



Believer's Voice of

W I C T O R Y

MERRY CHRISTMAS

December 2011

As the Copeland family gathers this Christmas, you will be with us...in our hearts and in our prayers.



Dear Partners and Friends,

Every year at Christmas the world is reminded of God's love for mankind. As we celebrate, eyes are turned toward the light of the gospel, ears are opened to faith and hearts are rekindled with hope—because Jesus came onto the stage of history and changed everything!



Jesus was God's ultimate gift of love—His plan for the world from the beginning. Acts 3:26 says God sent His Son Jesus to BLESS you.

This Christmas, let's thank our Father for all He gave us in His Son. The Names of Jesus recorded in Isaiah 9:6—"Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (*New King James Version*)—express THE BLESSING and the fullness of our faith, hope and love. Throughout the coming year let's continue to celebrate all God has given us in Him.

This year we were assured, "Every thing is going to be ALL-Right for the household of faith." God gave us that word, and it stands true as we head into 2012. It is an eternal word. God has a plan. The plan has always been Jesus, and He will not fail!

We believe you'll be blessed by the stories and articles from our family in this special issue of *Believer's Voice of Victory*. We pray you will receive a fresh word from the Lord for you and your loved ones.

Remember, when God unfolded His plan in Jesus, *you* were part of it. Think about that. See yourself in His plan and enjoy His marvelous love!

As the Copeland family gathers this Christmas, you will be with us...in our hearts and in our prayers. We will set aside special time to thank the Lord for you—our worldwide family of Partners and Friends.

We love you!

Merry Christmas!

Kenneth & Gloria

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Offers and prices shown in this magazine
are valid until December 31, 2011.

CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE: This Christmas the KCM Europe office will close on Friday, December 23rd and reopen Tuesday, January 3rd.
All the staff wish you a blessed and prosperous Christmas and New Year!

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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 38 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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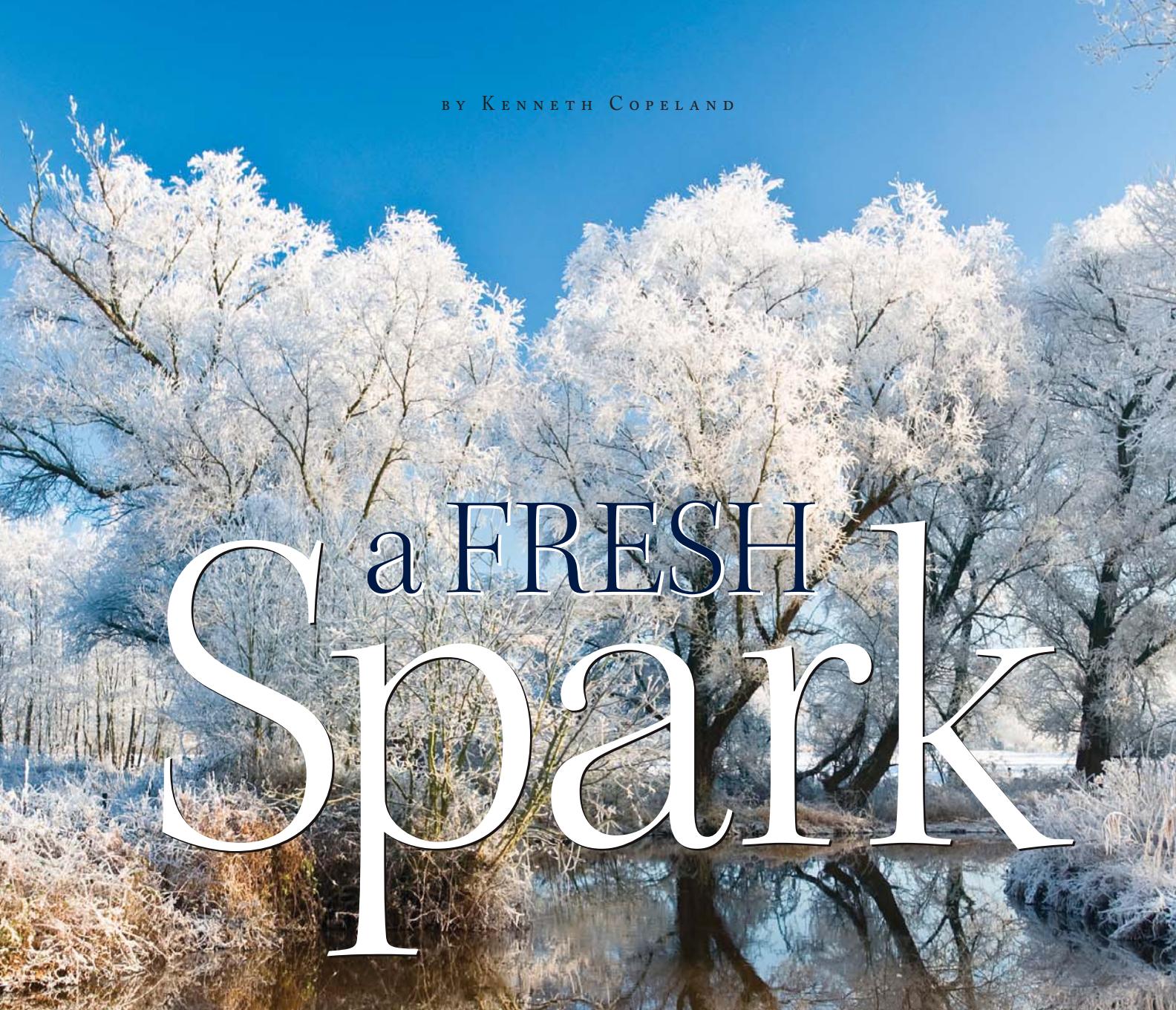
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BY KENNETH COPELAND

a FRESH Spark

*I plan to die
young. At a
very old age.*

Or, to put it more accurately (since, as a believer, I've already done all the dying I'm ever going to do) I plan to depart this earth and go to heaven as a very youthful old man. :: Spiritually, I have the DNA to do it. So do you and every other born-again child of God. As people of faith, we all have great spiritual genes. If you need evidence, just take a look at Abraham. He lived to be 175. According to Romans 4:11, he's "the father of all them that believe." So longevity runs in our spiritual family.

It's not the kind of longevity that just involves a lot of years, either. It's not the kind that leaves you weak, worn out and sitting in a nursing home. No, it's the kind that comes from having your youth renewed like the eagle's.

That's what happened to Abraham. At somewhere around 100 years old, he got a new lease on life. His old body that had aged to the point where it was reproductively dead, got a fresh spark. The same thing happened to his wife, Sarah. At 90, she started coming alive as never before. So at an age most people consider ancient, Abraham and Sarah started over. They stepped into the fulfillment of God's promise and had a baby.

Think of it! Those are the spiritual genes we inherited when we received Jesus as Lord and God grafted us into the family of faith! We're born again into a lineage of folks who were famous for living vibrantly on earth for a long, long time. We know we have their spiritual DNA because the Bible says, "They which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:9, 29).

I have made a quality decision to lay claim to that heritage. I'm following the example of Abraham knowing that, because I have the same covenant of BLESSING, if I do what he did I'll get the same results.

Not that Gloria and I want any more babies at this point. That was Abraham's dream, not ours. We're more interested in bearing fruit for Jesus. We want to be preaching His Word and giving Him glory on earth for decades to come. We may not want to hang around here 175 years. But we seriously believe the 120 years mentioned in Genesis 6:3.

Granted, hitting that mark isn't easy. There are some enemies arrayed against us. To defeat them we'll have to fight the good fight of faith.

Beware the Generational Curve

One enemy I encountered a few years ago is what I call the *generational curve*. That's an influence passed down through our natural parents and grandparents. In my life, that curve came through the Indian bloodline that runs through my mother's relatives. Physically, and in the way I think, I take after her side of the family.

Gloria once told me that the older I get, the more Indian I become. In some ways that's fine with me. There's a lot I appreciate about my natural Indian heritage. But there's also something I've had to guard against: People on that side of my family start going downhill at about 70 years old.

Take my grandfather, for example. A strong, hardy man all his life, he hit his late 60s and began slowing down for no apparent reason. When he turned 70, he retired, sold the north Texas farmland that had been his home for years, and moved to town. Problem was, he didn't really belong there.

He wasn't a town kind of man. So from that point on, he kept getting weaker and sicker.

He was eventually diagnosed with cancer. My mother prayed and filled his household with the Word of God until he was healed. But, even so, he continued to decline.

One day, he announced to his wife, Pearl, that they were going on a trip—something they'd rarely done. For a few weeks they traveled around visiting each of my grandfather's family members. Then they spent some time with his youngest sister who lived in Lubbock, Texas.

They were all watching television in the living room one evening when my grandfather got up and headed for the bedroom. "Pearl, don't come to bed until the TV goes off," he said. (That was back when the networks signed off at midnight.)

"OK," she said, "but why?"

"Just don't," he answered.

After midnight, she went into the bedroom and found him lying on the bed with his hands folded across his chest...gone. Sickness didn't kill him. He'd just taken leave of this life the Indian way. When they decide it's time to die, they just go somewhere, lie down and die.

My mother's life followed generally the same pattern. She lived just about the same number of years that he did. I won't take time to tell the story here but, suffice it to say, it's a miracle she lived that long. Doctors had been telling her she was going to die ever since she was a teenager. But she kept believing God for 10 more years until she hit 70.

Because of the death sentence hanging over her, she always pushed herself too hard. She wanted to get as much done for God as she could in the few years she might have left. She meant well, but that's unscriptural. God gave us the responsibility of taking care of our bodies. That means we have to rest.

My mother didn't do it. She spent her nights up praying for family members to get saved. One time I asked my dad, "Doesn't she ever sleep?"

"She doesn't even wrinkle the sheets," he answered.

The year my mother died, I was sitting beside her hospital bed late one night praying for her to receive healing. I'd just read Psalm 103:2-3: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases," when all of a sudden, the word of the Lord came to me.



We don't have any business retiring from God's service at 65 or 70 years old.

No born-again, faith-walking believer should ever think about quitting! We should think about getting more BLESSED.

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Your mother doesn't need healing, He said.

I was so startled, I jumped. "Well, You could have fooled me!" I answered. "Look at her! She's lying there almost dead. How can You say she doesn't need healing?"

