

AUGUST 2010

Lifestyle of

# FAITH

A monthly publication of The Faith Center Ministries



*You've*  
Halfway There!

By Henry Fernandez



# Finish What **He** Started!



Dear Partners and Friends,

Don't quit now!

That's what I've been saying to encourage the members of our church in recent weeks, and it's what I want to say to you. That's because, for some time now, I've sensed that many of you are about ready to give up on your hopes, dreams and desires. You're ready to throw in the towel because what you've been trusting and believing God for hasn't come to pass.

But quitting is never an option—especially when you look back and see how far you've come, how far God has brought you from when you first began your journey of faith. The truth is, you're halfway there!

God showed me this not long ago when He reminded me of God's Creation. It took the Lord six days to create the universe and everything that is—from the heaven and earth to the grass, the herbs and the trees, from the fish of the sea to the fowl of the air, from the animals to mankind, whom He created after His own image. When His work was finished on the sixth day, when everything was completed, the Bible says, "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Then, on the seventh day, God rested.

In January, the Lord gave us a word that this was the year of "great expectation." It was a time to look for Him to do great things for us, and the Church as a whole. This past June, the sixth month, marked the halfway point of 2010. For the believer, it marked six months of praying, fasting, believing and trusting God to stand firm on His promise to bless us. Last month, the month of July, marked our "seventh day," or the entry point into our rest. As God's children, we reached our halfway point, and now God is saying to us: "You've used your human effort, and you're there. Now you can rest. I'll take it from here."

In 1 Corinthians 9:24, Apostle Paul encouraged the Church by telling them to "Run to win." And in Hebrews 12:1-2, he said, "...let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith."

No one has ever won a race by quitting at the halfway mark. The goal is to reach the finish line—to resist the urge to give up! How about you? Will you retreat, fall back and give in to the enemy? Or will you press to the end and, like Paul, receive the ultimate prize? Don't quit now, you're halfway there!

*Henry*



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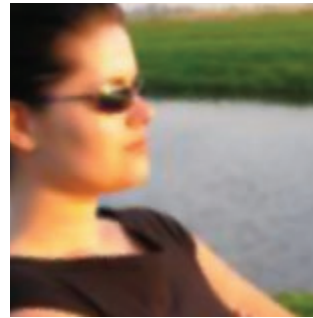
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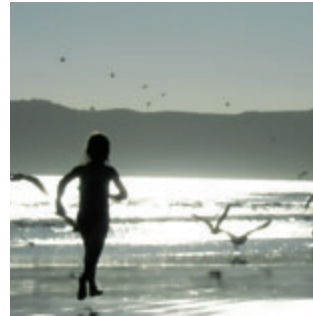
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By Henry Fernandez

A photograph of the Brooklyn Bridge, showing the walkway with a yellow line down the center. People are walking across the bridge. The bridge's massive stone towers and suspension cables are visible. An American flag is flying from the top of the central tower. The sky is clear and blue.

# You've Halfway There!

*"Don't quit now, you're halfway there!"*

That's what I heard the Lord say to me a couple of months ago as I was praying and spending time with Him. At first, I didn't quite grasp what He was saying, but I knew He was making a point and it was important for me to find out what it was.

Then, the Lord showed me two things that put it all into perspective. The first thing He did was remind of something my sister, Judith, told me years ago about an experience she had in New York where she lives. She told me how it had always been her desire to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge. Now, I lived in New York awhile and I have to say walking the length of the Brooklyn Bridge, which extends across the East River and connects the New York boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn, has never been something I wanted to do.

When Judith finally made up her mind to take the challenge, and was halfway across the bridge, she told me she began to get tired. Completing her journey, it seems, had suddenly become a more difficult task than what she had imagined.

At that point, my sister said she heard a voice say to her, "Turn back. You're never going to make it. Just go back. Don't even try to finish."

Almost immediately, she heard a second voice: "Judith, that's dumb! You're halfway there. The distance from where you are to where you began is the same distance from where you are to where you will finish. If you're going to make a move, make the right move. Move forward!"

The words of encouragement from that second voice gave my sister the strength and the confidence she needed to continue her journey. Through God, she was able to finish her course and make it to the other side of the bridge. She reached the finish line, glory to God!

### Taking Time to Rest

The other thing God spoke to my heart about had to do with His Creation. But before I go any further, let's take a look at part of the story of Creation from Genesis 1:27-31:

So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you 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. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

It took God six days to create the universe and everything that is—from heaven and earth to the grass, the herbs and the trees; from the fish of the sea to the fowl of the air; from the animals to mankind, whom He created after His own image. When His work was finished on the sixth day, when everything was completed, the Bible says, "God saw every thing that he

had made, and, behold, *it was* very good."

Now, look at the first three verses of Genesis, Chapter 2:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

After He finished His work, when everything was completed, the Bible says God rested. Now, I'm not much into numbers or numerology so it took a moment for me to figure what this all meant. But when I realize what month it was, that we were currently in the month of June, the sixth month of the year, it all started to make sense.

From a biblical perspective, the number six signifies completeness, as supported by the fact that God *completed* His work in six days. Then, on the seventh day, God rested.

Last January, the Lord gave us a word that 2010 would be a year of "great expectation" for us individually, as well as for the Church. It would be a time to look for Him to do great things on our behalf. This past June, the sixth month, marked the halfway point for this year. For the Body of Christ, it marked six months of praying, fasting, believing and trusting God to stand firm on His promise to bless us.

Last month, the month of July, marked our "seventh day," or the entry point into our rest. As God's children, we reached our halfway point, and now God is saying to us: "You've used your human effort and you're almost there. Now you can rest. I'll take it from here."

### Don't Give Up Now!

"Don't quit now, you're halfway there!"

I am convinced that's the point God was making in those two things He showed me. His purpose was to encourage me, and you, to be like Him and never give up. Never quit! You see, God never starts something and then changes His mind and not finish it (Philippians 1:6) and that's the same attitude He expects from you and me.

"Why shouldn't I quit?" someone may be asking.



"This may be the year of great expectation for some people, but I haven't seen anything happen for me yet. I've fasted and prayed just like everyone else, but nothings changed for the good in my life. Sometimes I find myself wondering, *Where is God anyway?* I'm just tired of waiting!"

Well, let me just tell you that you're not the only one feeling like you're in a holding pattern. A number of people, many of them very strong in their faith, are still waiting on God to show up. But the difference in them and you is that they're willing to wait awhile longer. They're not complaining, and they are

**Now is your season.  
It's a time when God is  
going to show you that  
He cannot lie.**



not questioning God.

They liken their situation to that of a runner in a race, and they remind themselves of what Apostle Paul said to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 9:24-26, *NLT*: "Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. So I run with purpose in every step."

If you've ever run in a race of any kind, and particularly a marathon, then you know at some point you're bound to get tired. How do you combat tiredness? You train. You prepare your body weeks, months, even years in advance so when the time comes to run the race you're ready.

Apostle Paul was very familiar with preparation: "I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27).

In Hebrews 12:1-2, *NLT*, Paul suggested the Church do the same so they could be successful in running the race: "...let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith."

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes 3:1, *NLT*, "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven." That includes the plan God has for your life and destiny.

Now is your season. It's a time when God is going to show you that He cannot lie. He is about to open up the windows of heaven and flood you with blessings in abundance. He's also about to surprise your enemies by proving to them that when His favor is on one of His children, there is nothing they can do to block His blessing.

You might say, "Well, I'm not there yet." No, but you're halfway there.

"Yeah, but what about all the hardship I had to deal with in the first half of the year?"

To that I say two things:

First, the mere fact that you "dealt" with them means you somehow managed to get through them. They're over! Done with. That was then, this is now.

Second, I encourage you to not focus on what happened to you in the first half of your season. Because

it's in the pass it's irrelevant. The only thing you need to consider about the first half of the year is that it is over. You've done what you needed to do to make it through and now you're looking at the second half of the year—the period where it's OK for you to rest and watch God work on your behalf.

Besides, God's not concerned about what happened in the first half of your season. His question for you today is this: "Do you believe Me, and do you trust Me to bless you?"

So many people have allowed the enemy to beat them down so bad, to keep them reminded of their past failures, that they're not willing to move forward. They would rather stay where they are, or worse, go back to where they started out in life. They've reached the halfway point, but because they can't see the end from where they're standing, because they know what lies ahead, they're willing to turn around and go back.

