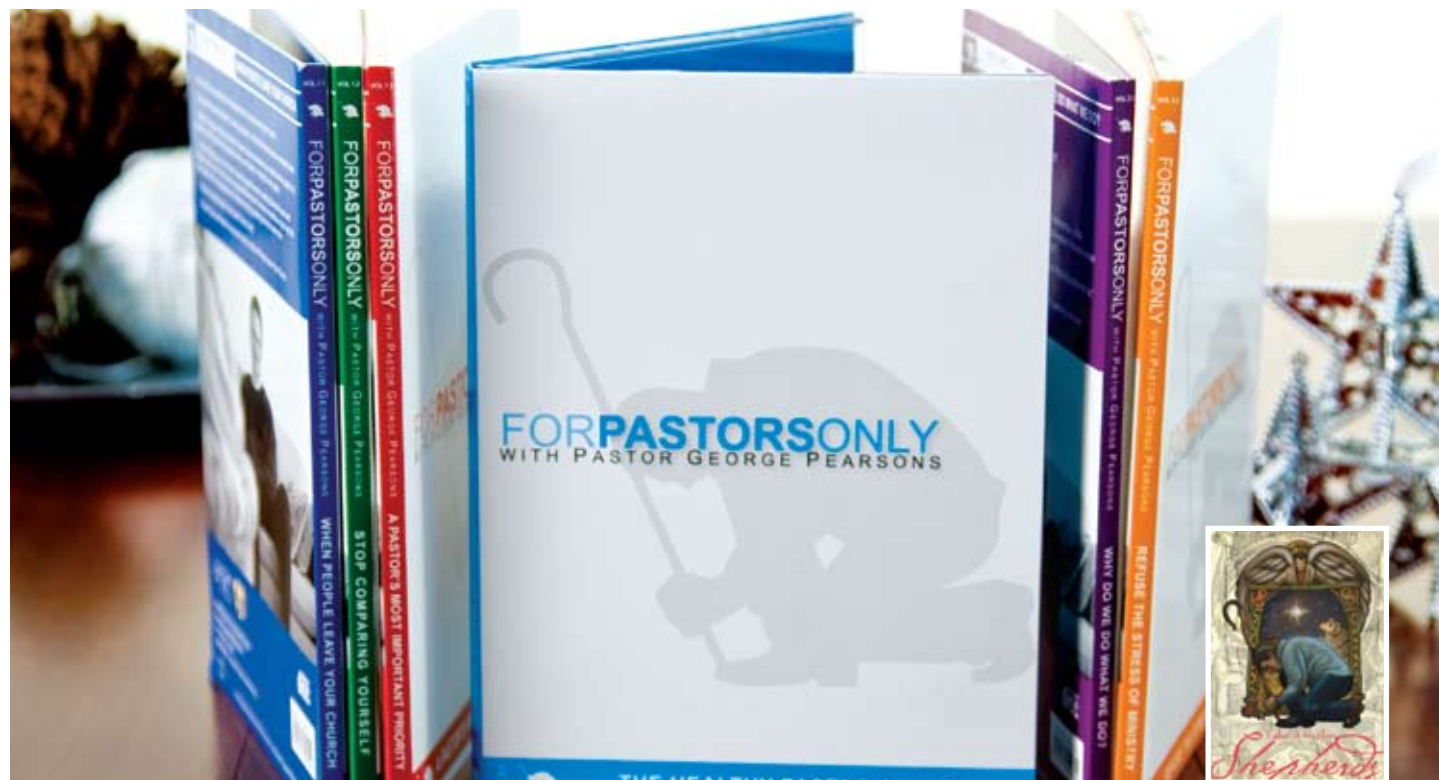
I encourage you to do something all through the year to honor, bless and love the ministry gifts God has put in your life, but especially during the Christmas season. It's the example God gave us!

Perhaps one or more of Pastor George's *For Pastors Only*

CDs would get you started. After the Lord opened my eyes to *His* heart, a little verse came up in *my* heart. Feel free to use the poem on the preceding page, titled *Take It to the Shepherds*, as your own "thank you" to your pastor and other spiritual leaders in your life. We have a wonderful congregation that honors our place in their lives, and I can tell you that it drives us to be the best shepherds we can be over the flock God has entrusted to us! **VICTORY**

Terri Copeland Pearsons is the eldest daughter of Kenneth Copeland. She and her husband, George, pastor Eagle Mountain International Church located on the grounds of Kenneth Copeland Ministries. For information or ministry materials write to Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Fort Worth, TX 76192-0001.

Bless your pastor this Christmas!



For Pastors Only

In this unique series of closed-door sessions for pastors—by a pastor—George Pearsons shares candidly and openly about the pastoral challenges and solutions he and his wife, Terri, have faced. Now, receive *all* his encouraging teachings on CD in this powerful **For Pastors Only Package**:

A Pastor's Most Important Priority—Discover the top three priorities for any pastor...the answers may surprise you!

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When People Leave Your Church—Allow God to enable you to say goodbye with joy.

Why Do We Do What We Do?—Clearly determine your ultimate motivation for ministry.

Bonus!

Order now and receive a FREE Christmas card featuring Terri Copeland Pearsons' "Take It to the Shepherds" poem—a great gift for a pastor you love, or to remind yourself of God's blessings for pastors.

To purchase additional Christmas cards please contact our wholesale office toll free at 800-998-3971.

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SweetVictory

Ruthie Vander Lugt felt like dancing across her kitchen floor as she prepared dinner. After 14 long years of praying and believing, 14 years of tests and treatments, she was finally pregnant. She only wished her husband, Bob, could spend more time at home relishing the victory with her. As a busy attorney in Washington, D.C., the demands of his job called for 12-hour days. But she knew that even at work his heart was pounding out continual praise to God that they would soon have a baby.