After reminding me of how quickly she'd gotten healed of the pneumonia she'd had a few days earlier, He said, *Her body parts are worn out. What she needs is not healing but the covenant benefit in Psalm 103:5.*

I looked down at my open Bible and read it. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

What the Lord told me next changed the course of my life.

Youth renewal is included in THE BLESSING of Abraham that's yours in Christ Jesus, He said. *If your mother had laid claim to that benefit and declared it over her life every day, things would have turned out differently for her. She didn't know she should do that. But you do! You ought to say every single day, "I receive the benefit of my youth being renewed today!"*

That was in 1988, and I've been claiming youth renewal ever since.

Going Downhill Fast

Thank God I did, too. Because about 20 years later, the devil snuck up on me through that generational curve. A few years before I was about to turn 70, I started wanting to quit. I'd look at my preaching schedule and think, *I've been at this 40 years now. I ought to just get in my bass boat and head up the creek. I ought to relax, retire and get ready to die.*

Let me tell you right now that no born-again, faith-walking believer should ever think about quitting! We should think about getting *more* BLESSED. We should be growing and increasing in THE BLESSING, expanding its reach everywhere we go. We don't have any business retiring from God's service at 65 or 70 years old. We ought to give Him at least 100 years to BLESS the world through us.

That's the scriptural way of thinking. But it's not the way I was thinking back then. I was giving in to other ideas. After a while, those ideas made their way into my mouth. I'd find myself grumbling about how tired I was or some such thing. Meanwhile, I found out my physical body had been affected. I went to the doctor with pain like I'd never experienced in my life. He diagnosed it as degenerative joint disease. The MRI he took of my spine showed one of the disks had ruptured, and a piece of it had worked its way into the nerve canal of the spine. Every time I moved, or even breathed, it would put pressure on the nerves.

Oh, man, talk about hurting! I've been shot. I've been kicked by mules. I've been in car wrecks. But none of it compared to that pain.

As if that wasn't enough, the doctor did a full physical on me and found out my adrenalin glands had just flat lined. I had no strength. I'd get in The Word and the anointing would come on me and I'd do what I was called to do. But when I finished ministering and the anointing lifted, I'd almost fall on the floor.

So it wasn't just my mind wanting to quit. My body wanted to quit, too. I was going downhill fast, and the devil thought he had me beaten. He figured that before long I'd exit planet earth the same way others in my family did. Finally out of his way, I'd just be another dead Indian.

But there was something the devil didn't consider: Psalm 103:5—THE BLESSING of youth renewal I'd been claiming by faith ever since 1988.

For a while there, under the pressure of that generational curve, I almost let it get away from me. But, as always, the Lord was faithful to help me get back on track. The moment it happened I was standing on my treadmill, hanging on to keep myself upright in spite of the pain and fatigue. "Lord, how long do I have to put up with this?" I cried.

His answer came back and slapped me right in the face. *You're not giving Me anything to work with!* He said. *You're crying out from the weakness. You're crying out with the pain. I am the High Priest over your confession of My Word. Declare The Word! Give Me something to work with!*

Acting Like Abraham

From that moment on, I got back on The Word of God. I did the same thing about my physical body that my forefather, Abraham, did.

What, exactly, did he do?

The Bible says "he believed" and acted like "God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 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" (Romans 4:17, 19-21).

Instead of complaining about the symptoms, I started saying, "Every sickness and disease is under the curse of the law. I'm redeemed from the curse. Therefore, I'm redeemed from degenerative joint disease. Jesus bore my weaknesses and pains, and by His stripes I was healed. I consider not the pain in my body, but only The Word of God. I am fully persuaded that His Word is true and the work has been done" (Deuteronomy 28:61; Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:4-5; 1 Peter 2:24).

Someone might ask, "Did you feel anything when you said that, Brother Copeland?"

Yeah. I felt pain—and lots of it! Some nights I hurt so much, I'd sit out on the back porch with heating pads wrapped around me just waiting for the sun to come up. But I didn't sit there complaining about how I felt. I didn't spend my time thinking, *Oh dear God, I have an incurable disease! I hope my elbows don't fall off! I wonder when my knees are going to go? Will I have to have a hip replacement?*

I was tempted with those thoughts but I refused to entertain them. Instead, I got a list of healing scriptures and read them out loud. Over and over and over again.

Then, just like Abraham, I started giving glory to God. I determined to be grateful and give Him thanks by faith. It occurred to me, for instance, that even though some parts of my body hurt, others didn't. So I'd thank Him for that.

I thanked Him that I was saved and going to heaven instead of hell. I thanked Him for my children who are all serving Him. I thanked Him for all kinds of other blessings He's given me. After a while I noticed that I'd tapped into something supernatural. As long as I was shouting my gratitude to God, I wasn't hurting. So I just kept it up.

Somewhere along the way, my physical body started changing. I don't know exactly when. But I can tell you this: Sixteen months after that first MRI, I went back to the doctor for another one. It showed the ruptured disk completely restored. All the other herniated disks were normal again. All signs of degenerative joint disease had vanished.

Today, I am 75 years old and instead of slowing down, I'm gearing up. Instead of getting weaker, I'm getting stronger. I'm living proof that Romans 8:11 is true: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

My physical body has been quickened by the resurrection power of God! Not only have

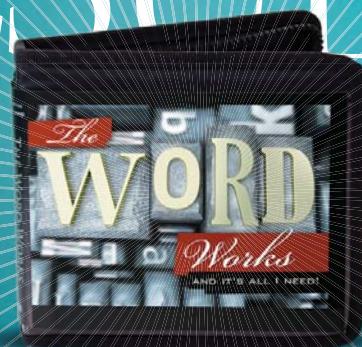
I been healed from the disease that tried to destroy me, my adrenal glands are functioning. My thyroid has come back to life. I'm more alive in every way than I was 15 years ago!

These days when I'm on the treadmill, I'm not crying out in pain and fatigue. I'm enjoying the fellowship of my Father and declaring His praises. I have a fresh spark. I'm enjoying a whole new fruit-bearing season of life, and I intend to live it to the fullest until Jesus and I are both satisfied.

Then, and only then, I'll depart this planet like Abraham did. "He died at a good (ample, full) old age, an old man, satisfied and satiated, and was gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:8, *The Amplified Bible*).

The way I see it, that's the only way to go. **VICTORY**

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BY PASTOR GEORGE PEARSONS



JESUS Our Lord & Savior

J"Jesus is my Lord and Savior." :: This phrase has been repeated countless times by believers. Over and over again, we acknowledge Him as our Lord. We declare Him to be our Savior. After all, God sent Jesus to earth to fulfill that role in our lives. :: But, do we really have a clear understanding of these two magnificent words?

As we celebrate Christmas, let's look at what it truly means for Jesus to be our "Lord" and our "Savior."

Jesus—Our Savior

First John 4:14 says, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Within the word *Savior* we can see the word *save*. That is exactly what it means in the Greek language. Jesus is the One who saves. He is our salvation. *To save* means "to deliver from all destruction" and "to preserve from harm." *Savior* is also defined as "one who rescues."

What exactly did Jesus rescue us from?

It is stunning to realize that He rescued us from an eternity in hell.

David proclaims in Psalm 30:1, 3 (*New Century Version*), "I will praise you, Lord, because you rescued me. You lifted me out of the grave; you spared me from going down to the place of the dead." Other translations describe hell as being, "the region of departed spirits of the lost," "the place of everlasting punishment," "the pit of the underworld" and "the destiny of the doomed." Because Jesus is our Savior, you and I have been rescued from this horrible place of eternal damnation.

For God so loved you and me He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). He gave us a Savior so we would not perish but would have everlasting life. God did not send Jesus into the world to condemn us. He sent Jesus so we could be rescued from hell.

Heaven is now our destiny.

Savior of Our Present

But our Savior did not just rescue us from an eternity in hell. He is not only the Savior of our future. He is also the Savior of our present.

Second Timothy 4:18, *GOD'S WORD Translation*, tells us, "The Lord will rescue me from all harm and will take me safely to his heavenly kingdom." Psalm 6:4 in the *New Living Translation* says, "Return, O Lord, and rescue me. Save me because of your unfailing love." He did that for us. He returned to earth and rescued us.

Colossians 1:13-14 tells us God has already "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The word *redemption* actually means, "to be rescued." We have been redeemed, or rescued, from the curse of the law so we can walk in THE BLESSING right here and right now! Second Peter 1:4 in *The Amplified Bible* tells us God has given us "His precious and exceedingly great promises, so that through them you may escape [by flight] from the moral decay (rotteness and corruption) that is in the world." Jude 1 in the *New Living Translation* gives us great assurance from our Savior: "I am writing to all who have been called by God the Father, who loves you and keeps you safe in the care of Jesus Christ."

When we say that Jesus is our Savior, we are declaring that He has already rescued us from the curse in this present world and from the torment of hell in the future world. Our Savior has made a way for us to live in days of heaven, here and there.

Jesus—Our Lord

"Jesus Is Lord!"

Now, there's a familiar phrase. We hear it declared every day on the *Believer's Voice of Victory* broadcast.

The Father spoke to Brother Kenneth Copeland many years ago and gave him a



mandate: *Proclaim "Jesus Is Lord" from the top of this world to the bottom and all the way around.* Again, has that become so familiar to us that we've lost sight of what *Lord* actually means?

The word *Lord* is used over 700 times in the New Testament. It is a title that deserves the greatest honor. It carries with it the idea of supreme authority.

Jesus holds the highest rank in the universe. Acts 10:36 says, "He is Lord of all." Revelation 19:16 literally shouts from the page. "And He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

In Philippians 2:9-11, we find that, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

He is ruler of all. His Name is above every name.

But two very important questions remain. Is Jesus our personal Lord? And, does He hold the highest rank in our lives?

In his book, *The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption*, E.W. Kenyon writes:

The human race was identified with Adam in his crime of high treason. As a result of that identification, the human race came under the personal lordship of Satan over their lives. Man lives in the realm of spiritual death because Satan is the Lord of his life. All human suffering is the result of Satan's lordship over humanity.... Therefore, man's greatest need is for a new Lord. He needs a Love-Lord, a Love-Master.... The Son of God has dethroned Satan from his position as lord over man and god of this world. Hebrews 2:14, 15 says, 'That through death He might bring to nought him that had the authority of death, that is the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Every unsaved man and woman living in the bondage of spiritual death now has a legal right to the Love-Lordship of Christ over his life. The Lordship of Christ means a New Nature, a New Family, a New Father.