The very thought of that is contrary to how God sees us as His children. In his eyes, we are victors.

#### Finishing the Race

Apostle Paul said in Philippians 1:6, NLT, "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

God is not only willing, but He is able to finish the work He started in you. And according to this scripture, the work He's about to finish in you is a "good work." Your responsibility is to believe His Word and trust Him to do what He has promised to do.

Faith is what got you this far, and faith will take you the rest of the way.

Instead of allowing the enemy to push you to the point of wanting to turn back, start speaking faith-filled words and declare, "I know I can make it because God is on my side." Rather than speak negative words and proclaim things like, "I just can't make it!" speak positive words into the atmosphere and tell your situation that things are going to turn around for the good.

The amount of energy it takes to speak faithless words, to magnify the problem and the enemy, is the same amount you would use to speak words of faith that will catapult you into your place of fullness. Soon, you'll find yourself declaring, "I'm halfway there. I'm about to get to my destiny. I don't care what the devil says, my mind is made up. I moving

## Instead of allowing the enemy to push you to the point of wanting to turn back, start speaking faith-filled words

forward, not backwards, and I'm going to reach the place God has for me."

Right now, God has shifted you into a position where you don't have to use your human intellect anymore to try and figure out what He is doing in your life. He has set you up for such a time as this. Whatever you encountered during the first half of this year was merely a setup. God made sure you did what you were supposed to do in those first six months, and now He's saying: "Rest easy, now, and watch me bring you into a season of completeness."

Now, here's a word of caution.

Resting does not mean taking a vacation from God or His Word. I'm not telling you not to pray and read your Bible in exchange for catching up on your favorite TV programs or reading the latest novel. No. It just means you keep your trust in the Lord and trust Him to fulfill His promises in your life. You look to Him with expectation that He will move on your behalf and work things out.

You've done your half; now let Him do the rest. Trust Him to do that in your life, and you won't be disappointed.

**Register NOW For Fall Semester  
Classes Start August 30, 2010**

# UNIVERSITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE...

Where Change Happens



**Are you looking to earn a degree that would enable you to enter the competitive workforce, highly skilled and trained and a cut above the rest?**

**Do you desire:**

- a new career in business to work for a profit or non-profit organization?
- to prepare for a promotion at your job?
- to prepare yourself for ministry?

**The University of Fort Lauderdale will prepare you to achieve these goals. We are here to help you change your life for the better. We take great pride in making sure we provide our students with: a godly atmosphere; academic excellence; affordable tuition; flexible scheduling; an ideal location.**

**Our programs prepare you for advancement wherever you work and live. The University of Fort Lauderdale offers the following degree programs:**

## **Business Leadership**

**Associate of Arts, Business Administration,  
Master of Arts, Business Leadership,  
Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration,  
with majors in:**

- Business Administration
- Accounting

## **Religious Studies**

**Associate of Science Degree in Ministry  
Master of Science in Ministry  
Master of Science in Pastoral Counseling  
Doctor in Ministry  
Bachelor of Science, with majors in:**

- Christian Education
- Christian Counseling
- Ministry
- Theology



The University of Fort Lauderdale is a member of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS) [PO Box 328, Forest, VA 24551; Telephone: 434.525.9539; e-mail: info@tracs.org] having been awarded Candidate status as a Category IV institution by the TRACS Accreditation Commission on April 7, 2009; this status is effective for a period of five years. TRACS is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE), the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

## **Financial Aid**

The University of Fort Lauderdale participates in the U.S. Department of Education's Title IV federal financial aid programs. UFTL students are eligible for grants, federally subsidized loans, educational loans, and the federal work study program. To apply for financial aid, complete your 2010-11 FAFSA today by visiting [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). To complete a FAFSA, you should apply for a PIN number @ [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). This number is your electronic signature to your FAFSA. Have your 2009 tax return on hand to complete the application. If you have not filed your 2009 tax return, you may estimate using your W2. Our school code at UFTL is 041563.

## **Our Students**

Students at the University of Fort Lauderdale understand that their positive life change influences the lives of those around them. They are committed to living lives of excellence. They develop a lifelong love of learning. They understand that spreading the Gospel message depends upon their preparation as leaders. We believe that excellence in leadership cannot be genetically inherited. It must be nurtured through study, preparation, practice, and participation. Our programs prepare students to advance God's Word wherever they work and live. Our students complete undergraduate and graduate degrees while maintaining employment and meeting the demands of everyday life.

## **International Students**

The University of Fort Lauderdale received approval by the Department of Homeland Security to admit International students.

## **The University of Fort Lauderdale...**

**Our beginning**

Dr. Henry Fernandez, chancellor and founder of the University of Fort Lauderdale, demonstrates godly leadership that results in positive life change for those he leads and those impacted through the university and the ministries of The Faith Center in Sunrise, FL., where he and his wife, Dr. Carol Fernandez, co-pastor.

## **The University of Fort Lauderdale...**

**Promoting Positive Spiritual Change**

The Bible is the heart and core of each educational program at the University of Fort Lauderdale. We believe it to be the source of truth. You will be blessed when you pursue your education goals in classrooms where your Christian faith will not be attacked, but strengthened. Courses are taught from a Biblical and practical perspective providing opportunities for students to grow in



spiritual maturity through course work and group interaction. We believe in quality, Christian higher education.

### **Godly Atmosphere**

In addition to receiving an education from a Biblical perspective, we are persuaded that what we are is as important as what we know. Therefore, we place a tremendous effort in developing Christ-like character and a servant's heart. Our students are challenged to live a balanced, mature, consistent Christian life. Students receive spiritual encouragement from one another in the classroom, chapel services, and special family-oriented events designed to strengthen their personal walk with Christ.

### **Cross-Cultural Fellowship**

South Florida is known as a cultural melting pot with cultures and people coming from various regions of the world and all walks of life. With a culturally diverse board, administration, faculty, staff, and student body, the University of Fort Lauderdale is a leader in modeling and promoting multiethnic ministry. Here, you will learn to appreciate the heritage and culture of those different from yourself and increase your love for all people.

### **The University of Fort Lauderdale...**

**Pursuing Academic Excellence**

You may have been out of school for a long time or feel you may be too old for college. The University of Fort Lauderdale provides caring, individualized attention and support of your academic pursuits—regardless of age. Full and part-time faculty members have college degrees as well as many years of Christian ministry experience. Our professors live what they teach and are dedicated to the individual success of each student. They want you to pass each course and receive your degree, and they will do all they can to help you succeed. They believe you are God's student and they desire to help you achieve your goal.

The University of Fort Lauderdale is licensed by the Commission for Independent Education, Florida Department of Education to award Diplomas and confer Associate of Arts and Science, Bachelor of Arts and Science, Master of Arts and Science and Doctoral degrees.

### **Unique Emphases**

Training Christian Leaders to Reach a Multiethnic Urban World for Christ—is more than a motto at the University of Fort Lauderdale. We are committed to help you make an impact in Southern Florida and abroad. Our unique focus is a blend of academics with God's Word. We believe the "Great Commission" defines the primary mission of the Church. Thus, we seek to incorporate a true spirit of evangelism and discipleship into the total academic experience. Our students are expected to be concerned for the lost and seek to be soul winners. Students have opportunities to go overseas or to U.S. cities on faculty-led mission teams.

### **Local Church-Oriented**

We believe your local church is God's primary agency to minister to a hurting world. Thus, all students and faculty are expected to be faithfully involved in a biblical church. The University of Fort Lauderdale partners with Bible-believing churches everywhere in an effort to train and equip leaders and promote church growth. We stand with all who love Christ and preach His Word. We are a non-denominational institution and our students come from various denominational backgrounds. We are all united by the common goal of better equipping you to serve your local church and its ministries.

### **Affordable Costs**

We understand your desire to learn and improve. With rising gas and food prices and the cost of living increasing, you need the proper wages so that you and your loved ones can improve your standard of living. You desire to help your community and the world so that things will be better for you, your family and others. Your improvement will empower you to assist your church, as well as be an example for others. An affordable, first class education is an important step to do that.. We are committed to providing the lowest possible costs and financial assistance.

### **Flexible Scheduling**

We respect your time and the responsibilities involved in caring for a family and handling a job. Your time is valuable. Our class schedules are designed for busy, working, adult students as well as recent high school graduates. Flexible scheduling allows you to maintain your schedule while obtaining your degree. We offer day, night, and weekend classes.