“Ruthie and I learned that anything you do that is not in faith is vain. It’s the vanity of trying to be your own god.”

Ruthie and Bob had first met at Oral Roberts University. It was there they had picked out names for their children. It was also during those college years that doctors had told Ruthie she might never conceive. Back then, the starry optimism of youth had kept her from imagining a childless life. As the passing years seemed to prove the doctors right, she and Bob had never been depressed over the situation. They loved one another, loved the Lord and believed for the best. But their childlessness had been a dull ache they’d carried around so long it left them weary.

Now, at last, the weariness had fled. Pregnancy had given Ruthie such a zest for life that on nights like tonight, even after cooking dinner, washing the dishes and straightening the house, she could hardly settle down to sleep. Turning out the light, she lay awake smiling before she drifted into dreams of the happy times to come.

The next morning, sharp cramps jerked her out of her dreams and into a nightmare.

What’s wrong?

It was a cold, dreary February day in Virginia when Ruthie, bundled against the wind, drove to have an ultrasound. A frigid wind blew through her heart at the sight of her empty womb. She had miscarried.

Numb with sorrow, Ruthie felt like she was on automatic pilot as she drove to the lab for blood work. On the way, she heard a loud *pop!* as a tire on her car blew out. She pulled to the side of the road and got out. One side of the car lay crippled on a flat tire. She leaned against the fender and tried to breathe. Life had seeped out of her



womb like the air in that tire. It seemed as though her hopes and dreams had died with the baby and the loss had finally crippled her soul.

Winning the War

“That was one of the blackest moments of my life,” Ruthie remembers. “I’d known other women who had suffered a miscarriage and the depression lasted for months. One reason mine didn’t was because I’d been watching the DVDs in Brother Copeland’s *Prayer Series*. In that series, he told the story of a man who’d lost a child, then later learned

how to stand against the devil. When the enemy attacked another one of his children, he knew how to fight in faith and save the child’s life. Brother Copeland said, ‘That man lost a battle, but he won the war.’”

Ruthie kept that story in mind and got a quick grip on her emotions. Determined to continue standing for a child, the day after the miscarriage she considered her situation in a new light.

“It had taken the doctors 12 years to diagnose me with polycystic ovarian syndrome,” she says. “During that time, we had endured every treatment for infertility except in vitro fertilization, and we might have done that except we didn’t have peace about it. When I got pregnant in 2001, I hadn’t been on any medication. So although losing the baby was awful, at least I knew without a doubt I could conceive. Like that man in Brother Copeland’s message, I may have lost a battle, but by the grace of God I would win the war.”

For Bob, getting through the miscarriage took more than just continuing to stand. He had to further

Bob and Ruthie Vander Lugt
opposite page, Joel

strengthen his faith by meditating on the life of Abraham who didn't receive his promised son until he was 100. The Lord showed him the key to Abraham's victory in Romans 4:19-21. "And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, *giving glory to God*; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Bob knew he would have to praise his way to victory, just as Abraham had done.

Divine Alignment

A year later there was still no baby in sight. Bob's long hours at work made the house seem to Ruthie even emptier than ever and the solitude left her drained. In 2003, she finally said the words she couldn't hold in anymore.

"Bob, if we *had* children, you'd never even see them."

Those words shook Bob, and caused him to take a long hard look at his life. "Our problem wasn't just infertility," Bob explains. "I was a workaholic and my life was out of balance. My position in the D.C. law firm wasn't conducive to family life. We prayed about the situation and not long afterward one of my clients—the third largest defense contractor in the world—offered me a job and I accepted.

About the same time, the infertility doctors told the Vander Lugts there was nothing else they could do and suggested the couple adopt. Bob and Ruthie were not opposed to adoption. It was just that whenever they prayed about it the Lord urged them to fight the good fight of faith for a particular child, much as Abraham had done.

Bob had learned through experience just how challenging that fight could be. "There are a lot of voices out there trying to tell people how to follow the Lord," he says, "but when we committed to be Partners with Kenneth Copeland Ministries, we committed to following the Lord by faith. I realized it was taking a long time to get our minds renewed. To

win this victory, we were going to have to focus on the Lord and our faith in Him more than we ever had in our lives."

Refusing to allow the medical report to defeat them, Bob and Ruthie turned the tables on it. Instead of becoming victims, they became victors. They fought every thought or feeling of defeat and discouragement. They gave glory to God, praising Him for His goodness and thanking Him for their children.

In 2005, Ruthie conceived again. And once again she miscarried. Bob and Ruthie picked themselves up, dusted off their faith and continued to believe God for a child.

The Vanity of Building Your Own House

"One of the wonderful passages to stand on for children is found in Psalm 127," Bob says. "Verses 3-5 say, 'Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.'

"As I was meditating on that Psalm, the Lord told me I could never get what those verses promise if I didn't pay attention to verse 1. It says, 'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.' At first it didn't seem that verse had anything to do with children, but God showed me it did.

"Ruthie and I learned that anything you do that is not in faith is vain. It's the vanity of trying to be your own god. We discovered that even making a doctor's appointment without faith is trying to build your own house. We determined, to the best of our ability, we would do everything in faith and not try to build our own house."

Another scripture the Lord impressed Bob and Ruthie to meditate on was 1 John 5:14-15:

And this is the confidence (the assurance, the privilege of boldness) which we have in Him: [we are sure] that if we ask anything (make any request) according

to His will (in agreement with His own plan), He listens to and hears us. And if (since) we [positively] know that He listens to us in whatever we ask, we also know [with settled and absolute knowledge] that we have [granted us as our present possessions] the requests made of Him (*The Amplified Bible*).