Christ died and rose again that He might meet the need of man for a new Lord. Romans 14:9, 'For to this end Christ died and lived again that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.' When a man confesses the Lordship of Jesus, he is delivered from the authority of Satan into the authority of Christ. Every spiritual blessing now centers in the personal Lordship of Christ over a man's life.

To call Jesus "my Lord" is to acknowledge His deity, His union with the Father, our union with Him, His supreme authority over the universe and His right to rule in our lives. To call Jesus "my Lord" is also to acknowledge Him as Ruler and Master, Possessor and Owner, Power and Authority.

The more we realize the significance of Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, the more of the abundant life we will live here on earth. This Christmas, receive by faith Jesus' Anointing to be your Lord and Savior. Make a fresh dedication to walk in all God did when He sent Jesus to the earth on our behalf.

Say this out loud:

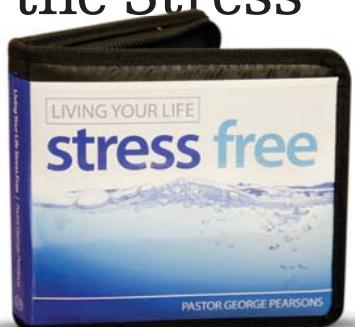
Jesus, You are my Savior—my Deliverer and my Rescuer. Jesus, You have rescued me from eternity in hell. Jesus, You are my Redeemer—so I can daily walk in THE BLESSING.

Jesus, You are my Lord—my Supreme Master and Ruler. Jesus, I not only acknowledge Your rank and submit to Your authority—I exercise that authority in the Name of Jesus right here on earth! Jesus, You are my Protection—over everyone and everything in my life.

Now, just thank Him for what He is doing for you as your Lord and Savior. Realize how much He loves you and how much He wants to do in your life. Jesus is our personal Lord and Savior, Master and soon-coming King. VICTORY

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STOP the Stress



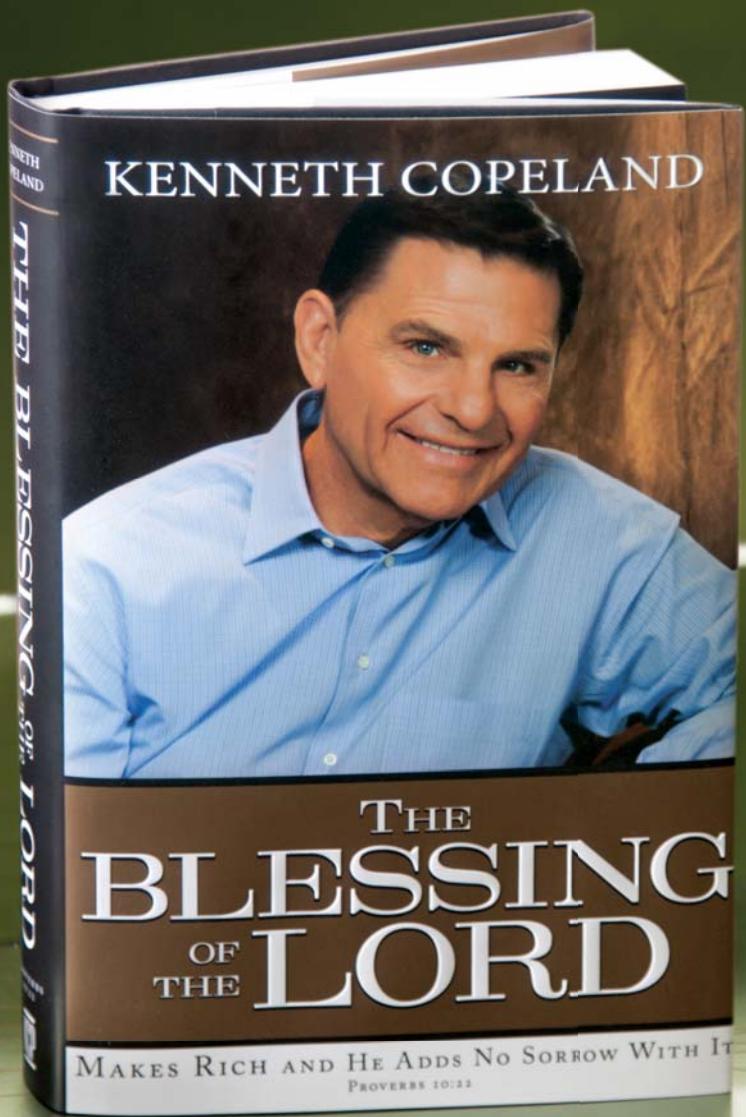
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WHEN GIVING becomes a supernatural event

The Grace of Giving

For the believer, giving is more than an obligation to fulfill or another rule to follow. When done as act of love and worship to God, it becomes a supernatural thing. This kind of giving becomes an act of grace.

In this series, Gloria Copeland shows listeners that God's definition of an acceptable gift has nothing to do with the amount one gives, but everything to do with the motivation of the heart. She'll also show them how easy it is to give from a cheerful heart—every time.

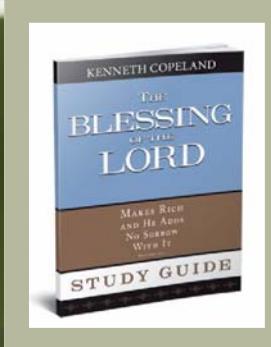
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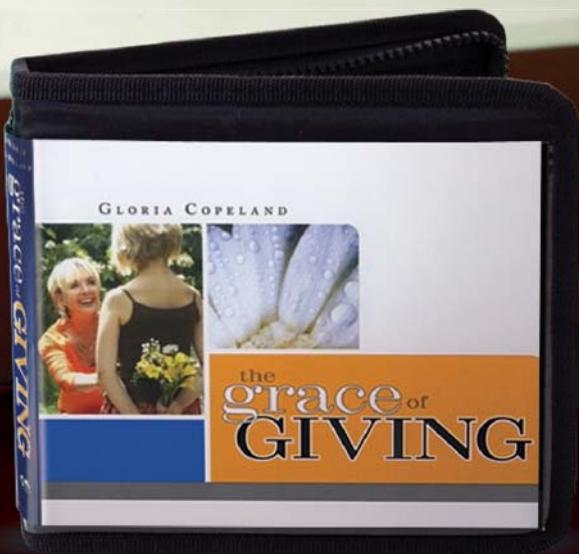


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The advertisement features a large, stylized title "Think Different, live different" at the top left. Below it is a photograph of a Lifeline kit box and a book titled "The Way of Cain".

Lifeline Kit: The box is brown with a collage of various people's faces on the front. It includes a circular price tag with "£16²⁵" and "reg. £25.00". The text on the box reads: "Your 10-Day Spiritual Action Plan for Building Relationships That Last" and "Kenneth & Gloria Copeland".

Book: The book cover is blue with a branch of red apples against a blue sky background. The title "THE WAY OF CAIN" is prominently displayed in large letters, with "BREAKING THE CYCLE OF SELF-DECEPTION" below it. The author's name "DR. BILLY J. RASH" is also visible.

Text:

- God's Word reveals differences between the way people think and the way God thinks. How often do we really consider God's way of thinking when it comes to:
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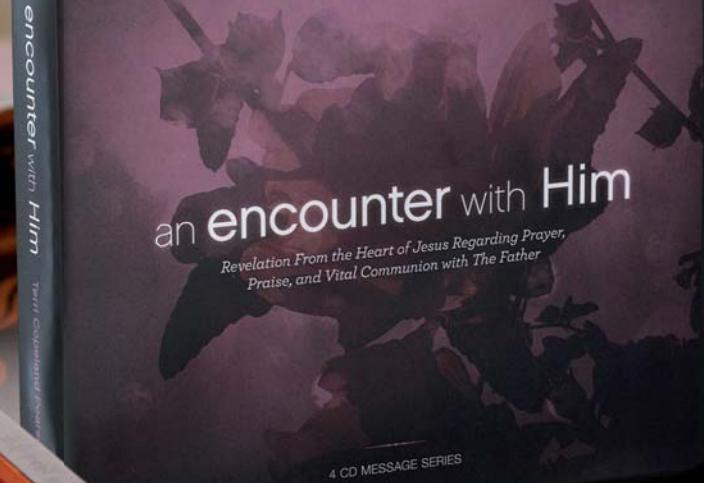
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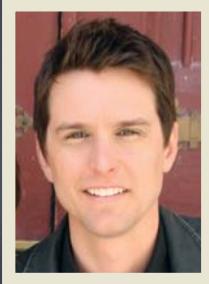
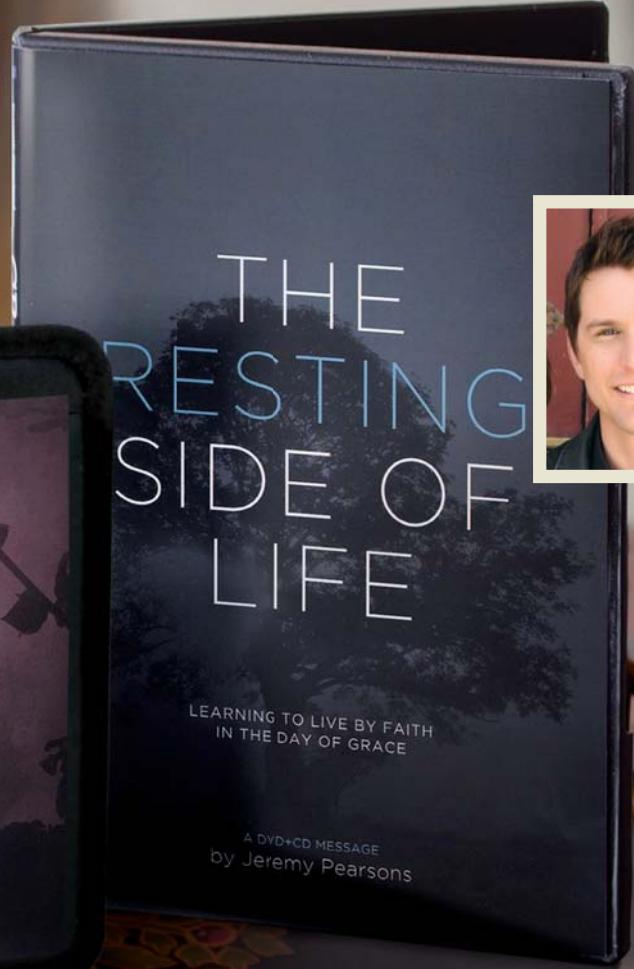