### **Location—an easy drive after work!**

The University of Fort Lauderdale is located in the City of Lauderdale and has classrooms, a chapel, lecture halls, a library, and a student center. The campus is conveniently located near several shopping malls and recreational areas. The University is within walking distance to bus service and city-owned facilities, such as community centers, swimming pools, parks, and golf courses and tennis courts.

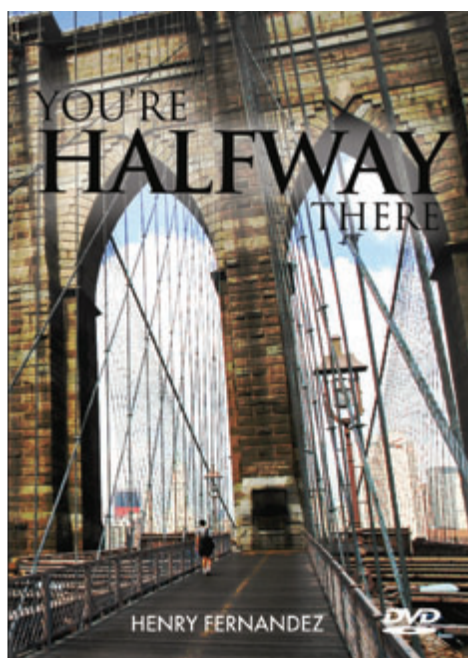
### **The University of Fort Lauderdale...**

**Where Your Success is Our Success**





## Take a Vacation In the Word



### **You're Halfway There!**

Life is much like running in a race. A goal line has been established, and we're all faced with the challenge to rush toward the finish line. Sadly, although everyone is in the competition, not everyone endures to the end. Halfway through the race, trouble comes, disappointment and weariness set in—the challenge becomes more than we can bare and we give up. We drop out of the race.

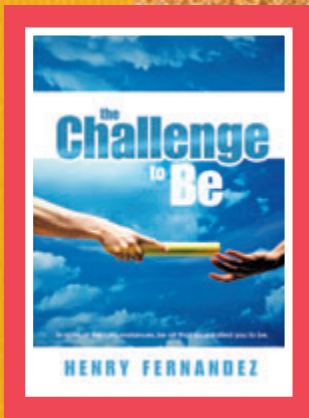
No one has ever won a race by quitting at the halfway mark. The goal is to reach the finish line. And in this thought-provoking message by Henry Fernandez, you'll be challenged to resist the urge to give up—to quit halfway through the race. You'll discover that it's much easier to keep pressing, to fight the good fight of faith, and finish your course than it is to retreat and go back.

You're halfway there! Now, let God take you the rest of the way!

Single CD | CD102706 | \$10

Single DVD | DV102706 | \$15

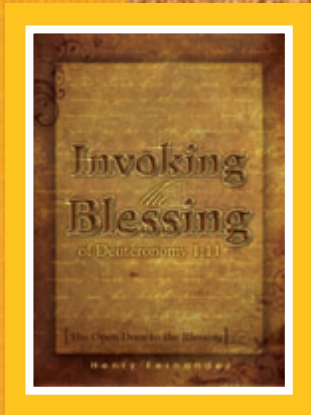




### The Challenge to Be

The world is calling you. It is challenging you to conform to its standard of living—to be like others in the world, to act like others in the world, to do all the worldly things you see other people doing. In this thought-provoking teaching, Henry Fernandez reminds you that, as a born-again child of God, you have been created to be unique—set apart to be different from the world. You don't have to fit into the mold of society, to follow the world's trends in order to be accepted.

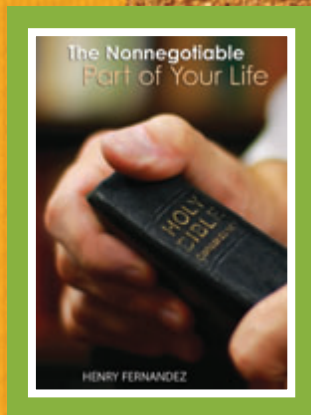
Single CD | CD092609 | \$10  
Single DVD | DV092609 | \$15



### Invoking the Blessing of Deuteronomy 1:11

Challenge yourself to become a recipient of God's best. Discover His plan for your life, so you can enjoy His blessings today and receive God's promise of a "thousand times more" blessing.

8-CD Series | PKODTB8C | \$50



### The Nonnegotiable Part of Your Life

Are you making deals with the devil? Without reservation, most people would likely answer something like, "Absolutely not! I never negotiate with Satan!" But the truth is, if you've ever been in a place where you had to decide whether to do right or wrong, whether to go with the world's system or do what God says to do, then you likely had to deal with the devil. In this revealing message, Henry Fernandez points out that the world system is constantly testing the believer, trying to get you to compromise or negotiate your faith in God. Make sure your decisions don't compromise your relationship with God, and that you're not allowing Satan to steal your joy, your peace, or your love for Him.

Single CD | CD092609 | \$10 • Single DVD | DV092609 | \$15





**Rebirthing Your Dreams:  
The Ultimate Conception**

God has made great provision for you, and He's expecting you to go after every one of them. He desires for you to follow your dreams!

3-CD Series | PKRYDCD | \$25  
3-DVD Series | PKRYDVD | \$40



**From a Bag of Groceries**

Right now, you are in a place of revelation. Your life may seem empty, and perhaps you're standing with only a single bag of groceries. But God says wait on Him and be patient. You're moving from the revelation of where you are to the manifestation of what He has for you. You're moving into the place where that single bag of groceries will become an overflowing storehouse of plenty.

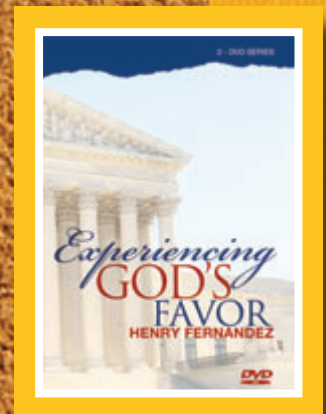
Single CD | CD102504 | \$10 • Single DVD | DV102504 | \$15



**Experiencing God's Favor**

When you see yourself the way God sees you, you'll have no problem receiving the blessing and favor He's provided for you. He has given you His mercy and His grace for every situation you will ever encounter. Set includes two messages: *God's Mercy* and *God's Grace*.

2-CD Set | PKEGFCD | \$25 • 2-DVD Set | PKEGFDV | \$40







### Overcoming Life's Obstacles

You are equipped for success. It's part of God's plan for you as a born-again believer. But what happens when things get in your way and block you from reaching the next level on your way to success? In this informative teaching, Henry Fernandez offers a stern reminder that being a Christian does not exempt you from the attack of the enemy through tests and trials. But you have power over any obstacle that comes your way through God, who has called you to be a world overcomer.

Single CD | CD00528 | \$10



### The Perseverance Package

Long before you were ever born, God set a plan in motion that would guarantee your success. He planned your destiny, and then mapped out a strategy for you to not only reach that destiny, but to enjoy the fulfillment of all His blessings along the way.

PK0806CD | \$20



### The Prosperity Package

God intends for you to prosper and succeed. It's part of His promise to you as a born-again believer—His child. And in this revealing series, Henry Fernandez helps you understand the true impact of that promise, explains that you are destined to succeed, and proves that God has already opened the door that leads to that success.

The Bible says in 3 John verse 2, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Discover today how, by following God's Word, by obeying and doing exactly what it says, you can walk in prosperity and live like God intends for you to live.

This powerful package includes four teachings: *An Opportunity to Prosper*; *God's Kingdom of Increase, Parts 1 & 2*; and *Returning to True Prosperity*.

PK4PRCD | \$40





# Reflections

*With Carol Fernandez*



Don't copy  
the behavior  
and customs  
of this world,  
but let God  
transform  
you into a  
new person  
by changing  
the way you  
think.

## Get Excited About Change!

Are you bothered by change?

I believe most people, including myself, are or at least have been at one time or another. And there's good reason.

Change can sometimes be somewhat intimidating, especially for those who are "set in their ways." They're used to things being the way they are. They want the usual, the customary, the norm.

But that's not the way God wants it, and it's not the way He desires for us to live. In fact, God is all for change.