They hooked their faith onto those verses with settled and absolute knowledge that they had, in their present possession, a child of their own. In learning what faith *is*, they learned what it *is not*.

"Faith is the difference between hoping something will happen and believing it *has* happened," Ruthie explains.

"Faith isn't saying, 'I believe I receive the power to conceive' 100 times a day until you reach critical mass and suddenly you're pregnant," Bob says. "It isn't a mantra. Faith is getting the Word of God so deep in your heart it *changes you* from the inside out."

A Step of Faith

As the Word of God was transforming Bob and Ruthie, He began to lead them in an unexpected new direction. He let them know He wanted them to live in Texas. They were eager to follow His leading but there was one problem: Bob's company didn't have an office there. In obedience to God and by faith, Bob did the only thing he knew to do. He applied for a job at KCM.

That door didn't open, but in 2006 another did. Bob's company created a new position for him—a position that would allow him to live in Texas. In May 2006, the Vander Lugts moved to Plano, Texas.

A couple of months later, Bob and Ruthie were working as volunteers at the product table at the Southwest Believers' Convention when someone asked them: "Do you have children?"

"By faith!" Ruthie answered with a wide smile.

That Friday, during the morning session of the Believers' Convention, Brother Copeland asked every woman believing God for a baby to stand. Women all over the auditorium rose to their feet, including Ruthie, as Brother Copeland began to prophesy.

Ruthie allowed his words to sink into her body and soul. As he finished the prophecy he decreed, "You will have a child this time next year!"

The next day there was a sale on all KCM children's products—Bob and Ruthie shopped by faith.

Two months later, Bob and Ruthie were preparing for a hiking expedition in Wales when Ruthie made an announcement. "I've got good news and bad news," she said.

Bob raised an eyebrow and listened.

"The bad news is I'm not going to make that 10-mile hike in Wales."

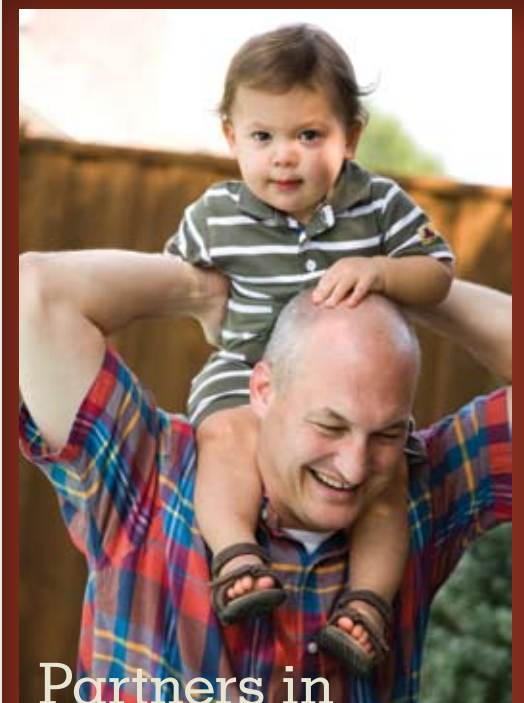
"What?" Bob asked, concerned. "What's wrong?"

"Well, that's the good news," Ruthie said, eyes sparkling. "I'm pregnant."

Eight months later, Ruthie gave birth to a son.

"We would have never been parents if Kenneth and Gloria hadn't done the heavy lifting," Bob explains. "It took them years to learn to live by faith. Now many of us are standing on their shoulders. That's what partnership is all about."

In 2007, 3-month-old Joel attended his first Believers' Convention. What sweet victory! **VICTORY**



Partners in Victory

Ruthie and Bob Vander Lugt

fought a long, hard battle that led to sweet victory when their son, Joel, arrived. But they didn't fight it alone! As Bob said, "We would have never been parents if Kenneth and Gloria hadn't done the heavy lifting." Their partnership with Kenneth Copeland Ministries and the life they learned to live by faith brought them their victory!

Having someone to join you in your faith battle is the heart of partnership. And having someone with whom you can celebrate victory is the sweetest part of living by faith! We need one another!

We all win when we stand together through every moment of life—whether we're in a major battle or simply walking out each day. We are here for you every day—fighting alongside you and celebrating your victory—just as we did with the Vander Lugts and countless Partners around the world. Join us today!

To learn more about partnership, contact KCM today and ask for our free Partner Package with complete information about partnership, complimentary gifts and more. Simply check the circle on the response form in the center of this magazine, call 800-600-7395 or visit kcm.org.

We're here for you!

Salvation Prayer

If you do not know Jesus as your Savior & Lord, simply pray the following prayer in faith, and Jesus will be your Lord!

Heavenly Father, I come to You in the Name of Jesus. Your Word says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" and "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:9). You said my salvation would be the result of Your Holy Spirit giving me new birth by coming to live in me (John 3:5-6, 15-16; Romans 8:9-11) and that if I would ask, You would fill me with Your Spirit and give me the ability to speak with other tongues (Luke 11:13; Acts 2:4).

I take You at Your Word. I confess that Jesus is Lord. And I believe in my heart that You raised Him from the dead. Thank You for coming into my heart, for giving me Your Holy Spirit as You have promised, and for being Lord over my life. Amen.

If you have just prayed this prayer, please contact us and let us know of your decision. We have a free Salvation Package we would like to send you to help you begin your new life in Jesus! Simply write and ask for offer #50801, check the circle on the response form in the center of this magazine or call 800-575-4455.



REAL PEOPLE. REAL NEEDS. REAL VICTORIES.

GoodNewsGazette

“...Let the Lord be magnified, Who takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.”