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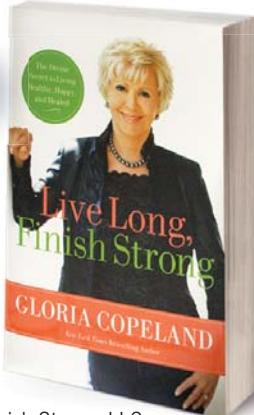
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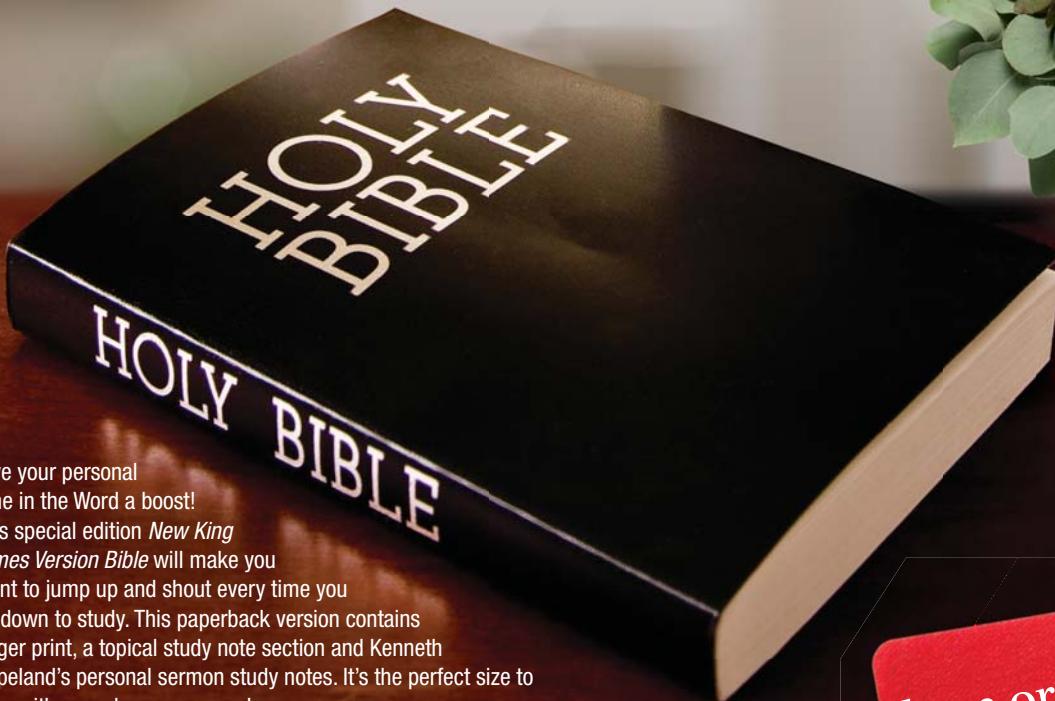
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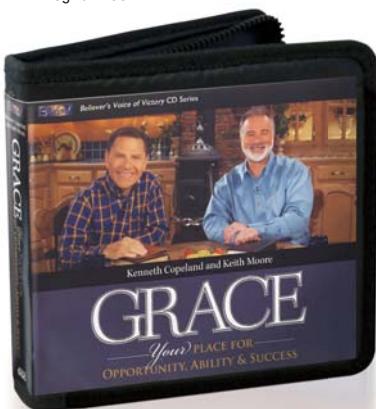
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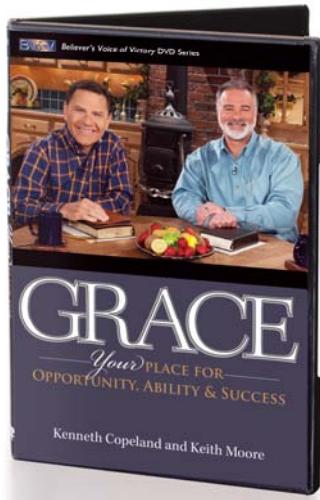
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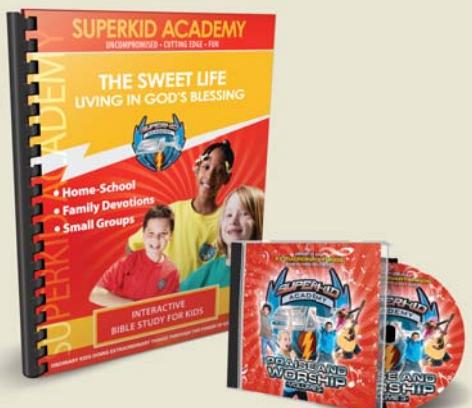
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HEAVEN'S FIERCEST TROOPS

Even the most secular among us has noticed that angels are a recognized feature of the Christmas Story. :: Perhaps one reason the world is so quick to accept angels during Christmas is that, in their thinking, angels fit in nicely with Santa, elves and other magical notions that seem appropriate to the season. But for the believer, anything in the Word is to be taken seriously.

The role these marvelous creatures have played in God's plan for man throughout history is both significant and dramatic. I mention history in the plan of God because God reveals the future in the patterns of the past. We can look at the Old Testament and see the picture of the first coming of the Lord, which includes everything from His birth to His ascension. We can look at the first coming and get an idea of the characteristics of the Second Coming. One of the more notable elements is angels.

Angels were hard at work from the onset of the first coming, appearing to John the Baptist's father, Zachariah, to Mary and to Joseph. It seems their primary role was to announce the will of God to these key players, and then move them in to it. Everything had been spoken through the prophets that needed to be spoken. The timing was right, the people were in place and the circumstances had come together. The only thing left was the faith-filled cooperation of these chosen vessels.

In Luke 1:5-22, we read how Gabriel appeared to Zachariah in the holy of holies, first quickly moving to arrest Zachariah's fear. There's no room for fear in such strategic spiritual times, because everything must go

exactly as ordered. God had done His part, and now it was Gabriel's job to see to it that everyone else did theirs.

Gabriel told Zachariah he had no reason to fear, because his prayers for a child had been heard. He proceeded to lay out the plan for John and how he was to be raised. But Zachariah clung to his fear and doubt, putting God's plan of redemption at risk. Aroused by such unbelief, Gabriel shut Zachariah's mouth so he couldn't thwart the plan.

Without such correction, Zachariah would not have seen the glory of God in his family and would have missed his eternal purpose.

At Work on Our Behalf

In these last days, we must be ever conscious of praying prayers that agree with the Word of God and then remain in faith, knowing the angels of God are at work, hastening them to come to pass (Psalm 103:20). We must also be aware that we can shut their work down with words filled with fear and unbelief.

When Gabriel appeared to Mary, her response was different than Zachariah's. Though she was "troubled" at the sight of God's messenger, Mary wasn't afraid. The Bible says

Zachariah was “troubled,” and that “fear fell upon him.” Rather than challenge the angel of the Lord, Mary sought understanding, which brought a different reaction from the angel. He not only announced God’s plan for her and her Son, but, because he saw the virtue of her faith, He provided insights on how it would come to pass and told her about God’s plan that was unfolding with her cousin Elizabeth.

Mary was quick to recognize the will of God and His messenger. She was not caught up by the spectacular nature of the encounter, but was inclined to seek understanding and was spiritually capable of handling Gabriel’s explanation.

As the coming of the Lord draws closer the glory of the Lord will increase. Those who follow religion as a form, as it seems Zachariah did, will have their spiritual shallowness exposed in the presence of the glory. Those who have inclined their heart to the Word, as Mary must have done, are the most likely to be able to comprehend and interpret spiritual matters (Proverbs 4:1, *The Amplified Bible*).

Joseph’s world was absolutely rocked by the revelation that Mary was pregnant. He was tender toward her and wanted to guard her reputation and put her away quietly (Matthew 1:18-25). It must have been his intent to marry someone as dedicated to obeying God as he was because, what seemed to be indiscretions on Mary’s part were a real problem for him.

Joseph’s fear of the Lord ran much deeper than a fear of society’s scorn. Had he been worried about what the synagogue would think of him, he would have publicly disowned Mary and made it clear what he thought of such behavior. But his concern regarding what others thought was for Mary. With tenderness, he considered the best plan to help her through her situation. Joseph’s posture of such honor revealed a man who could be trusted with guarding heaven’s Most Precious Gift. He *believed* the impossible had happened. He quietly accepted his role and pressed forward, assuming this most awesome responsibility without question or complaint.

Part of his reward was supernatural assistance all along the way. He had three

visitations of the angel of the Lord, as well as obvious angelic handiwork in protection and provision throughout his tenure as watchman over the young Messiah. Their instructions, followed by his obedience, kept the first family ahead of destruction.

Throughout the book of Proverbs, and especially in Chapters 2-4, we see that wisdom, understanding and honor for God result in riches and honor from God. It is an honor to have our eyes opened to the realm of the spirit. In these last days, as we honor God and His Word, we can expect to have an increase in angelic activity, both seen and unseen.

Perhaps the angels that visited the shepherds are the best known. And yet, their depiction is most unscriptural. Everyone is familiar with the Christmas-card version of angels in the sky—singing sweet melodies. *The Amplified Bible* gives a clear picture of reality. Luke 2:9 says, “Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord flashed and shone all about them, and they were terribly frightened.”

Well, I guess so! He had to assure them that he had good news.

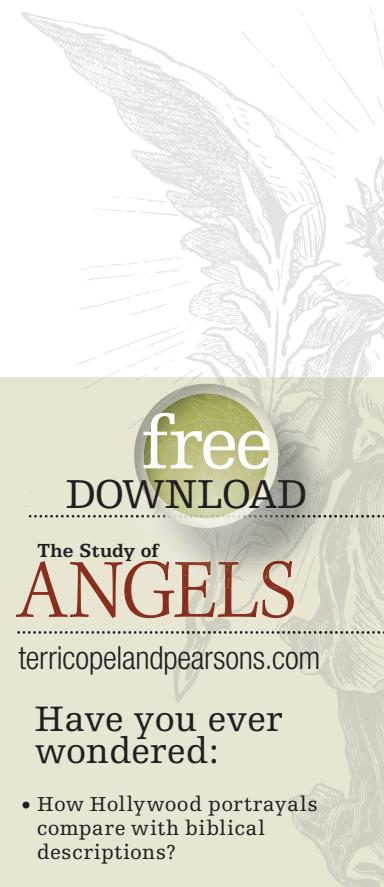
But it gets better in verse 13!