In Romans 12:1-2, *New Living Translation*, Apostle Paul says "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." That's a lot like what the Bible says in 1 John 2:15-17, where we are admonished: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

When you read those two passages of Scripture, it's easy to understand why God is so into change when it comes to His people. The truth is, being like the world means not being like God. It means going after ungodly things and living a lifestyle that is totally contrary to God's Word. It means not allowing God to be part of your life and destiny.

God knows very well how the ungodly live. He knows their ways and actions, and His desire is that we have nothing to do with that way of life. Instead, He wants us to be like Him, to project the godly character we received when we were created in His image and likeness. He made us to be like Him, and that's how He wants us to live.

That's why He tells us to be transformed, to change our ways so we people won't become confused about who or what we are. They will quickly recognize we're different from the world, that we are children of the Most High God.

When you look at it that way, then you realize change is something to be excited about.

*Carol*



# Let In The



“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Salvation is a gift from God that is available to whoever will repent of his sins, believe and confess that Jesus is Lord and that He died and rose from the dead to save mankind (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10). The fact that it is a gift indicates that one cannot work for it or be good enough to be saved (Ephesians 2:8; 2 Timothy 1:9). It is a matter of faith (acting on what you believe according to God’s Word concerning salvation).

When the Holy Spirit convicts, He shines the light on all that is filthy and sinful. You become exceedingly aware of what is wrong in your life. If you are looking for a change in your life, if you desire peace that passes all understanding, then God is your answer. He is ready and willing to help you right now—right where you are. You can receive that new life now by taking the following steps:

**1. Acknowledge Jesus.** The first step is to acknowledge that you need a change in your life. You need a Savior. It is important that you understand there is no other name given whereby men might be saved. “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

**2. Repent.** Repent means to turn away from all that is wrong and turn to Jesus. You have run away long enough. It is now time to run to Jesus. Don’t look back. Repent from your heart, and not with your head or your lips. You must be genuinely sorry for your style of living. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:10). Talk to Jesus about what’s going on in your life. Confess your sin. 1 John 1:9 states, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

**3. Ask.** Now ask Jesus to forgive your sins. Ask Him into your heart, to be your Lord and Savior, and your best friend. Jesus will not refuse. He promised in John 6:37: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

**4. Believe.** You must believe you are forgiven, that you are saved. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). Don’t be moved by what you feel—simply believe.

**5. Live Free.** Now live, for you are set free from the bondage of sin and death. You are saved; you are changed. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus. John 8:36 says, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” Jesus not only made you free, He has reconciled you back to God.

**If you do not know Jesus as your Savior and 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 write to us at The Faith Center Ministries, 5555 N.W. 95th Avenue, Sunrise, FL 33351 and let us know of your decision.

**Welcome to the family!**





# Healthy Lifestyle



**Your Body Is a Temple** ■■ Years ago, a friend of mine borrowed my small Ford Ranger pickup truck. When he brought it back, the whole bed was sagging. "I went to a marble show at the convention center, and they gave me lots of free samples," he said. But the weight was way too much for my little pickup. It messed up the shocks and cost me some money to replace them. My friend was totally unaware that anything was wrong with the truck.

Millions of people do to their bodies what my friend did to my poor little truck. They load up their bodies with extra weight, more than their frames were designed to carry. Then they wonder why their knees and hips are wearing out and they're developing arthritis, ankle problems, heel spurs, lower back pain, bunions, degenerated disks, and more. That's their body's way of saying, "Quit putting so much weight on me!"

Why can't Americans lose weight and keep it off? There are some basic reasons.

**Bad foods are a habit.** Some people who were raised on regional/ethnic cooking, like southern food, habitually eat fried foods, gravy, fatback, biscuits, apple pie, cake, butter-soaked grits, and worse. My mother raised me on southern food, and after frying bacon she would pour the bacon grease into a cup and add the grease to green beans, butter beans, and many of the vegetables we ate.

**Bad foods are convenient.** To my knowledge, there isn't a fast-health food chain in America.

**Bad foods are a vicious cycle.** People fall into a cycle of eating sugar, and the cycle perpetuates itself. When you eat a doughnut or a piece of cake or pie, or you drink a dessert coffee, for example, you get a sugar rush, but several hours later you get the whiplash effect. Your blood sugar level drops and you crave a pick-me-up. The quickest fix is something sweet or starchy, and so the cycle goes.

**Hormones make bad foods look good.** When women are pregnant, on their period, or going through menopause, they generally crave sweets, starches, and chocolate.

**Bad foods give comfort.** Excessive stress causes high cortisol levels, which cause cravings. When people get stressed, they reach for comfort foods: sweet, creamy, starchy, salty items. Nobody reaches for broccoli or carrots when they want comfort.

Starchy and sugary foods raise serotonin, one of the brain's feel-good chemicals. Chocolate raises dopamine levels, another feel-good chemical. Generally, when people are depressed, anxious, or just low in serotonin or dopamine, they reach for a food that pumps up these feel-good chemicals.





## Food Cravings

The 2004 movie, *Super Size Me*, chronicled one man's switch to an all McDonald's diet. In just thirty days he went from 185 to 209 pounds, his cholesterol went up a whopping 65 points, and his body fat jumped from 11 to 18 percent. That's not even including what he suffered from mood swings, high blood pressure, and symptoms of addiction. His was an experiment, but many people treat their bodies that way by choice.

The main reason many Americans are obese is simply gluttony, and Christians are no exception. Think about this: How often are church functions centered on food? How many churches have doughnuts and coffee to raise attendance numbers for a Bible study or service? A study from Purdue University found that religious people are more likely to be overweight than are nonreligious people. In state-by-state comparisons, they found the percentage of obesity highest in states where religious affiliation was more prevalent. Think about it! Christians often think that because they don't smoke, drink, or party, they can eat all they want! Then they reap what they sow in obesity, heart disease, cancer, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, reflux disease, sleep apnea, and loss of quality of life.

Webster's dictionary defines *gluttony* as "excess in eating and drinking." The Bible equates it with drunkenness: "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags (Proverbs 23:20-21), *New International Version*).

The word *glutton* in this passage is defined as "ravenous eater of meat." This describes a lot of men in particular. If you want to experience the harsh reality of some people's lack of restraint, simply go to a buffet and watch how they load up their plates with meat, potatoes, and macaroni and cheese. Many will eat as if they've never seen food before. Food is not at the root of the overeating issue; it actually goes much deeper than that.

## The Mind-Body-Spirit Connection

Gluttony, or overeating, is a spiritual and emotional problem first, and a dietary problem second. Gluttony is simply a lack of temperance. We may not

like to think of our weight problem as gluttony, because confronting our emotional issues can be painful. Many times people who struggle with a weight problem experience self-loathing, loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, guilt, and shame, especially the latter two. In all my years of practice, I have treated numerous patients with a weight problem, and almost always the root cause is emotional. The moment they mess up by eating something they shouldn't, they feel guilty and ashamed, and they feel like quitting. In my medical office, we know that we need to treat the patient's body, mind (emotions), and spirit. We give them scriptures to confess daily aloud and meditate upon so that they begin to change their mind-set from a negative to a positive state. The Word gives them hope.

I take them through forgiveness therapy, which enables them to forgive themselves as well as others. When they forgive themselves and begin to love, respect, and accept themselves, it breaks the vicious cycle of negative feelings and emotions. Then we address the physical by making lifestyle changes—eating living foods and exercising.

Our physical bodies are precious and were created as a dwelling place for their Creator: Yet most people pollute their temples by eating too much food and eating the wrong foods.

We must be willing to start loving ourselves and forgiving ourselves. In so doing, we can begin to exercise self-control over our physical nature. No one is going to restrain your appetite for you. You have been given *the power* to restrain yourself by having the ability to control your cravings. *You make the choice.*

Up to now you may have felt hopeless or even said, "Why try when I've tried everything?" You said it; *you tried*. The good news is that *you are not alone*. Start building on this pillar of health by practicing temperance, moderation, portion control, and self-restraint when it comes to food. Then, when you make positive changes to your diet, it will have a real and lasting effect on your health.