(Psalm 35:27, *The Amplified Bible*)

Internet Teachings Are a Blessing

I am an Internet viewer who lives in a very rural part of southern Texas. I do not have satellite TV, but my children have high-speed Internet and I'm able to watch all of the *BVOV* broadcasts within a couple of days at their homes. I also watch the Believers' Conventions that way.

I just want to say thank you, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland and KCM, for making this available on the Internet. It is a big part of my spiritual growth, not only affecting me, my children and my grandchildren, but the Bible classes I teach twice a week at my local church. Thank you for the uncompromised Word—even under persecution. From me and my family, we love you.

C.M. | Texas

Physical Strength Restored

My husband and I attended the Southwest Believers' Convention and it was a life-changing experience for both of us. While there, as we sat under the marvelous anointing of Brother Kenneth and the other great speakers, I began to feel strength come into my back, which was injured in a serious fall. For the last five years I had to wear a neuromuscular stimulator 10 to 12 hours each day just to get through the day, despite many pain medications. At *Healing School*, I believe I received my full healing—and totally stopped taking one of the medications, although I felt the Lord put me into the group of those whom Brother Kenneth said the Lord would want to work with Him to fully experience the results and maintain them. Praise the Lord! My husband also got relief from his respiratory problems.

Bette Conrad | Royal Palm Beach, Fla.

The Word Works

I have been writing to KCM requesting prayer for about a year. There were so many needs in my life; I was frustrated with the direction of my life, tired of living in lack, my marriage falling apart after two months, my 8-year-old daughter acting out, having strife in my home and hating my job. On my job I was being overlooked for special projects and unappreciated after seven years of service. Things went from bad to worse.

Many times I thought about packing up and leaving it all behind, but I knew God would not be pleased. Then I found out about the *BVOV* broadcast over the Internet and I started watching and listening at work. It has been such a tremendous blessing in my life ever since! I studied teachings by Kenneth, Gloria and Kellie Copeland, Leroy Thompson, Billye Brim and Charles Capps. God's Word has started to come alive to me. My faith has been built up and I no longer speak, act, think or behave like the world around me. The Spirit of God prompted me to pay tithes from the gross and I did in obedience. He also instructed me to put a guard over my mouth and stop speaking negative words, get strife out and start walking in love. Step by step God would instruct me and I would move in obedience to His prompting.

Then I started seeing changes in my world. I am no longer passed over at work, but instead I am asked to cover for associate payroll. My husband's attitude started to change, my daughter has turned her attitude and behavior around and there is peace and harmony in my home. There is no strife.

T.A.G. | New York

God's Blessings Provide Debt Freedom

We want to give God all the praise, glory and honour for blessing us financially beyond measure. We have been Partners with you for some time now and our prayer has been to be debt free. God has blessed us abundantly to overflowing and we are so thankful and grateful to be able to say we are totally debt free!

My husband works for a great company and receives many benefits which enabled us to pay off our mortgage and car debt. We are in a position where we loan to many and borrow from none. Praise God! Thank You, Jesus! Thank you for all your prayers and excellent teachings on finance. They are truly appreciated.

M.A. | South Africa

No More Pain

In January 1980, I was lying in a hospital bed hurting with pain and grief that I cannot accurately describe. I had just delivered a stillborn baby girl and a nurse had left me saying something to the effect of God being responsible for what had happened to me. I knew better—I grew up in church, but was in sin and acting like the world. Just about that time, Brother Copeland's voice came across the television yelling with authority, “God did not kill your baby!” I jumped up on the inside and probably on the outside yelling back, “I knew it!” I got back the will to live.

Now I have three sons and I'm out of sin. I am a tither, healed, delivered and walking in the love of God. Thank you for your obedience to God, for all the years you have written to me and for sharing the Word of God with me daily.

J.L.P. | Alabama

Increased Giving = Increased Living

Since we increased our giving to the Lord's work last year, my husband's business has grown significantly. He has lots of work when others are finding it difficult.

My 5-year-old daughter came in with a sore ear, crying, while I was watching Gloria's healing service from Bournemouth. I prayed with her and laid my hand on her ear. No more sore ear! Praise Jesus! Thank God for your wonderful ministry!

K.H. | Northern Ireland

Supernatural Protection

Thank you very much for your prayer and encouragement. On Dec. 30, 2007, I wanted to drive back from visiting my 82-year-old mother in Bavaria. After attending the Christian assembly service and having coffee with my mother I was scheduled to drive back home. One hour before departing the Holy Spirit advised me not to drive, but to stay two more days. The next day the newspaper showed a terrible accident on the highway, several persons killed and some heavily injured. And the highway was closed for several hours. I normally would have been, just at that time, on the same part of the highway where this happened. Glory to God for His protection.

E.C. | Zambia

Thanks for Your Faithfulness

Thank you for making a difference in my life. We are missionaries in Alaska, and over 20 years ago I heard your faith teachings. They helped me step out as a single mother to be a missionary on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota, and on from there. Now, 20 years later, my daughter is calling me so excited because she started listening to your programs and tapes. Thank you for your faithful work.

Lorna Henze | Wasilla, Alaska

P.S. We got our first airplane because of hearing your testimony and believing for one. Isn't God wonderful?



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Monika Langguth | Connecticut

God Gives Sweet Sleep

A special thanks to your ministry, especially your prayer group, for prayers of agreement for peaceful sleep at night. Now I sleep peacefully at night or during the day without nightmares or bad dreams. I have sweet sleep now and I know in my heart I will never have that problem again. Praise and thanks to God—I am set free!

A.J. | Norway



Stay Fit in Season!

BY MARTY COPELAND



Let's face it—Christmas is a busy time of year. But, as believers, we realize the importance of maintaining our spiritual fitness—no matter what season we are in. We understand if we don't keep ourselves spiritually fit we can give the enemy entrance into our lives, which is why we keep our focus on Jesus—the real reason for the season. Well, guess what? Maintaining our physical fitness requires that same no-compromise attitude.