“Suddenly there appeared with the angel an army of the troops of heaven (a heavenly knighthood), praising God....”

It’s important to note the scripture never says they were in the sky or that they were singing. That may be nice on a Christmas card, but the fact is these were heaven’s fiercest troops, sent to watch over the first coming of the Lord. They were on duty, right here on the earth, assisting men in fulfilling the plan of God for the whole of mankind.

The angels at work among us today are just as fierce, just as purposeful and just as full of the glory as they watch over the Second Coming of the Lord. VICTORY

Terri Copeland Persons 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, PO Box 15, BATH, BA1 3XN, UK or visit terricopelandpersons.com.



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The Key to Leading a

Healthy Lifestyle



There are two vital components to great leadership. First, is the direction in which one is leading. Second, is the character in which one leads. :: Certainly we recognize the value of great leaders. We've witnessed their roles in history and we've been touched by those who have influenced our lives, both good and bad. I dare say that our awareness of the impact of leadership causes most of us to endeavor to be good leaders ourselves—at work and at home.

But what about our health, our lifestyles, our bodies? What about our children? Where are we going, and whose lead are we following?

It's obvious that most of us want to be healthier. We're spending countless billions of dollars on health and weight-loss products. It seems the demand and need for help in attaining a healthier lifestyle fuels a great deal of our economy. With more and more products flooding the market, we would expect to be making great strides toward better health. But in fact, obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other ailments are on the rise. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that nearly 33 percent of adults and 17 percent of children in the U.S. are considered obese.

My generation is touted to be the first generation whose children will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents, due to symptoms associated with a sedentary lifestyle and poor nutrition. We seem to be headed in the wrong direction, and it's easy to see why.

Food. It's everywhere we go. It's at work, school, the mall, the airport, the movies—even at church. I recently checked in to a hotel where a freshly baked platter of large chocolate chip cookies sat on the counter with a fan, blowing the tantalizing aroma directly into my face. Please!

Money. Suppliers giving us more because they are charging us a lot more. Our "small" sizes have become "large," just as we have. I think our great-grandparents would be astonished at the portion sizes today. Then there's that last-minute push, right before you pay, to save money by supersizing your order.

Exercise. We all know we should exercise to be healthier, but how much? And really, who's got time? We're too busy chauffeuring our kids, working late or just too tired to get off the couch. Maybe we hit the gym or the pavement for a month, then here come the interferences and hindrances in our lives and schedules and we quit. It's hard to stay committed.

Nutrition? Yes, we know. More fruits and vegetables, more fish, chicken and leaner beef. But it takes time and know-how to plan and prepare healthy meals. Fast food is so much easier!

Whose Lead Are We Following?

With all of these obstacles to overcome, how can we possibly lead a healthy lifestyle? The answer is found in Galatians 5:16-18 (*The Amplified Bible*):

But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by

the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God). For the desires of the flesh are opposed to the [Holy] Spirit, and the [desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh (godless human nature); for these are antagonistic to each other [continually withstanding and in conflict with each other], so that you are not free but are prevented from doing what you desire to do. But if you are guided (led) by the [Holy] Spirit, you are not subject to the Law.

When we are led by the Spirit, then we can do the things we truly need to do. We are not under the law, but under grace. That means we do our best to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in our eating and exercise habits—and He empowers us. If we occasionally miss it or we simply choose to eat a treat, we should do so without feeling shame or guilt. What matters most, is that we are consistent and faithful to follow His lead. We can totally trust that He is the One to follow toward a greater life and better health!

Make Spirit-Led Choices

Are your choices based on fleshly desires, or are they Spirit-led? Are you following human nature, or the leadership of the Holy Spirit? How do we follow the Holy Spirit in our eating?

First, we acknowledge the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. In John 14:16-17 (*AMP*), Jesus said, “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthening, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever—the Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive (welcome, take to its heart), because it does not see Him or know and recognize Him. But you know and recognize Him, for He lives with you [constantly] and will be in you.”

Notice how Jesus described the Holy Spirit as our Helper and Strengthening. In John 16:13 (*AMP*), He said: “But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all Truth (the whole, full Truth).”

We don’t have to rely on ourselves to gain victory in the area of living healthy. God desires that we look to Him for guidance. The Holy Spirit will help us and strengthen us!

Hebrews 5:14 says those who are mature in conforming to God’s will have, through practice, trained their senses to discern good and evil. This applies to our sense of taste. We honor God’s leading when we eat what He says is good to eat. As we grow in the knowledge of the truth of God’s Word, we gain the ability to discern good from evil.

Now that we have looked at this from a spiritual aspect, let’s look at what God says we should do in the natural. In Genesis 1:29, God says that grains, nuts, fruits and

vegetables are good to eat. After the Flood, God said we could eat meat (fish, chicken, beef). Science has confirmed the truth of God’s Word, because it says eating these foods can keep you healthy. Furthermore, research confirms that if you consistently make healthier food choices you will change your sense of taste and come to prefer healthier foods. But let me add a caution: Stay away from junk food while you are retraining your sense of taste. You can do it with the power of God’s Word and the help of the Holy Spirit!

God desires you to know the fullness of His power and love for you. He doesn’t want you just to hear about His goodness; He wants you to experience it. Within His love resides the power to change your life and the character it takes to stay committed to those changes.

If you’ll make a decision to trust God and His Word, your life, your health and your body will never be the same again! **VICTORY**

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Speaker Schedule*

Thursday

7:00 pm | Kenneth Copeland

Friday

9:00 am | Kenneth Copeland

2:00 pm | Gloria Copeland

7:00 pm | Kenneth Copeland

Saturday

9:30 am | Gloria Copeland

Healing School

6:30 pm | Kenneth Copeland

* Schedule is subject to change

2012

Branson Victory Campaign: March 8-10

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



Europe Victory Campaign: May 10-12

Excel Centre | One Western Gateway | Royal Victoria Dock | London E16 1XL

Living Victory West Coast Faith Encounter: TBD

Hilton Anaheim | 777 W. Convention Way | Anaheim, CA 92802

Living Victory Pacific Rim Faith Encounter: June 15-16

Word of Life Church | 544 Queen St. | Honolulu, HI 96813

Southwest Believers' Convention: July 2-7

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

Great Lakes Victory Campaign: August 9-11

U.S. Cellular Arena | 400 W. Kilbourn Ave. | Milwaukee, WI 53203

Living Victory East Coast Faith Encounter: September 14-15

Hilton Orlando | 6001 Destination Parkway | Orlando, FL 32819

Word Explosion: October 11-13

Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center | 1101 Lincoln St. | Columbia, SC 29201

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

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Boomerang Church: Dec. 1-4, 2011
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704-982-1515 | BoomerangChurch.org

Glory House of Prayer: Dec. 9-11, 2011
1869 Central Ave. | Albany, NY 12205
518-986-6755 | gloryhouseofprayer.org

Join Kenneth and/or Gloria at:

2012 World Conference: January 4
(Morris Cerullo World Evangelism)
Gaylord Opryland Resort | 2800 Opryland Drive
Nashville, TN 37214 | 615-889-1000 | mcwe.com

United Theological Seminary: January 23, 2012
University of Dayton Arena | 1801 S. Edwin Moses Blvd.
Dayton, OH 45408 | united.edu

Join Dr. Stephen and/or Kellie Swisher at:

Covenant Connections Church: December 3-4, 2011
5818 Atlanta Highway | Flowery Branch, GA 30542
770-965-6055 | covenantconnectionschurch.com

Grace Festival Crusade: February 15-18, 2012
Ambon, Indonesia | Contact: World Impact Ministries
P.O. Box 968 | St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 6Z4 | Canada
905-346-4828 | peteryoungren.org

New Creation Fellowship: February 26, 2012
3325 Genesee St. | Buffalo, NY 14255
716-631-8595 | ncfcny.org

Victory Christian Center's Women's Conference: March 2-4, 2012
Victory Christian Center | 11520 Ellerslie Road SW
Edmonton, Alberta T6W 1A2 | Canada
(Please contact church to register.) | 780-988-5433 | vcc.org

Kern Christian Center: March 24-25, 2012
4701 Gosford Road | Bakersfield, CA 93313
661-664-1000 | kernchristiancenter.org

New Life Family Church: April 1, 2012
202 S. Gilbert Road | Gilbert, AZ 85296
480-456-9200 | newlifeaz.cc

Brand New Life Christian Church: April 15, 2012
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714-974-7031 | brandnewlifechurch.com

Glory House of Prayer: April 21-22, 2012
1869 Central Ave. | Albany, NY 12205
518-986-6755 | gloryhouseofprayer.org

Living Word Bible Church: May 9-10, 2012
3520 E. Brown Road | Mesa, AZ 85213
480-964-4463 | livingwordonline.org

Word of His Power Faith Christian Centre: July 21-22, 2012
108-4053 Meadowbrook Drive | London, Ontario N6L 1E8 | Canada
519-709-2167 | wohp.org

Hope and Healing Christian Church: August 12, 2012 (Visit their website or call for details.)
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635 | 520-417-2468
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Tony Orlando Salute to Veterans: November 11, 2012
The Welk Theatre | 1984 State Highway 165 | Branson, MO 65616
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What Can I Do for You?

“Jesus is the reason for the season.” :: I’m sure most everyone has heard that saying. And for those who are believers, they recognize how true it is when it comes to celebrating Christmas. :: But for many, as Christmas approaches, there are two other thoughts that seem to be more prevalent than the birth of Jesus Christ. Whether they realize it or not, many people’s thoughts go immediately to the giving and receiving of gifts. Thing is, they are really more concerned about what they will receive than what they can give to others.

We’re all familiar with John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Jesus was God’s gift to all mankind. Sadly, many don’t acknowledge the importance of that gift—how Jesus is the Source for everything we need. Instead of desiring to bless others and ask, “What can I do for you?” their mentality is, “What can you do for me?”

The Power of Giving

Growing up, giving was as much a part of life for my family as learning to live by faith. My parents looked for and took advantage of every opportunity to sow into God’s kingdom or bless others. And they taught us to do the same.