*Dr. Don Colbert is a graduate of Oral Roberts School of Medicine and shares his years of experience and research in nutritional medicine in all of his work. He is a national speaker, bestselling author and host of a national talk show titled Your Health Matters. For more information, visit [www.drcolbert.com](http://www.drcolbert.com).*





# Waiting On

God

When I awoke the morning after my coming-of-age experience in nursing, I moaned as I rolled out of bed. I didn't feel 21. I felt old. I felt older than Abraham. I felt older than Methuselah. I felt like I'd already seen too much in 21 years. But nursing, especially intensive care nursing, makes you grow up hard and fast. When I crawled into bed that night, I asked myself for the hundredth time, *Why am I doing this?*

I'd always dreamed of being a writer, but no one in my family had gone to college and there simply wasn't enough money for my parents to send me. In my desperate desire for a college education, I accepted a part-time job as a nursing assistant at a local hospital. I naively believed I could save enough money to put myself through college while earning minimum wage. After working half days at the hospital during high school, I was offered a partial college scholarship—in nursing.

My thoughts drifted back to my senior year. *What should I do?* I wondered as my high school graduation loomed on the horizon. *I want to be a writer, not a nurse. But this scholarship is the only way I see to go to college.* Didn't the Bible promise that if we asked God for wisdom, He'd give it to us?

*This qualifies, I thought. I need God's wisdom now.*

"Father," I prayed, "I need wisdom. You know I've made plans for my life—plans to go to college and be a writer. Now, I've been given this scholarship in nursing. I guess it's time I ask *You*—What do You want me to do with my life?"

I listened for an answer while I pulled on my white uniform and dressed for work. "Well, Lord?" I asked impatiently, while driving to the hospital. After lunch, I made a quick change and rushed to my first class.

"Lord...are you there?" I asked, pulling my books from the locker.

At five o'clock I drove home and helped mother start dinner. Later, with my homework spread across the kitchen table, I strummed my fingers on the table top and listened for God's answer.

*Nothing.*



## 'Be Still, And Wait'

I had a baby-sitting job that evening that kept me running until I dropped into bed late that night. I pulled myself out of bed the next morning at six and talked to God while I dressed for work. "Lord, I *really* want Your will for my life, but I can't be held responsible for something I don't know. When are You going to show me what to do?" I tugged on my white hose, finished dressing, grabbed a biscuit from the breakfast table and rushed to work.

I fed one of my patients breakfast then went to gather clean linens for her bed. I'd just opened the linen closet door when I heard a roar and the sound of a chair being kicked across the room. I threw myself in the linen closet and slammed the door. One of the doctors had a horrible temper. *He must have bumped his leg against the hand crank on one of our old hospital beds again*, I thought. I huddled in the dark listening as he raged and cursed, knocking furniture around. *Lord, please don't call me to this.*

Weeks flew by in a busy haze of senior pictures, printing graduation announcements, dates and my senior prom. When would I hear from God?

One night I lay in bed thumbing through my Bible. I turned to Psalm 25 and began to read. The fifth verse seemed to leap off the paper. "Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day."

*Yeah, Lord, I'm waiting.*

A few minutes later Psalm 27:14 seemed to light up on the page. "Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD."

*The Bible talks a lot about waiting, doesn't it?*

I read a few more chapters and read, "Be still and know that I am God...."

I paused. Those Psalms seemed to be speaking to me. Be *still*, and *wait*.

Suddenly I blushed. What had I been thinking? I had asked the God of the universe for direction, but I hadn't sat still to wait on a reply. I'd talked to Him on the run to work, whispered a sentence between classes, and moved ahead with my life at the speed of light.

I would have never considered treating a friend that way. If I asked someone a question, I would wait expectantly for an answer. Yet, I'd spoken to God, never waiting for Him to answer. I'd given Him my half-hearted attention while driving through busy traffic, while I talked to patients at work and listened

I would have never considered treating a friend that way. If I asked someone a question, I would wait expectantly for an answer.

to my teachers at school.

"Father, I'm sorry," I whispered.

I lay awake late that night. Where in my busy schedule could I make time to *listen* to God?

The next afternoon after school I pulled on a pair of old jeans, sneakers and my favorite plaid shirt. "I'm going to sit in the pasture," I told mother, nodding toward the farm at the end of our block.

"The pasture?" my mother asked, raising an eyebrow. "Why?"

"It's the only place I know where I can get quiet enough to hear God's voice. I need to know what He wants me to do with my life."

She looked at me and smiled. "That's a good idea," she said. "Don't worry about helping with supper."

## 'I'll Just Be Quiet'

The world seemed alive with promise as I climbed over the barbed-wire fence and strolled to a clump of trees. Black and white cattle stopped chewing to gaze at me. I sat down in the soft spring grass still moist from a morning rain, and leaned my back against the tree I'd climbed hundreds of times as a child. The sun felt warm on my face as I listened to the swish of the cow's tails swatting flies. The hustle-bustle world suddenly seemed far away and less important than the caterpillar that climbed up my sleeve.

"Well, Lord, here I am," I said, breaking the silence. "Since I became a Christian, I guess I've spent a lot of time telling You what I think...and what I need. I can't say I've ever spent any time giving You a chance to speak to me. But that's why I'm here today. So...I'll just be quiet."

I sat still and waited.

An hour passed, then two. Reluctantly, I climbed back over the fence and walked home. I wasn't any wiser about God's plan for my life, but as I waited on the Lord, something inside me that had been



Sadder still are the millions of people who wander aimlessly through their lives never taking the time to know God's plan.

coiled tight began to unwind. I couldn't even give it a name.

The next afternoon, I rushed home and changed into my jeans. "You're going back to the pasture again?" my mother asked.

I paused at the door. "I'm going every day until I hear from God."

Once again, she nodded her silent approval. A few minutes later, I sank into the soft grass. "I'm back, Lord," I said. "I'm going to be still and wait on You."

A cow tugged at the tender grass near my feet and contemplated my sneakers.

I didn't hear anything from God that day.

Or the next.

Yet, day after day as I waited—quiet and still—my perspective changed. *My plans, my career, my school, my job and my needs* all began to pale in significance to His presence.

Some days it seemed that the Lord drew my attention to magnificent, billowing clouds that formed overhead. Other times my senses danced when He brushed my hair with His breeze and His sunlight kissed my cheeks.

The world became new and vibrant to me during those hours. A butterfly fluttering on a leaf left me breathless. That day, I broke my silence. I didn't mean to do it, but awe of God welled up in me from some place so deep that it couldn't be stopped.

I threw back my head and sang.

I sang hymns. I sang love songs. I sang everything that was in my heart.

Afterwards, I lay spent in the grass and felt the weight of His presence in every molecule of my being.

*This must be how David felt when he was a shepherd, I thought. All alone with God and the sheep—no wonder he wrote so many songs.*

A week passed, then two.

I could hardly wait to climb that fence each day. The time I spent alone with God became the hub around which the rest of my life turned.

I had just settled against my favorite tree one afternoon when a cow ambled over and looked at me with soft brown eyes. A moment later, God spoke.

God, the Creator of the heaven and earth.

God, who measured the foundation of the world with His hand.

God, in whose presence I had finally learned to wait.

God spoke.

The voice wasn't audible, but it echoed through every cell of my body. Thirty years later, the sound of those words are as real to me as they were that day.

*"I am calling you into nursing. In your later years, you'll write."*

Today, I'm still following those simple instructions from God. I worked as a registered nurse for nearly 16 years before trading in my stethoscope for a computer and going back to school to begin a second career as a freelance writer.

I'd like to say that I had the wisdom to wait on Him at every crossroads in my life.

Sadly, I did not.

Sadder still are the millions of people who wander aimlessly through their lives never taking the time to know God's plan. Without His plan it is impossible to find our place in the Church.

I've had people desperate for God's will ask me, "Do you know what God wants me to do?"

"No, I don't. But you can know if you'll learn to listen to God."

Looking around the Body of Christ, I believe we are becoming a praying Church. We pray all kinds of prayer. We pray petitions. We pray supplications. We pray intercessions. We pray in the Spirit. We pray the Word. We pray thanksgiving.

Then, the moment we stop speaking and God opens His mouth to answer—we walk away.

We may be a praying people. But we haven't been a listening people,

The people God will use in the critical days ahead will be those who are willing to wait on Him. God is speaking all the time. Is anyone listening?

*Will you?*



*This article is an excerpt from the book A Healing Touch—The Power of Prayer, by freelance writer, Melanie Henry. To contact Melanie, visit her website at [www.melaniehenry.com](http://www.melaniehenry.com).*



## D E V O T I O N

...his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God.