Do we really have the right to slack off on our health and fitness goals during the holidays and put on extra weight?

Certainly, we are free to do this if we choose—but do we have to? No, we don't. And we shouldn't.

During Thanksgiving and Christmas, let's make a quality decision to stay focused on maintaining a strong, healthy body. I know that can be difficult—especially when Christmas cookies and Grandma's fudge may be calling your name—but the Lord has shown me a few simple strategies to help maintain my weight throughout this season, and I know they will work for you, too!

1. Get God involved!

Ask God to give you wisdom about how you can best fight cravings and resist temptations throughout this season. Ask Him to show you available time in your schedule for increased cardiovascular exercise. Proverbs 4:5 says, "Get wisdom, get understanding..." God wants to be involved in every part of your life, and He wants you to have a strong, healthy body.

Take time, especially throughout this season, to acknowledge Jesus came to earth and paid the price on the cross for our strong, healthy bodies. First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own. You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness

and paid for, made His own]. So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body" (*The Amplified Bible*).

So, while I don't think it's a sin to eat Aunt Martha's pecan pie and enjoy it without guilt, let's not see Thanksgiving and Christmas as opportunities to pig-out. That's called lasciviousness and it's the opposite of self-control. So what can we do if we desire some holiday treats, but we don't want to blow our health endeavors? That leads me to strategy No. 2.

2. Never, never, never show up famished at a holiday party! (Did I mention never?)

If your blood sugar level is low and you're really hungry, you could be a glutton waiting to happen. Don't rely on willpower to get you through a long night of fudge, Christmas cookies and party mix. Instead, go to the holiday party prepared by eating a healthy snack and drinking a glass of water 30 minutes before arriving. Having your blood sugar level in a stabilized state will enable you to make better food decisions and feel more in control. You can still eat a serving of sweet potatoes and a piece of pumpkin pie, but you won't be tempted to eat the whole casserole dish of sweet potatoes or the entire pie. Just think—each holiday party presents the perfect opportunity for you to sow to the spirit. In other words, you can restrain yourself entirely, or simply eat half of that piece of pumpkin pie and victoriously say, "Father, I am sowing self-control right now by leaving half of my pumpkin pie on the plate. Thank You that I reap a huge harvest and grow daily in self-control."

3. Focus on relationships.

I think it's important to remember holiday parties and family get-togethers are filled with much more than just fattening foods. What about partaking in family traditions such as reading the Christmas story around the fireplace, or catching up with those relatives you only see once or twice a year? Bottom line: You should be enjoying Aunt Martha more than you're enjoying her famous pecan pie. Focus on your family and friends more than you focus on the fabulous food.

4. Move it!

As the fellowship and feasting come to an end and you push away from the dinner table, remember two words: Move it! While your relatives are making their way to the couch to watch football on TV, why not head for the great outdoors instead? Grab a football and toss it around outside with your children. Or, take a walk around the block with your cousins. Just make sure you move your body after eating in order to rev up your metabolism. Then go ahead and have a good rest on the couch. After all, that's part of the holiday fun, right?

5. Exercise more.

During the Christmas season, life gets very busy with family get-togethers, shopping, church commitments, parties and much more; however, we must find time to work out. Exercise could be your best friend during this season because it will definitely help you maintain your weight, even though your diet may not be as healthy as usual. Here's what I do.

Knowing I'll be splurging on high caloric treats on Thanksgiving and Christmas, I intentionally increase my cardio workouts a few days before to compensate for the extra calories I'll be consuming. By increasing your workout time and level of

intensity, you'll get extra caloric expenditure during a time you'll need it most.

I believe if you implement these simple strategies this Thanksgiving and Christmas, the scales will be balanced in your favor, and you'll be much happier and healthier as you maintain your health and fitness goals. Merry Christmas! **VICTORY**

Certified by the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research in Dallas, Texas, Marty Copeland is a personal trainer, nutritional counselor, author and minister of the gospel.



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GIVE THEM
Something to
talk about

“Faith must be in someone or in something before it can come alive and operate. Faith is dead until it is in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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And if you live your faith, people around you will probably be talking about it.

Have You Heard About...

Even back in the Apostle Paul's day, we see evidence of a person's faith preceding them. Just before Paul prayed for some of the churches, he said that his prayers were a direct result of what he heard about them.

In Ephesians 1:15-16, Paul said, "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers."

In Colossians 1:3-4, he said, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints."

In Philemon 4-5, he said, "I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints."

In these three instances, Paul was saying, "The Spirit of God is moving, and I am brought to my knees, inspired to pray for you." When you read the prayers that follow each of those statements, you'll find them filled with intensity and fervor.

But where did that intensity come from? Paul's inspired prayers were a direct result of what he *heard* about those people. Would he have heard about anything if there was

nothing to talk about? Of course not.

"Did you hear about the church in Ephesus?"

"No, what's going on there?"

"Nothing."

That is a conversation no one would desire to have. Why? Because people like to talk about *something*—not nothing.

Wherever Paul was, he heard people talking about the church at Ephesus, about the Colossians and about Philemon, and they were talking about two things: *their faith* and *their love*.

Faith in What?

In these passages, Paul said, "I heard about your faith in Jesus *and* I heard about your love *for* each other."

Do you know faith is useless until it is *in* someone or something? People always say, "I'm a man of faith" or "I'm a woman of faith." But faith in what?

"I don't know." Then you're not a person of faith!

Faith must be *in* someone or *in* something before it can come alive and operate. Faith is dead until it is *in* the Lord Jesus Christ.