As a result, giving is a major part of life for me and my wife, Marty. Over the years, we have sown a lot of seed, believing God for different things. And God has always been faithful and blessed us. He has brought us to a place now where we are financially comfortable. We know the joy of receiving. But through all God has blessed us with, I can truly say Marty and I get more joy out of giving and seeing God bless others.

Giving is part of God’s will for every believer, and a way to prosper. Luke 6:38 in the *New Living Translation* says, “Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

When God tells you to give to someone, it’s not to take something away from you. He’s telling you to give so He can get something *to* you. He says, “Give, and you will receive.”

Does that mean we should always give expecting something

in return? Not at all! We should give because we desire to, and because we enjoy doing it (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Bottom line is, your giving is determined by whom you see as your source. If you try to figure out how your needs will be met before you give, then your trust is clearly not in God. But if you’re a believer, you recognize God is your *only* Source. So you can give, not out of concern for what you’ll get in return, but out of love and compassion. You’ll give cheerfully, to bless others.

Recognizing the Seasons

We live in a world of cycles and seasons. The Bible confirms that in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8:

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace (*New Living Translation*).

From that scripture, it’s easy to understand why we deal with so much change. It’s inevitable that there are going to be seasons of plenty and seasons of famine. We can expect good times and bad. That’s just the nature of this world. It’s what has been described in the Bible as the life-and-death cycle.

What if...

Thankfully, the Bible tells us in Romans 8:2, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made [us] free from the law of sin and death.” That means, as born-again believers, we don’t have to identify with the *death* part of that cycle anymore. Instead, we get to live our lives walking in the *life* cycle of God.

If we are faithful, God can and will work in our lives no matter what’s happening around us. How do we remain faithful to His calling and stay in the life cycle?

One way is to stay focused on God, especially during the good times. It’s human nature to become complacent when things are going well and there are no problems. In times like that, we may not be as motivated to pray and spend time in the Word.

When times are tough, we’re more likely to get serious about the things of God. We feel more need to dig into the Word. We begin to prepare for the future instead of living just for the moment. In desperation we cry out, “God, what do You want me to do?”

When we’re in a cycle of good times, it’s because of the seeds we planted yesterday. When we’re in tough times, it’s also from the seeds we planted, or didn’t plant, yesterday. We should be able to level out the ups and downs by preparing spiritually for the next cycle.

The truth is, as Christians, there really should be no bad or tough times. That’s because we are always blessed. We should not be affected by what’s going on in the world. People watching us should see something so different that they look *to us* for answers—not the world!

Remember the story of Joseph? Although he was well acquainted with hard times—sold into slavery by jealous brothers and unjustly thrown into prison—his life was blessed. No matter what happened to him, he came out on top. Why? Because he stayed true to God, served others well and didn’t complain. In one instance, God gave Joseph the interpretation of a dream revealing that a cycle of plenty was coming and then a famine would follow. Joseph managed the resources of the nation so they were prepared for the famine. Many lives were saved, and Joseph prospered personally as well.

God will show us things to come if we will remain sensitive to Him. He can tell us about an upcoming real-estate crash or boom, or show us when to sell property and when not to sell. He can point out a person in need and tell us how much to give, or when and where to give so we can not only be a blessing to others, but so we can prosper.

Don’t you want to be blessed so you can bless others? I know I do, and I will. And so will you.

Just because some are struggling in this “recession” our nation is facing, doesn’t mean they’re stuck. Believers have a choice! We can choose to participate in the recession and miss out on what God has for us, or we can choose to believe the report of the Lord and walk in His BLESSING.

This is only a season, and for many it is about to change.

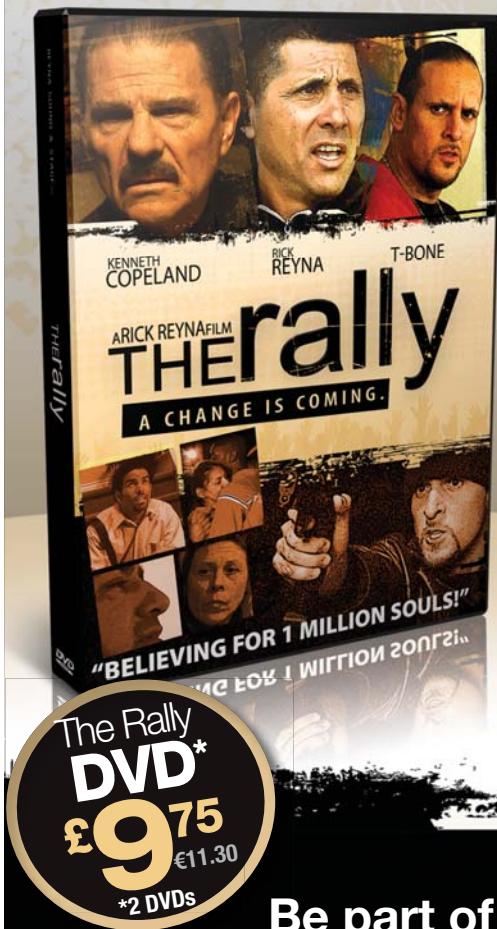
Make a quality decision today to seek God and obey Him. No matter how things look, don’t let your mouth work against you by speaking negative words. Instead, speak the Word over your life. Continue to give, sowing toward the next cycle, and be thankful to the Lord for the good things you have.

As you do these things and keep pressing on in faith, your situation will begin to change. Not only will you find yourself walking and living in The BLESSING, but more and more you’ll find yourself asking others, “What can I do for you?”**VICTORY**

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

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BY DR. STEPHEN & KELLIE SWISHER

The Christmas Covenant

THE DIFFERENCE A CHILD MAKES

The excitement

OF HAVING A CHILD IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT INTO WORDS. :: FROM THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT, A CRESCENDO OF EMOTIONS SURROUNDS THE PARENTS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE EXPECTANT COUPLE. ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE TAKES ON NEW MEANING. THE PARENTS-TO-BE, DESIRING THE VERY BEST FOR THEIR LITTLE ONE, OFTEN EXPERIENCE MIXED EMOTIONS—JOY, HOPE, CONCERN—at the prospect of the new responsibilities and the changes that will be made to welcome and care for this special blessing from God.

Whether you're a parent, or the relative or friend of one, you know what we're describing. So with this in mind, let's take a look at the Gospel of Luke. From the first few lines of this passage we hear about the birth of two children who are destined to change everything—John, the son of Elizabeth and Zacharias; and Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph. These cousins impacted

the world then, and have had a major impact on all of humanity ever since.

Just look at how their births were announced, beginning with John:

Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you



shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord.... He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord" (Luke 1:13-16, *New King James Version*).

Now, look at what the Scripture said about the birth of Jesus in Luke 1:30-33:

Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (*NKJV*).

Notice each announcement began with the reminder not to be afraid.

Both children and their parents have pivotal roles to play in the celebration of Christmas. John was called to "prepare the way" for the Christ Child, and Jesus to fulfill His role as the Prince of Peace, King of kings and Lord of lords. The dynamic reality and result of this timeless truth was presented as prophecy in Isaiah 11:6: "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them" (*New International Version*).

A Promise Fulfilled

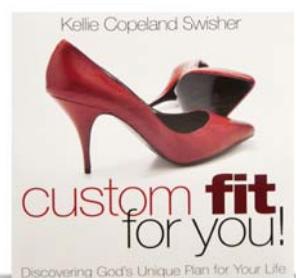
Kellie and I understand the excitement a child brings as we prepare to celebrate our first Christmas with our 11-month-old Emily JeanAnn Swisher who was born Jan. 8, of this year. A few months ago, she was baptized and dedicated during the Southwest Believers' Convention by both sets of her grandparents, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, and Lowell and Barbara Swisher. Her sisters, brother, aunts, uncles, cousins and several thousand KCM Partners participated in person and many thousands more were a part as the service was broadcast live across America and around the world.

During that ceremony, as her parents and family, we pledged to teach Emily about Jesus Christ and the Word of God until the day she makes this public commitment for herself. The ceremony is an outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace—God's covenant established and sealed in a human life.

In the Bible, the words *baptism* and *communion* are interchangeable with the word *covenant*. This covenant, also described as prevenient grace, says that before we even knew who God was, before we had the revelation of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, God was already reaching out to us and beckoning us to follow Him. We see this truth clearly in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Although this covenant was operative through God's promise to Abraham and his descendants in the Old Testament, it was ratified and came to full fruition through the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this Christmas covenant is yours and mine through the unconditional love of Jesus Himself. This love first dawned on humanity in the form of a little baby. It isn't surprising then, that Jesus spoke the words, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children" (Matthew 19:14, *New Living Translation*).

The faith heritage that Emily has deep within her can impact the world by communicating this most basic and yet misunderstood truth: As we confess that Jesus is Lord, this one commonality bridges denominational gaps and brings people of all backgrounds and faith traditions together. That's really what the Christmas



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covenant is all about...simple, childlike, yet eternally life-changing.

John the Baptist carried on the majority of his ministry within earshot of the New Testament village of Jericho. Soon, throngs of people from the mountains of Judea, Samaria and beyond the Jordan came to hear him preach. John encouraged them to believe in God. Romans, Jews, Samaritans, women and children—John accepted them all into a symbolic act of baptism and preparation for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. A common practice among kings in ancient times was to send forth a scout to ensure the road was safe, clear and prepared before their journey. This was John's task, only the road he made ready was the hearts and minds of people. He was, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight" (Matthew 3:3, NKJV).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, a remote corner of the world where Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David roamed the hillsides. Joseph and Mary named him Joshua, meaning "God Saves." But the world would come to know Him by His Greek name, "Jesus." He was immediately accepted as King by wise men and shepherds alike. Although there was one man who was not happy about a baby born to be King. That man was the ruthless Herod. For one who acquired possession of the kingdom by political ingenuity, daring military campaigns and murderous persecution, this birth of a new king was not easy to accept. Before, when his throne was threatened, Herod put to death anyone he remotely suspected, including many of his in-laws, one of his wives and four of his sons.

Now he attempted trickery to enlist the help of the three wise men, saying he also wanted to worship the child, while hiding in his heart his intention of killing the infant. Herod's plan was exposed to Joseph, Mary and the wise men by messengers sent from God. The wise men returned home by a different route, while Mary, Joseph and Jesus found safety in Egypt. The proximity of Bethlehem to Herod's

palace vividly illustrates the difference between Herod's cruel, heartless kingdom and the spiritual, life-giving kingdom of love led by Jesus. Herod may have been king by might, but Jesus was, and is, definitely King by right. Born the Son of God, His divine birthright gave Him the authority and the power to establish God's kingdom forever.