Romans 4:20, NLT

## Believing By Faith!

“Why can’t I have strong faith like Abraham?”

If you’ve never spoken those words before, chances are pretty good you’ve at least thought about it at some time or another. It’s not unusual to question the size of your own faith when you read dramatic and powerful accounts in the Bible of such faith people as Abraham. It’s also not unusual to question your own faith when trouble comes and you can’t seem to pray your way through.

You know God’s Word works, but despite your prayers, nothing seems to be happening. The obvious answer, you convince yourself, is that if it’s not God then the problem must be with you. You don’t have the faith to believe.

That’s not necessarily the case.

The Bible says in Romans 12:3 that God has given every man the same amount of faith. In other words, we all have faith. It’s how we use that faith determines how and whether it works for us.

In Abraham’s case, he looked at his natural physical state and realized that, at 100 years of age, it was impossible for him to father a child with his wife, Sarah. But because God had told Abraham that he and his wife would have a child, that changed everything for Abraham. God’s Word carried a whole lot more weight than what Abraham saw in the natural. And because of his faith in God, what appeared impossible on the surface suddenly seemed impossible to him—by faith!

Romans 4:19-22 says, “And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a 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. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”

Abraham put aside what things looked like in the natural, and looked to God. He used his faith to believe what God said would happen. The result was that Sarah gave birth to Isaac. Abraham did not have to see God in the flesh to believe what He had promised would come to pass. He had God’s Word, and that was enough. Abraham’s faith honored God, and it blessed him and Sarah.

God gave everyone “the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3). That means you have just as much faith as Abraham had. And, just like Abraham, you can measure to what degree your faith works for you by how you use it.

Thank God for His Word that causes faith to operate in your life.



God gave everyone “the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3). That means you have just as much faith as Abraham had.

By Edna G. Jordan



# Only *You* Can Do It!



“When I say only you can do it, I’m referring to the things God has ordained for you to do. I mean the desires He has put in your spirit over the years. Close your eyes for a moment. What constitutes your dream? Can you see it? If you can see it, you can reach it by faith.”

In July 1991, God spoke to me and said, “Son, this is what I want you to do. I want you to start a church and call it The Plantation Worship Center” (now known as The Faith Center Ministries). I’m glad God had been preparing me for this moment. The thought of pastoring a church was totally out of my reach.

I’d never pastored a church before, so I brought no experience to the ministry. I considered it the most difficult job a person could ever have. Who would want to be a pastor? Who would want all that responsibility? Not me.

Despite the fact that I felt I couldn’t do it, the Holy Spirit came to me and said, “Only you can do it, son. Only you.”

“What do you mean, God?” I asked. “You can find another pastor.”

“No, no, no,” God said to me. “I have others who will pastor other churches, but not The Faith Center. This is your calling.”

*My calling.* That carried with it a sense that before I was born, God had it in mind that one day I would obey His call to start a church and call it The Faith Center. As if starting a church wasn’t overwhelming enough for me, God added: “Son, alongside the church, I want you to start a university.”

“A university? Why not a Bible school? Why a university?”

“Because where this ministry is going, you need a school of higher learning. The success of this ministry is not going to depend on your preaching. If you think your ministry will survive through the preaching of the Word, you are making a big mistake. It’s not about the preacher. Your church is not going to be strong because you’re up there preaching every week. The strength of your ministry will come through the study of the Word and equipping believers through the university to be qualified to serve in the world.”

By Henry Fernandez

## The Results of Obedience

Fast forward to today. What would have happened if my wife and I had never started The Faith Center Ministries, and later the University of Fort Lauderdale? Where would our 8,000-plus church members be? Yes, perhaps some of them would be at other churches. But they come to our church because they're convinced it is where God wants them now—that this church is God's will for them.

What if I had been too afraid to take the steps required to start a university? What if I had told God I just couldn't do it? What if I had not followed the will of God?

Based upon my example, do you see how crucial it is for you to do everything God tells you to do? It not only drastically affects your life, but there are others in your life that are affected by your actions as well.

When I say only you can do it, I'm referring to the things God has ordained for you to do. I mean the desires He has put in your spirit over the years. Close your eyes for a moment. What constitutes your dream? Can you see it? If you can see it, you can reach it by faith.

Have you given birth to what God put in your heart, or are you still wondering, *Can I do it?* Maybe it is a future plan you have put on the back burner of your future. Perhaps you don't know if you can ever achieve it.

My point is that not only can you do it, but only *you* can do it. No matter how small and insignificant you think you are, when you stand on the Word of God and walk in His will, whatever God has purposed for you to become in life, only you alone can do it. If you die without fulfilling it, you will go to the grave without developing the potential God gave you. That dream, that gift, that call God has put on your life—no one else can do it. Only you—and you alone.

Don't ever try to pass your responsibility on to someone else. It's not that other people are not capable of doing something similar to what you should be doing. But if God wanted someone else to do it, He would not have put it in your spirit to do. Only you can do it if it's His will for your life.

Some people will say, "Well, if God tells you to do something, and you don't do it, God will find someone else to do it." That's true in a sense, but not in every case. For example, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is so important that it cannot be hindered by a person or a group of people. If you are called to preach the Gos-

pel, but refuse, God will send someone else to make sure the Good News reaches all corners of the earth. But that doesn't mean the Gospel will be preached the same as you would have preached it. God called me to begin The Faith Center, and no one preaches the Gospel as I do. Others may preach it more or less effectively, but the expression of the Holy Spirit through me is unique to me.

There are many things in your life that only you can do. God's not going to find someone else to do it. For example, let's say that God has placed you on the earth to run a particular business. God has placed that dream and that passion in your heart. If you were born to do that, no one else can fulfill the desire and will that God has placed in you. Who else would have done what you've done for your employees? Who else would make a difference in the lives of your clients? Only you can do it as you do.

The same is true about your family, relationships, or ministry opportunities. No one can do it but you. You need to get that in your spirit. The thing the Lord has called you to do is for you to do. And if you don't do it, then you're going to die with all that untapped potential. You have all the power in the world to do it. God has empowered you to do it, but maybe you have allowed circumstances and issues in your life to cause you to doubt your ability to do it.

## God's Purpose for Your Life

God is using everything that is happening to you, good or bad, to bring about His plan, purpose and will for your life. I wish I could take credit for saying that, but Apostle Paul beat me to it long ago: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

How can God use bad things to bring about His purpose for your life? Well, that's how God works, and that's how faith works. Faith works in the most impossible environments. Faith looks for situations that are impossibly out of your reach and says, "Let me prove to you that God is able to do exceedingly above all you can ever ask or think of Him."

*Faith is looking for an environment that is impossible.* So the next time you find yourself in a situation or predicament that looks impossible, don't be discouraged. Instead, say to yourself, "Get ready! God is up to something." When things look impossible, God is about to work.



The content for Romans 8:28 is Apostle Paul's marvelous teaching about our life through the Holy Spirit. He states how you can receive the life that will bring total fulfillment if you walk in the Spirit, not in the flesh. If you walk in the Spirit and understand the workings of the Spirit, you will have life in the Spirit. He writes about our future glory, and then beginning at verse 28, he shares how you and I can become more than conquerors in life.

Paul states that if you love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength, He is working on your behalf because He desires to accomplish the purpose to which He has called you. He will work out His will in your daily experience. In fact, I think it's impossible for a person to love God and not be in His will. When you love God, you automatically align yourself with the purpose of God for your life. When you love Him, you follow His commandments, and do what He tells you to do. You are in His will.

So where are you right now concerning God's plan for your life? In your personal life, are you where God wants you to be? Are you walking with Jesus today in your family life, in your finances, in your church, and in your relationships? Are you where God wants you to be?

If you're not in the will of God, if you're not loving God and drawn to His purpose, you are not going to know what to do with your life. God can't help you, because you're in violation of His will. When you call upon Him, He won't answer you. Why? Because you are disobeying God just as the Old Testament prophet Jonah. He heard God's call and promptly jumped on a ship headed in the opposite direction and nearly ended up being responsible for the loss of the lives of everyone on that boat. They had enough sense to throw him overboard when he confessed his sin (See Jonah, Chapter 1).