You may be saying to yourself, "I don't want to hear about that. I want to hear about faith *for* something. I want to hear about faith *for* healing, *for* finances, *for* my family, *for* relationships." That's *exactly* what I'm talking about. You can't separate faith *for* from faith *in*. Can I have faith *for* something good to happen in my life

without first having faith *in* a good God? No. Can I have faith *for* increase without faith *in* the Increaser? Absolutely not.

Scripture is loud about the fact that faith *in* the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of faith *for* anything else. Romans 3:21-22 states that our right-standing with God is revealed through faith *in Jesus*. Galatians 2:16 states we are justified by faith *in Jesus*. That's the foundation.

Hebrews 11:6 states, "Without faith it is impossible to please him." But faith *in* whom or what? Clearly, faith *in Jesus*. As a discipline, every time you hear the word *faith*, I encourage you to make it a complete statement: "Faith *in Jesus*."

Doing this will challenge you to the core. It will force you to evaluate what you're *really* saying about your Christianity. You don't just walk by faith. You walk by faith *in Jesus*. You confess your faith *in Jesus*. You live by faith *in Jesus*.

Conversely, you may realize you need to stop saying some things out of religious habit such as, "I'm not sure I have enough faith *in Jesus* for that" or even "My faith *in Jesus* just isn't there."

Really? Are you telling me you can trust Jesus, but only to a certain degree? Are you telling me Jesus is good to you, but not *that* good? Of course not! Understanding this will change not only the way you speak, but also the way you live.

Smart Talk

In Romans 1:8, Paul said, "...your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Let that be said of us! When it comes to our churches, our ministries, our families and our lives, let's give the world something to talk about. Let's live what we believe by putting our faith *in Jesus* in all we do.

The good news is, when this revelation comes alive in you, it removes all the pressure. You won't have to be concerned about what others are saying because your eyes will be on Jesus—what He's said and what He's done. Before you know it, your faith and love will precede you. **VICTORY**



From a rich heritage of faith, Jeremy Pearsons ministers the uncompromised Word of God to congregations at home and around the world. He and his wife, Sarah, passionately believe and preach to believers the simultaneous importance of holding fast to what we have been taught and reaching beyond ourselves to teach those coming behind us. "There are two kinds of legacies: the one you keep and the one you leave."



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LIVING

THE FREE LIFE

in a 9-to-5 world



What would you do if you could do *anything*? How would you like to live the “free life”? The good news is that God has more for you than just your 9-to-5 job, and it’s time to find out what it is.

It could be He wants you more involved in your church’s outreach. He may want you to enter the ministry. Maybe He wants you to start your own business

and develop an idea He has given you. Deep down, you know God has placed a unique dream in your heart...but have you ever been willing to step out and go after it? *Really* go after it? It’s time!

Take Action

God has called each of us to do great things, but if you’re not careful life can pass you by. James 1:22 says, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.” *The Message* spells out this truth: “Whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life!—even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action” (verse 25).

When we hear a word from God and know what we’re supposed to do, we need to take action. If all we have are good intentions, we won’t get anywhere. We must be *doers* of the Word. Only through acting on God’s instruction and sticking with it will we find “delight and affirmation” and “the free life.”

Now you may be doing something from 9 to 5 that you’re called to do. Your job may be like mine: a mission and an adventure. But I believe God still has something more for each of us beyond the eight hours of work we punch in on a time clock. He has the power to give us wealth, but it takes a step of faith on our part. It takes action.

It’s easy to become comfortable about life and finances, especially if you have a steady paycheck. It can keep you from stepping out into your calling. It can keep you from developing the ideas God has given you. That happened to me until God opened my eyes and led me to step out of my comfort

zone. When I did, I saw possibilities everywhere. I realized the only thing holding me back from doing more for the kingdom of God was not understanding the opportunities.

Unlocking Wisdom

Imagine finding a rough, uncut diamond. To an untrained eye, it might look like a cool paperweight that belongs on a shelf. But to a trained eye, it could look like the next Hope Diamond. I wonder how many million-dollar ideas are sitting on shelves because of a lack of knowledge.

When we receive knowledge, God’s wisdom can show us how to put it to work. If you want to know more about business, study businesses. If you want to know about real estate, read about real estate. If you want to start a home-based business, find a mentor who has one. Proverbs 8:12 states, “I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.” The knowledge you receive will spur the revelation God has for you.

Beyond 9 to 5

What’s the big picture here? Is this just about wealth? No, it’s about getting the Word out and bringing people into the kingdom. Abraham, David and Solomon were tremendously blessed. We are entitled to that kind of blessing, too, and as the Church, we need that kind of blessing to do everything we’re called to do.

If you don’t know what God wants you to be or what He wants you to do, spend some time in prayer. Don’t stay stuck in a 9 to 5 with nowhere to go. God’s clock doesn’t stop after eight hours. We need to decide what we’re going to do with our free time...because the proper use of free time will lead to a free life! **VICTORY**

John Copeland is CEO of Kenneth Copeland Ministries and the son of Kenneth and Gloria Copeland. He lives in Fort Worth, Texas, with his wife, Marty, and their three children.

BY GLORIA COPELAND

Following the Faith of

Abraham

THE POWER OF FAITH WILL NOT ONLY LAUNCH YOU INTO
THE PROMISED LAND OF GOD’S MASTER PLAN
FOR YOUR LIFE, IT WILL ALSO GIVE YOU THE POWER TO CONQUER
THE GIANTS ONCE YOU GET THERE. IT WILL MOVE EVERY
MOUNTAIN THAT TRIES TO STAND IN YOUR WAY.