Now that Jesus the Messiah has come, our responsibility is much the same as John's: to prepare the hearts of people of all ages, everywhere for the good news of Jesus Christ. We are messengers called to present the Christmas covenant where we are, with whomever we meet, and with what we have. Like those ancestors of faith before us, we can encourage others to believe in God. Our lives can and should be a living testimony of God's unconditional love and joy announcing the good news of the kingdom that Jesus Christ has come!

Allow the excitement of this season to engulf you with the power to be, with laser-like precision, exactly what God has called you to be. Remember the words, "Without God, you can't—without you, God won't." As a disciple of Jesus, you have a covenant. Now is the time to rise up and take your place with faith and action.

Merry Christmas from our family to yours! We look forward to seeing you in the days ahead somewhere across America or around the world as we partner in ministry together. Blessings to you!
VICTORY

Salvation Prayer

If you do not know

JESUS

as your Saviour 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 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 #K0602, tick the circle on the order form that comes with this magazine or call +44 (0)1225 787310.

Dr. Stephen and Kellie Swisher are ordained ministers of the gospel who minister at churches, conferences and conventions around the globe. Kellie Copeland Swisher is an executive at Kenneth Copeland Ministries, where she manages several departments alongside her husband. Known as Commander Kellie, her Superkid curriculum is being used in over 1,000 churches worldwide. Dr. Swisher served as a senior pastor for more than 15 years, pastoring churches ranging in size from 100 to over 6,000 members. He leads several departments at KCM, including Ministerial and Partner Relations, and Public Relations. He also directs the Kenneth Copeland Scholars Doctoral Degree program in partnership with United Theological Seminary.

Lift Up and Look From

BY JEREMY PEARSONS

If I were to ask you about your life, you'd likely tell me all about yourself—where you live and work, what you have or don't have, what you wish you had and so on. It's easy to talk about life as it is, but what about the future? Wouldn't it be great if you could talk about your future with the same certainty as the present?

In Genesis 13:14, God told Abram to lift up his eyes and look from the place where he was. It's a simple instruction, but opposite of the way most people live. Instead of lifting up and looking from, most people look down...at where they are.

It's easy to have your vision limited by what you see going on. The drama life tends to cultivate can be very distracting, demanding your constant attention. But you don't have to live addicted to the drama. It's possible to look beyond your current situation into the future God has for you.

How do you get from here to there? Walk by faith.

Too often we think faith is dealing with the unknown, but it really has more to do with the unseen. Your future is not unknown, it's merely unseen. You may not know all the natural details that make up your destination, but you do know God's plans for you are good and not evil (Jeremiah 29:11). You know He who has begun a good work in you is faithful to complete it (Philippians 1:6) and you know God gives you the victory through your Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57).

A Simple Step of Faith

Actually, you know more about your future than you think you do. So, it's time to start walking.

Walking by faith is simple—it's one step at a time. Each step is preparation for the next. If you try to skip a step, you'll lack the proper foundation for the step that follows. If you are where you are, following the leading of the Spirit, you're there because your future needs you to be there, laying the right foundation for what's ahead.

Often, people hear a message like this and start making advances toward their future, but the common mistake is that they start without direction, trying to see if it's God. If that's you: *Slow down, cowboy!* You don't want to head in just *any* direction. You want to be on the right path—God's path.

My wife, Sarah, and I recently spent a month before the Lord, just listening—seeking His path and direction for our lives and ministry in 2012. It's easy to come up with cool ideas, projects and endeavors. But we can't afford to set out on a path we charted ourselves. When I'm on my own path, then I am my own source. Psalm 65:11 says, "You crown the year with Your goodness, and Your paths drip with abundance" (*New King James Version*). So, right now I've got my eyes up and I'm looking

into my future. And in front of me I see a path that starts on Jan. 1, 2012, and goes through December.

We're going to stay on that path—His path—all year long. We're going to go where He says go, do what He says do and say what He says to say. We are convinced that if we take one step of faith at a time along *His* path, we will never run short or run out, because His path drips with abundance.

God is able to finance whatever He has called you to do, and He will. If you want to do your own thing, you'll have to pay for it yourself. You'll never experience God's abundance, and the joy that comes with it, if you don't look beyond where you're standing.

Lift up and look from. Lift up your eyes and look from where you are into the brilliant future God has for you.

He gave Abram a glimpse of his future, and He'll do the same for you. Close your eyes and ask Him to open the eyes of your heart and show you things unseen—things eternal. You can be confident that the mercy, grace and love of God are in your future right now—just waiting for you.

You're going to make it. And you're going to be all He's called you to be. But it requires you to live and walk by faith, and living by faith is learning to see with your eyes closed. Keep looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. He began a good thing in you and He will see you through to the end. VICTORY

From a rich heritage of faith, Jeremy Pearson ministers the uncompromised Word of God to congregations at home and around the world. He and his wife, Sarah, founded *Pearson Ministries International*. For information on their ministry and its outreach visit pearsonministries.com.



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REAL PEOPLE. REAL NEEDS. REAL VICTORIES.

GoodNewsGazette

Built Mother's House Debt Free!

I thank God for making it possible for me to build this house for my mother without owing a single cent to anyone. I paid the builder and carpenter cash. In 2009 and 2010, I phoned Kenneth Copeland Ministries in South Africa to ask for prayer regarding the building of this house. The house is complete. I am the breadwinner in the family, but I managed to build the house through the blessing from God. When I started to work, we had only a three-room house and my plan was to build the decent house for my mother, which I managed through the prayer from your ministry. May KCM continue to be the river of blessing to our lives.

M.M. :: South Africa

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

'My Dream Is to Minister to Women in Prison'

Praise the Lord! I want to thank Kenneth Copeland Ministries as I received so much support and reading material while I was incarcerated in North Carolina. I know firsthand how much this ministry does for prisoners, because I was one of them more than once. I was saved in prison. I remember the words of the song that was playing that day: “This is the air I breathe.... I'm lost without You....” I remember the hole in my heart and the emptiness I felt until the day I accepted Christ.

Now, three years later, I live a normal Christ-filled life in Florida. I am alcohol, drug and nicotine free. I work in a large sales office in Boca Raton, as a compliance/quality assurance agent, overseeing 400 sales agents. I am beautiful, my eyes shine bright with the love of Christ, my face glows—I am a new creation. I am being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, as I desire to serve the Lord with every fiber of my being. I know the Lord will use me to further His kingdom. I want other women and men to know the love of Jesus. My dream is to minister to women in prison. The time is now! I believe I am chosen to serve Jesus. I am healthy, vibrant, compassionate and ready to serve anywhere the Lord calls me.

J.P. :: Delray Beach, Fla.

Family Untouched by Massive Tornado

April 27, 2011, an F5 tornado destroyed the little town I grew up in, Hackleburg, Ala. My son, mother and uncle still live there, and my daughter lives just a few miles away. Earlier that morning, when my husband and I heard that the storms were coming to Alabama, we both (separately and unbeknownst to the other) began to pray for God to spare our family there, personally and property-wise. Our son is a firefighter/EMT in Hackleburg, and was in the fire station/jail when it took a direct hit from the massive tornado. He survived without a scratch, as did everyone in the building. Fifteen people crowded into a single jail cell, and all survived. Our son's truck was parked behind the building, and it survived without even having glass broken out. The homes of all my family passed through the storm completely intact. Thank you for teaching me that I do have dominion over storms, through the power of God that is in me. It helped save my family's lives that day.

Heidi Hislope :: Berea, Ky.

Prodigal Daughter Returns

We requested prayer for our daughter who was homeless in Kitchener, Ontario, and living with a woman. She was a lesbian for two years and on a lot of drugs. But thank God she is set free! She moved home April 2011 and gave her life to Jesus Christ. Thank God for answering our prayers. I give Jesus all the thanks and praise and glory. Thank You, Jesus!

T.G. :: Canada

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GLORIA COPELAND

Jesus Loves Me, This I Know

I was sexually abused by a relative from the time I was 4, then again by the first boy I dated. My life has been riddled with fear and shame. Today is the first time I've ever spoken of it.

I was listening to a teaching by Brother Copeland when he said, "Get the fear out and you will receive your healing."

Today, I believed if I'd confess the fear I would be free. My sister gave me the CD *Be Loved*. As Brother Copeland sang "Jesus Loves Me," I was filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in tongues. This song is so significant for me—when I was 4 years old, scared and hurting, I would sing this song. I am so thankful for KCM and I have new hope to walk in faith, free from fear.

K.G. :: Missouri

Family Members Saved

Thank you for being in agreement that my parents' marriage and the marriages of all my relatives are strengthened. They are blessed now! All of my family members are now saved. Praise God.

P.M. :: Canada

Dad Is in Heaven With Jesus

Thank you, KCM prayer line! I called daily for prayer as my family walked my dad through lymphoma cancer. When my sister visited, Dad fainted and stopped breathing. She held him in her arms praying, "Jesus, have mercy." After two minutes, Jesus brought him back. We were very grateful, as we were unsure of Dad's salvation. And it was a testimony to my stepmom as well.

One day she needed a miracle—she fell on her face and hit a rock in the garden while waiting for a delivery. The deliverymen were to come between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. They drove up just as she fell and were there to help her up, call 911 and wait with her for the paramedics. Dad was already hospitalized when this happened, and she was then unable to drive. Neighbors and family assisted and Jesus arranged for one person to arrive as another left.

Every need—in health, driving to the hospital, at home, hospice and caring for Dad—was always met in the midst of my dad and stepmom's physical challenges. The greatest miracle was in my dad's passing. Jesus gave me a vision of Him holding my dad in His arms, then turning to walk toward heaven, confirming his salvation. My stepmom sang "In the Garden" and my sister sang "Amazing Grace" as Dad passed into Jesus' arms. How precious and loving is our Savior! And one day we will walk hand in hand in the gardens of heaven, laughing, singing, picking roses and wildflowers (Dad's favorite).

Nancy Watson :: Alabama



God Restores Double

God is restoring double in my life—a new beginning. Thank you, KCM, for partnership, for your prayers and for always being there. A bondage has been broken in my life and there is no more oppression.