Jonah's experience actually provides a good lesson in relationships and the will of God. Make sure you only partner with people who are in the will of God, because the blessing of the Lord can fall there (Psalm 133). To partner with anyone who is out of the will of God will mess your life up (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

You must know you're in the will of God. When you need help from God, you don't want Him asking, "Did I tell you to do that?" or "Didn't I warn you about that relationship?" Don't assume just because you go to Him for help that He will be moved by your pleas and tears. If you have put yourself in that

situation based on rebellion, He may say to you, "No. You get yourself out of it because you went into it by yourself."

### Reaping What You Sow

When you are in the will of God, you can go to Him and say, "Father God, you told me to do this, and now there's a problem. Please show me how to solve this." And the Spirit of God will say, "Okay, fine. You're in My will, so I'll help you find the way."

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians 6:7-8).

We may not like it, but we reap what we sow. If you get yourself into a relationship you know is wrong, and you're having problems, don't try to dress it up and put a religious spin on it. God said "No," and you know what to do. Just turn yourself around and do the right thing. Get out of it.

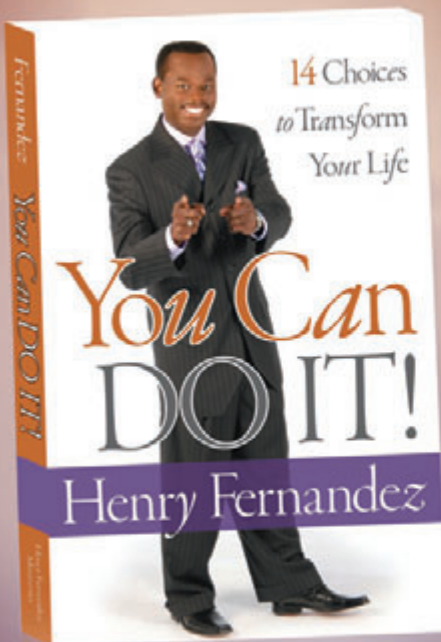
When you're in a financial mess and can't pay your bills, ask yourself how you got into the mess. Too many people won't face the hard truth. Yet they turn to God as though He's going to perform magic and pay the bill. After years of having God tell them to honor Him with their tithe and give of their first fruits to Him (Malachi 3:10), they still excuse their way out of obeying Him. They claim that based on their problems in life, they just don't have anything to tithe. Then they wonder why they do not receive the same blessing received by people who do tithe.

If you ask God to forgive you for the years of mistakes you've made and turn your life around, God will turn it around. But don't expect it to happen in one week. Don't think that if you give \$200 in the church offering, it's going to reverse five years of bad spending. Going to the house of God is not an automatic means to your financial ends.

### God's Foreknowledge and Predestination

God knew you before you were born, and He had already put in motion and planned that your life would be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. That's a powerful truth to carry with you today: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the

# Yes, You Can DO IT!



In Mark 9:23, NASB, the Bible declares that “All things are possible to him who believes.” What a great declaration for those who have learned to take God at His Word and live by faith. But even words as encouraging as these can sometimes become hard to grab hold of when you’re faced with tough times and nothing seems to be going right.

The truth is, God never intended for you to fail. If He has put something on your heart to do, He will provide whatever it is you need to accomplish the task.

Your success begins with putting your faith and trust in God. And in his new book, *You Can Do It!* Henry Fernandez reveals 14 choices you can make that not only will transform you, but guarantee success in every area of your life.

As a born-again child of God, all things are possible to you—when you believe.

Exercise your faith, and begin to live up to your full potential. Believe you can be everything He has called you to be, and you can do everything He has called you to do.

Believe that *You Can Do It!*

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firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29).

That means you were created to be like His Son Jesus, who says all things are possible if you believe. So the next time people ask you, “Who do you think you are? Why do you think you can do everything?” you can respond humbly, “Well, I can’t help it. I’m becoming like Jesus.” You are being conformed to the image of Jesus, which means you can conquer the obstacles of life through Christ who strengthens you (Philippians 4:13).

When people say, “Hey, you can’t do that,” you say, “Oh, I can. I’ve got to do it, because I’m becoming like Jesus. This is the will of God, and I can do it through His strength.”

Someone will say to you, “Now, wait a minute. I know your past. You don’t have a right to tell me you can do all things or that you can achieve this or that. Remember what you used to do years ago?” But the Word says that when God put a call on your life, when He sent the Holy Spirit to deliver you from sin, He also justified you. In other words, you can stand before the world’s court, which is saying, “You’re guilty,” and you can say, “Yes, I did those things. But I was washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and cleansed from all those sins. I’m forgiven and justified by God!”

We understand that when a crime is committed, the crime has to be prosecuted and punished accord-

ing to the law. We cannot commit a crime and say, “Oops! I didn’t mean to do it,” and think an apology will get us off. When we break the laws of the land, we must pay the price.

When mankind sinned against God, it means that we committed a crime against God, Himself, that had to be punished. And the punishment was death. But God sent His Son, Jesus, to pay the ultimate price by taking our place and dying the death we deserved. Jesus stepped into our place to die for us. And that death alone justified us before God. When Jesus died on the cross, His blood was powerful to reach across the centuries to today, and we have been justified. Jesus is our justification and our redemption.

And Paul added, “Whom He justified, these He also glorified.” Now that you know you’re justified through His blood, Jesus says, “I want to glorify Myself in you.” That means when you do something according to the will of God, God gets the glory out of it. When God looks from heaven and sees you doing what is right, heaven rejoices. Heaven is saying, “That’s My beloved son. That’s My beloved daughter, in whom I’m well pleased.”

If God Is for Us!

Continuing with Paul in the book of Romans, here is another power-packed scripture to boost your faith:



What is your greatest passion today? What is your greatest desire? What are you believing God for? Those things are possible through Jesus Christ—and only you alone can do them.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:31–32)

In other words, don't let anybody tell you that you've not been justified. God gave His own Son that you might be justified. God is really truly for you, and with His Son, God has promised to also freely give you "all things."

Never for one moment think you're presumptuous when you stand before God and ask for the desires of your heart. It is your birthright. Never think it is too much to ask the Lord to heal you, to bless you, to bring you into total fulfillment. Why? Because God says the reason Jesus gave His life was so that you and I may graciously receive "all things." Not "some things" but "all things." And only you can position yourself to receive all things.

I've discovered that when God puts something in you, He doesn't stop until He gets it out of you. He won't leave you alone until you do it. If He puts something in your spirit, and you start running away from it, He'll keep right on putting it in your spirit. You might wish it would go away. You might feel as though you can't do it. But He will keep putting it in your spirit. You've got to do it. And you can do it.

The truth is, nobody can stop you from receiving the things the Lord has for you. People might try to intimidate you and keep you from receiving the things God has for you. But if you stand firm in the Word of God, all the things God has provided for you through Christ's redemption are yours. Nothing will stop you, because all things are possible.

What is your greatest passion today? What is your greatest desire? What are you believing God for? Those things are possible through Jesus Christ—and only you alone can do them.

We make a great mistake if we wait for somebody to push us into our destiny. Too many people think that if something good is going to happen for them, it's got to be through somebody else. And that's why slavery lasted so long. As long as we believe that other people are better than we are, and that we are

no good and don't have a right to good things, then we're going to be held captive.

Ask people what it means to be free after they have fought for or defended their national freedom. People gave their lives for America to gain its independence. Hundreds of thousands more died to break the hold of slavery. And even after all that, American Blacks endured a long struggle to be recognized as people of equal value. So don't think for one moment that all God has for you in this life is going to be easily handed to you. Whether it is a house, a car, a career, or the fullness of God, it's never going to be delivered on a platter to you. You've got to fight to receive it. And you need to do your part to make it happen.

If you want to be promoted in your career, it's not enough just to go to work every day and do the basic job requirements. If you only do what is expected, you're going to get left behind. Go to your job and get the hands-on experience, but pursue the college degree that will help you get the promotion. When that job you desire opens up, most employers look for whether you have the qualifications to step up to a new level. When you have the degree, it tells them you have been tested and proven.

We often fail to appreciate the years of training that people have invested in their professions. When I think about doctors, lawyers, engineers, or chemists, I'm always impressed by the years of schooling they went through to prepare for their careers. It's no wonder they are paid what they are paid.

Perhaps you wonder, *Is it really worth it?* Think about this. When you need surgery, who are you going to call? I'll bet it's not someone who got a passing grade in Biology 101. You want a surgeon with the highest qualifications possible. You want to know the doctor's educational background, how many operations he or she has performed, and how successful those surgeries were. When your life is on the line, you won't allow a "wannabe" doctor to do the cutting.