Faith will bring God’s power on the scene to do whatever needs to be done in your life. It will heal your marriage and straighten out your children. It will fill your bank account. Faith in God’s Word will do whatever it says in your life. “And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

That’s why, when Ken and I moved to Tulsa and began hearing the message of faith, we just couldn’t get enough of it. We wanted to hear it...and hear it...and hear it. We’d drive through ice storms, slipping and sliding, to Kenneth E. Hagin’s meetings just to hear him preach—morning and evening for three weeks straight. I think every meeting he would teach faith from Mark 11:22-24. We received it and WE GOT IT!

In those verses, Jesus said:

Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

When Ken and I first started studying those verses,

we had more mountains in our lives than we knew how to climb. We were defeated in almost every area. We had countless questions and very few answers. So when we heard that faith would move mountains, we were eager to find out more about it—and we’ve been learning about it ever since. Even now, we don’t know everything there is to know, but we know a lot more than we did when we started. We know not only from the Word but also from experience that it doesn’t matter what kind of problem we run into, faith in God’s Word will always fix it.

Actually, I learned early on that faith would fix even *me*! That was an important discovery because I had some natural

weaknesses and shortcomings that could have kept me from fulfilling God’s plan. I didn’t possess the natural talents and inclinations necessary to do what He had called me to do. Like everyone else who sets out to do God’s will, I had what you might call an *ability gap*.

That was demonstrated quite clearly when Ken preached his first meeting. Before Ken spoke, the pastor of the church hosting the meeting asked me to stand up and say a few words to the congregation. (Traditionally, that’s what preachers’ wives were expected to do.)

My response was, “No.”

That’s all I said. I didn’t add, “I’m glad to be here” or “God bless you.” Nothing else. I didn’t intend to be rude, but, I felt very uncomfortable speaking in front of people and I didn’t want to do it. That was the sad shape I was in when we went into the ministry.

Of course after the service, I repented. “Lord, I’m sorry about that,” I said. “The next time someone calls on me, I will jump up, open my mouth by faith, and expect You to fill it.” I’ve done exactly that ever since. Little did I know then how thoroughly the Lord would take me up on that promise.

The Ability to See His Plans Through

In the years since, I’ve preached to thousands of people again and again. How have I done it? With the ability God provides. When I tap in to His grace by faith, it is always sufficient for me. God’s strength truly is made perfect in my weakness.

That’s a fact you’ll want to remember because as you step into God’s Master Plan for your life, one of the first things you’re sure to realize is that you don’t have the ability to do all God is telling you to do. When He unfolds His plan before you, you may be tempted to say, “Lord, You’ve got to be kidding. Have You looked at me lately? Have You checked the balance in my checking account? Are You aware that I have a track record of failure in that area? I don’t think I’m Your best choice to carry out this plan!”

If you’ve ever had thoughts like that, don’t be discouraged; you’re in good company. Abraham, the famous Old Testament father of faith, felt the same way when God told him he and his barren, old wife were going to have a baby. Although that was part of God’s Master Plan for him and for the nation of Israel, Abraham thought the idea was so far out he actually fell over laughing. When Sarah heard God’s promise, she had the same reaction. She “laughed within herself, saying, ‘After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?’” (Genesis 18:12, *New King James Version*).

Why did Abraham and Sarah consider God’s plan so outlandish? Because they looked at themselves and each other every day. They were old! They knew their history of barrenness. Physically, they had absolutely no ability to have

children. So the idea that they were about to become the father and mother of nations seemed ridiculous.

But when Abraham and Sarah realized God was serious, they stopped laughing. They got serious and did exactly what Jesus said we should do. They had faith in God. They began to speak His Word and believe His promise would come to pass in their lives.

Sarah and Abraham proved that faith works! They demonstrated it can overcome every obstacle. It can even turn barren, wrinkled centenarians into the beaming parents of a new baby boy.

Developing the Faith That Takes

Abraham and Sarah believed they received God’s promise, just like Mark 11:24 says to do. Exactly what does it mean to believe you receive? I can tell you what it doesn’t mean. It doesn’t mean we just sit back and say, “Well, I’ll accept whatever happens. I’d like to have God’s promises fulfilled in my life but...I’ll just leave it all up to the Lord.”

Although that may sound very spiritual, it’s actually unscriptural. Some people have the idea that if God wants to give them something, He’ll do it without requiring any action on their part. So when they fail to see God’s promises come to pass in their lives, they assume God just didn’t want to fulfill those promises in their particular situation. But they’re mistaken. God always fulfills His promises when His conditions are met. He is a promise-keeper, not a promise-breaker.

Mark 11:24 clearly commands us to *believe we receive* what we ask for when we pray. We can’t leave up to the Lord what He has left up to *us*. And He has given us the responsibility not only to believe, but to receive the things He has promised us in His Word.

The Greek word translated *receive* in Mark 11:24 is a strong, aggressive, action word. It means “to take, to get hold of,” “to receive to oneself,” “to take back.” It is an action word. I think *seize* would be an appropriate word to describe it.

If we don’t seize by faith what God has offered to us in His Word, it’s not His fault—it’s ours. God has already done His part. He has provided every blessing, every good gift we could ever need, and has extended those gifts to us through His Word. But that by itself does not complete the transaction. For a gift to be exchanged there must be a giver *and* a receiver.

We all know that’s true in the natural world. Imagine, for example, it was your birthday today and I walked up to you with a lovely gift. I could say, “Happy Birthday!” and offer it to you. But if you just stood there looking at it with your hands at your sides, that gift would never do you any good. Even though it belonged to you, and I had already bought and paid for it, if you didn’t reach out and take it, you’d go home empty-handed.

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On the other hand, if you would take hold of that gift, you'd take possession of it. You could open it up and enjoy it. When you did, both you and I would be greatly pleased and blessed.

We must do the same thing with God's promises. To enjoy their benefits, we must receive them. We must say, "Thank You, Father, for that promise. I believe it's mine and I take it by faith right now." *We must begin to think, speak and act as if that promise is already ours.* That's just how faith works.

Then, when the devil tries to talk us out of that promise, we refuse to give it up. We rebuke the devil and tell him to get his hands off our situation, in the Name of Jesus. When we do that, we'll experience victory.

Let Your Mountains Hear Your Voice

Another important lesson about faith we can learn from Abraham and Sarah is that they imitated God's example by calling "those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). God Himself convinced them to do that by giving them new names. A year before Isaac was born, He changed Abram to *Abraham*, which means "father of many nations," and Sarai to *Sarah*, which means "mother of multitudes." So Abraham and Sarah made a confession of faith every time they said their names.

Why is that important? Because, according to Mark 11:23, one primary characteristic of faith is that it speaks the Word of God and believes those things it says will happen. Real, Bible faith is never silent. It continually speaks God's promise. Faith has a voice—the voice of victory!

Many Christians don't realize that. They diligently study the Word, and faith arises in their hearts, just as Romans 10:17 says it will. Faith comes to them as they hear the Word. But because they never open their mouths to speak by faith, their faith never bears fruit. It dies unborn!

Remember this: Faith *comes* by hearing, but faith *goes* into action by saying! It is applied to the situation by words of faith. "Well, I just don't think my faith is big enough to get the job done," someone might say. "I think that's my problem."

If so, that's no problem at all because Jesus told us what to do about that. When the apostles came to Him and said, "Lord, increase our faith," He answered:

If you had faith (trust and confidence in God) even [so small] like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, Be pulled up by the roots, and be planted in the sea, and it would obey you. Will any man of you who has a servant plowing or tending sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, Come at once and take your place at the table? Will

he not instead tell him, Get my supper ready and gird yourself and serve me while I eat and drink; then afterward you yourself shall eat and drink? (Luke 17:6-8, *The Amplified Bible*).

According to Jesus, it doesn't matter how small our faith is, if we'll plant it by speaking out what we are believing, it will grow up and get the job done. When we release our faith with the words of our mouth, it goes to work for us like a servant and does what we send it to do.

That's one of the first principles Ken and I learned when we began to study faith. I'll never forget the day the revelation of it fully dawned on me. I had been listening to Kenneth E. Hagin's tape *You Can Have What You Say* on an old, 6-inch, reel-to-reel tape recorder. I had taken copious notes and was excited about what I was hearing. Revelation was coming to my heart and mind.

In Mark 11:22-24, Jesus clearly put a great emphasis on the words we say. As I took notes and listened to Brother Hagin preaching from this scripture about faith and the power of our words those many years ago, suddenly, the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart. He said, *In consistency lies the power.*

That's when it hit me. It's not just what we say in prayer or in church, but what we say continually that makes the difference. What we say consistently will come to pass in our lives because that's what we really believe in our hearts. Jesus said, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34, *NKJV*). What you say continually is what is abiding in your heart. If you want to know what is in your heart, listen to your mouth. It's *very* revealing. Most of the time, it's too revealing for comfort.

At that moment, sitting in our shabby, little rented house back in 1967, I decided I had to take control over my words. I made up my mind to start speaking words of faith not just in church or when reading my Bible, but all the time. I saw it wouldn't work for Ken and me to speak faith words for a while, then quit when results didn't come right away and we felt discouraged. We couldn't afford to lie in bed and murmur to each other about our problems at times like that. We couldn't declare a faith *timeout* and say, "Why isn't the Word of God working for us?" "Why aren't we getting any results?" "What is going to happen to us?" "How will we make it?" "What are we going to do now?"

Those negative words would undermine the whole faith process. We literally could not afford to say them at any time. *Every word we said was important.*

I'm absolutely convinced that had Ken and I not followed Jesus' example and begun confessing God's Word over our lives, rather than words of unbelief, we could never have connected with God's Master Plan. We would have remained

stuck in our old patterns of defeat and inadequacy. Instead of stepping into the bright, new future God had planned for us, we would have continued walking around and around the paths of the past.

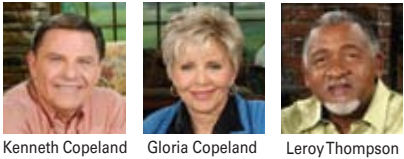
The same is true for you. To successfully walk out God's Master Plan for your life, you must start saying what God

says about you. You must come into agreement with God. That will put you where you need to be! **VICTORY**

(This article was adapted from Gloria Copeland's New York Times Best-Seller, *God's Master Plan for Your Life*.)

Believer's Voice of Victory Broadcast Calendar

December



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DAILY				
1 Mon	2 Tue	3 Wed	4 Thu	5 Fri
<i>The Best of the Southwest Believers' Convention</i> God moved mightily at the Southwest Believers' Convention this year! Join us for highlights from Kenneth and Gloria Copeland !				
7	8	9	10	11
Gloria Copeland <i>Developing Attitudes to Enjoy Divine Health</i> Find out how being cheerful, confident and peaceful leads to long life!				
14	15	16	17	18
Gloria Copeland <i>Forgive and Receive Your Healing</i> You have the power to forgive...and when you do, it will set you free. Discover what the Word says about forgiveness and healing.				
21	22	23	24	25
Kenneth and Gloria Copeland <i>Jesus, the Greatest Gift to Man</i> Jesus is the reason for the season! Gather your family and celebrate the Anointed One and His Anointing with the Copelands.				
28	29	30	31	1
Kenneth Copeland <i>We Are God's Hand Extended</i> Learn how God is ready to use you to accomplish great things in the earth!				
2	<i>Bring in the New Year With Faith</i> Kenneth Copeland welcomes Leroy Thompson as they discuss what God has in store for believers in 2009.			

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