There are no shortcuts to fulfilling your destiny. Only you can do it through the grace of God.

*This article was adapted from the book by Henry Fernandez, titled *You Can Do It!* For more information go to [www.henryfernandez.org](http://www.henryfernandez.org).*

## Read Through the New Testament

Reading the Bible is one of the most essential parts of your day-to-day walk with God. Daily use of this convenient, weekday reading plan, designed for Monday through Friday, will help draw you closer to God, develop a closer relationship with Him, and allow His Word to become alive in every area of your life.

*If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*

—John 8:31-32, NIV

# THE NEW TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST,

TRANSLATED OUT OF THE ORIGINAL GREEK; AND WITH THE MOST  
DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED,  
BY HIS MAJESTY'S SPECIAL COMMAND.

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>BOOK/CHAPTER</u>
Monday	August 2	2 Corinthians 3
Tuesday	August 3	2 Corinthians 4
Wednesday	August 4	2 Corinthians 5
Thursday	August 5	2 Corinthians 6
Friday	August 6	2 Corinthians 7
Monday	August 9	2 Corinthians 8
Tuesday	August 10	2 Corinthians 9
Wednesday	August 11	2 Corinthians 10
Thursday	August 12	2 Corinthians 11
Friday	August 13	2 Corinthians 12
Monday	August 16	2 Corinthians 13
Tuesday	August 17	Galatians 1
Wednesday	August 18	Galatians 2
Thursday	August 19	Galatians 3
Friday	August 20	Galatians 4
Monday	August 23	Galatians 5
Tuesday	August 24	Galatians 6
Wednesday	August 25	Ephesians 1
Thursday	August 26	Ephesians 2
Friday	August 27	Ephesians 3
Monday	August 30	Ephesians 4
Tuesday	August 31	Ephesians 5



# Go After the Blessing

Ever notice how the lives of some Christians seem to be so stagnant? Years pass, and they continue to live in the same small house, drive the same old run down car, and continue to exist on an income at or slightly above the poverty level. Worse of all, they seem content with living that kind of lifestyle, never complaining and all the time declaring, "I'm blessed and highly favored of the Lord. I've learned to be content with whatever I have, and I don't complain because God is my source!"

Really?

Well, can I just ask you this: If you're so "highly favored" of God, then please tell me how you interpret the verse from John 10:10 where Jesus said: "...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly"? And what about Philipians 4:19, which says, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus"?

Now, don't misunderstand what I'm saying here, or that I'm being critical. I understand that poverty is a serious epidemic in our country. And I realize that sadly, many Christians have fallen victim to the nation's economic woes and are struggling to get back on their feet. But being victimized by the failing econ-

omy is not what I'm talking about. I'm speaking more about those who are living in poverty by choice, or because they are not trying to better themselves.

Maybe that description doesn't fit you, and if not then I'm glad. But sadly, it fits many born-again believers who have not caught on to what God's Word says about His abundant blessing to the Body of Christ.

## The Blessing Is Yours

Jesus made a profound statement in John 10:9-10 when He told His disciples, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly." In The Message translation, verse



The blessed life is waiting for you. But as long as you choose to stay in your little corner of the world, as long as you hold back and refuse to go after those blessings, you'll never experience them.

10 says, "I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of."

More and better. That's what God has made available for anyone who will love and trust Him to take care of them. He desires for us to have not only the best—but the very best. And He has made it available to each of us as we obey Him and live according to His commands.

The blessed life is waiting for you. But as long as you choose to stay in your little corner of the world, as long as you hold back and refuse to go after those blessings, you'll never experience them. In other words, if you want something from God you've got to be willing to go after it. That's what Jesus meant when He said in Luke 11:9, *New Living Translation*, "...keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you."

When Jesus made that statement to His disciples, he had just related to them a story about someone in need and asked them a question. Here's what He said in Luke 11:5-8, *New Living Translation*:

Suppose you went to a friend's house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, 'A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.' And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, 'Don't bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can't help you.' But I tell you this—though he won't do it for friendship's sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

But notice what Jesus said in verse 10: "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

He didn't say a few would receive if they ask. He said "everyone."

That means you. And it means me.

### You Have Not ...

The Bible says in James 4:3-4, "...you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure."

The problem with most believers who are living in poverty is that they are not asking God for help. They've somehow been duped into believing that it's OK to live that way and that it honors God. They've become so used to where they are, to doing things the same way, that they dare not step out of the box and try to better themselves.

You see, stepping out requires change. It also requires effort. Sadly, many people today are afraid of change. They would rather things remain the way they are than try something new. Instead of going after something for themselves, they look to others to propel them to success.

But that's not how God says we, as believers, are to live. He expects us to be different. Look at what He says in 1 John 2:15-17:

Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

What does "love not the world." Obviously, it's not talking about love in the way we would apply it with regard to relationships. Take a look at how *The Message* translates that passage and you'll get a better understanding of what the writer is saying:

Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the



world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity.

Do you see it now? It's the ways of the world, the things of the world that we're told to not get entangled with. Sadly, those are the very things people tend to gravitate toward because those are the things they're most comfortable with. We like the nice cars and the fine homes. We enjoy eating in the fanciest of restaurants and taking extended vacations on the largest cruise ships. And why shouldn't we? That's all part of the abundant life Jesus spoke of in John 10:10.

But pay close attention to what this scripture is really saying. It says we're not to *love* those things. Sure, it's fine to enjoy them. But when we *love* them, we run the risk of getting *trapped* by them. Getting and having them becomes more our focus than our relationship with God.

God is not opposed to you having any of these things, but He is opposed to you becoming so attached to them that they end up having you—having your attention and your devotion.

Notice again what 1 John 2:16 says: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The Message translation says these things "have nothing to do with God."

## Go With His Plan

The truth is, God's really not interested in material things.

Now, you might ask, "But isn't there a scripture that says God gives us material things to enjoy?" Yes, there is. But that's not all that scripture says about having things. Let's look at 1 Timothy 6:17-19 to see exactly what it says:

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded; nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good,

that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

The Message translation gives an even better understanding:

Tell those rich in this world's wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. If they do that, they'll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.

That scripture is referring to wealthy people, people of status. But I believe it also applies to those who are not wealthy, because the principle is the same. God will give us things to enjoy, but at no time are we to let our status or our possessions cause us to become high-minded or self-righteous—thinking we're better than someone else.

The bottom line is this: God has a plan to see that you are blessed—that you prosper in every area of your life, beginning with your spirit, soul and body. And He will see to it that you get to that place in life as long as you love Him first, then trust and obey Him.

But there is a way for you to get to that place.

Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

God doesn't want you living in poverty. It is not His desire to see you struggling to make it when He has mastered a plan that calls for you to enjoy life in abundance.

He desires the best for you. He wants to see you walk in the fullness of His blessings. But you must want it just as much as He does. You have to want to succeed so much that you're willing to get up, step out of your comfort zone, and go after it.

Don't settle for less when you can have God's best. It's there, and it's waiting for you to claim it. Decide today to go after God first, and then His best for your life. Go after His blessing.



# Insight

By Henry Fernandez

## Eager to Share

Most born-again believers are familiar with the commission given in Mark 16:15, which instructs us to “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. When we first became a Christian, that’s all we wanted to do—share the good news of Jesus Christ.

It was a burning desire that could not be extinguished. But how about now—today?

How eager are you to witness to others about the goodness of the Lord? To see others come to know Jesus and enjoy the abundant life of blessings that He promises to all who will believe on Him?

Before his conversion on the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus was faithfully committed to his persecution of the Church, and God’s people. But when he was spiritually arrested by God, Saul, whose name God changed to Paul, became committed to a different cause.

In Romans 1:15, Paul boldly proclaimed in a letter to the church at Rome, “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel....”

Preach the gospel—any time, any place. That was the new call on Paul’s life, and he gladly accepted it.

You were given the same call the moment you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. And it has never been taken away.

How are you handling your assignment?

Are you as eager to share the gospel as Paul? Or has your fire gone out.

Nothing about God has changed. His love for mankind is as great today as it was when he saved you. That’s why we should never become slack when it comes to telling others about Jesus.

Have you lost your eagerness to witness? If you have, pray and ask God to rekindle your desire to share His goodness with others. You just could be the only Jesus some people will ever see.



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