M.J. :: Minnesota

Agreement in Prayer Gets Results

My family and I would just like to say a big thank you for your prayer department at KCM. Whenever we have a situation that needs prayer we send an email and ask the team to pray and be in agreement with us.

Over the last year we have had numerous urgent situations when we emailed KCM and they immediately got in agreement with us for what we were believing. We had no place to [sleep] and the Lord provided for us free accommodations. We had no money for a flight to Japan (we are missionaries in Japan) and the money came, and much more. It's such a joy to know that on the other end of the line is a pray-er with no doubt! We urge anyone who has a need to get in agreement with KCM! Praise God the Word always works.

M. & S.A. :: United Kingdom



Authority Over Pain

I had been suffering with pain in my right hand. At times it would go away and then return, but last night it came back with a vengeance. I could not go to sleep. I got up and took authority over the pain in the Name of Jesus. It disappeared and I went to sleep. I woke up with no pain in my right arm, and was able to go to work rejoicing. Praise God, and thank you, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, for helping me believe the Word and not focus on the problem.



Lamatha Fray :: Canada

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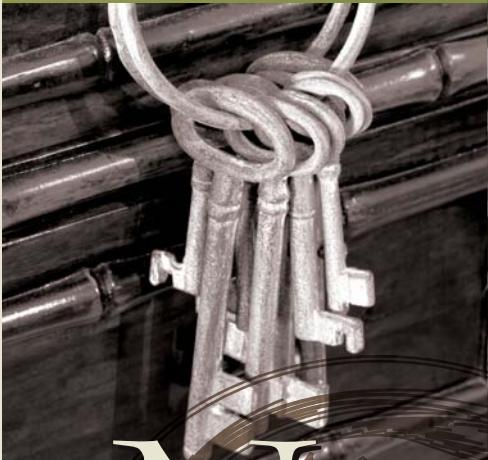
Preparation Pays

My wife was pregnant and having a really hard time. It looked like our son would not be born alive. I was prepared for this crisis because I received teaching from Brother Copeland that gave me the knowledge and confidence in my authority as a believer to bring healing to my wife and our now-grown, 27-year-old son.

R.B. :: South Carolina



G God said I could have what I said, and hatred couldn't stay in the face of those words!



NO SECRET

NINE-YEAR-OLD VIKKI CHAVEZ FURROWED HER BROWS IN DEEP CONCENTRATION AS HER MOTHER PLAYED THE ORGAN AND SANG A HYMN. THE WORDS STRUCK A DEEP CHORD IN THE CHILD'S SOUL, LIKE A SERMON THAT BURST FROM THE PAGES OF THE BIBLE AND SPRANG TO LIFE. :: "IT IS NO SECRET WHAT GOD CAN DO," HER MOTHER SANG, STRUGGLING TO FIND THE RIGHT KEYS. "WHAT HE'S DONE FOR OTHERS, HE'LL DO FOR YOU. WITH ARMS WIDE OPEN, HE'LL PARDON YOU."

God can do anything! Didn't that mean that if she opened her arms wide and prayed with all her heart God would answer?

Slipping out of the house, Vikki stood alone in the backyard. Opening her arms wide to God, she prayed

the most fervent prayer a child had ever prayed.

"God...please kill me."

With a sigh of relief, she slipped back inside. Standing in front of a mirror she looked at black, swollen eyes and drawn, pale face. Her hair, stick straight,

had always infuriated her mother. Once when she was brushing it, she'd slapped Vikki over and over, as if to punish the child for her awful hair.

Hearing a scream of rage, Vikki locked the bathroom door and sat on the side of the bathtub. Now that she'd asked God to kill her, she felt overwhelmed with relief. She didn't know much about heaven and certainly didn't want to go to hell. But even if she did, so what? She'd already been living in it for nine years.

Death was her only hope. There was no other way out. Her older sister had already proven it. After running away from home, she'd gone to the police and told them all about her mother's rage and the endless beatings, and about her father being an alcoholic. Even drunk, he'd never hit a woman. He had a rule about that. Kids, well, that was different.

But it wasn't his fault, Vikki thought. Her mother's rage worked him into a frenzy. It was her fault. All of it!

The police had done nothing. They'd brought her sister home, choosing instead to look the other way. Just like the neighbors who listened to their screams. And the teachers who pretended not to notice the black eyes and bruises.

God wouldn't look the other way. He'd kill her and get her out of her misery. She was sure of it.

Months later, Vikki stared at the ceiling above her bed and realized God had decided to look the other way, too. Her neighbors wouldn't help. Her teachers wouldn't help. The police wouldn't help. Now, God won't help.

Without hope, Vikki felt as though she'd slipped into a quagmire of depression. Like being in quicksand, she felt as though she were buried alive. She'd thought about killing herself. There were guns in the house and she knew how to use them. But suicide was a mortal sin. Vikki's family weren't good Catholics, only going to Mass on Easter and Christmas, but even she knew you couldn't get away with killing yourself.

When her father had been diagnosed with cancer, Vikki shuddered at a sudden thought. What would happen to them if he died? Her father might have been a violent alcoholic, but he was the only restraining force in the family.

She had to pray. This time she didn't open her arms wide to God and plead. She was a teenager; her prayer was short and terse.

"I'm not going on pretending. If You're God, heal my dad."

A year later, her face set in hard lines, Vikki watched clods of dirt shatter against her dad's casket. The future looked as bleak as black-shrouded mourners, pretenders who looked the other way. This was the final injustice. It wasn't right. She wanted to be in that cold, hard casket. Tears streamed down her face.

Why didn't You kill me?

Numbing the Pain

"I was devastated when my dad died," Vikki remembers. "A friend helped ease my pain with marijuana, mescaline

and angel dust. When I was at the beach one day, a group of young people got off a bus and witnessed to me. A young woman named Sherry Griffith told me about Jesus. I was so furious I wept and said, 'I hate God!'

"Sometime later, Sherry sent me a copy of *Good News for Modern Man*, but I didn't read it. As Catholics we'd been told that reading the Bible would make you crazy. I figured my family was crazy enough. I couldn't risk it."

After her father's death, Vikki's mother's rage escalated. Simmering with her own rage now, Vikki grabbed her mother by the neck and choked her. *I'm ending this!*

"Stop!" Vikki's younger brother yelled, yanking her away.

"Traitor!" Vikki hissed.

Turning to her mother, eyes hard and flat, Vikki said, "You beat me for the past 16 years. I'll beat you for the next 16."

Fear chilled the features of her mother's beautiful face. Something warm unfurled in Vikki's chest. Pure pleasure. Her mother would never hit her again, of that she was certain.

A New Direction

"After I graduated from high school, I got a job and after work each day I hung out with friends and used drugs. Then one day out of the blue, Gary—a drug-addicted guy I'd dated in high school—came from Seattle to tell me he'd become a Christian and was sober.

"Gary suggested I come visit him for a while, so I took a leave of absence from work and headed for Seattle. When I got there, I found out Gary had a group of friends who didn't work but spent all day reading the Bible. So for the first time in my life I read it too."

Every day for two weeks Vikki pored over the pages of the Bible. There she encountered a God so good that He would never kill a 9-year-old girl, even if she begged. On those pages she encountered Jesus—and loved Him. She believed Him. She embraced Him.

Vikki didn't know anything about being saved or born again. She'd never been exposed to those terms. All she knew was that she went to Seattle one way, and after two weeks, returned home a different person. She overheard her mother say, "Vikki has changed!"

"When I left Seattle, Gary warned me that the Holy Spirit didn't reside in Los Angeles or in any church," Vikki recalls. "I took the warning to heart and stayed away from church. Much later I learned that the group I'd stayed with in Seattle had been a famous cult called The Children of God. But that didn't change the fact that God had revealed Himself to me in the pages of the Bible."

"After being home for several months I asked the Lord to bring me Christian friends. God brought Jeff, a friend from high school, across my path. Jeff was now a Christian, and he invited me to church. I explained that the Holy Spirit didn't go to church. He laughed and assured me that I'd been misinformed."

Lives Intersecting

Sitting in the congregation, Dennis Burke looked up and watched as Vikki stepped into the sanctuary. He didn't recognize her, and had no idea they had attended the same high school.

Their paths had been anything but parallel. When Vikki had been 9 years old, she had begged God to kill her. When Dennis was 9, his family attended a Billy Graham crusade and Dennis had responded to the call to make Jesus the Lord of his life. The next evening, his dad had done the same.

While Vikki toyed with the idea of suicide, 10-year-old Dennis had explained to his mother that he would become a minister. By the time he was 12, however, Dennis' world had begun to shake. The war in Vietnam created waves of unrest in the nation. Even the foundation of his family seemed to be shifting. Most of his friends smoked marijuana, and Dennis experimented with it too.

Discerning the situation, Dennis' dad warned him: "Don't smoke pot. If you do, someday you'll attend a party and be offered heroin. If you take it, it will wreck your life."

The next summer Dennis' dad committed suicide.

A tsunami of grief overwhelmed the 13-year-old boy. The pain was so intolerable he stuffed it into the deepest closet of his soul, refusing to talk about his father's death.

Dark Years

"From age 13 to 17 were dark years," Dennis remembers. "I stayed stoned. It was the era of the hippie, which included a whole philosophy that I didn't buy, but I had long hair, rode a Harley, did drugs and surfed."

"The Jesus Movement was picking up momentum and kids in my school were getting saved, but not those in my crowd. When I was 17, I went to a party and some of the guys left to get cocaine, but came back with heroin. I'd never touched heroin until that night."

"I woke the next morning with one thing on my mind. I wanted more heroin, *now*. I remembered my dad's warning and knew I was at a crossroads. My friend and I agreed to stop using drugs, but a week later he showed up with a new stash of hashish. I realized I not only had to give up drugs, I had to give up my friends."

Determined to change the direction of his life, Dennis found a church, and on May 30, 1971, he was baptized in water. That evening he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke with new tongues. He had no idea he'd met his destiny when Vikki stepped into the sanctuary.

Learning street evangelism, Dennis, Vikki, Jeff and other young people spent a lot of time witnessing on the streets, in the malls and at the beach. The church started a coffee house called The Trust Company. Every Friday and Saturday they hit the streets, inviting people to the coffee house. New bands from Maranatha music played and

hundreds of kids were born again during altar calls.

Vikki, however, still carried within her a dark secret. She still hated her mother.

That hadn't changed when she became born again or when she was filled with the Spirit. She felt powerless over the rage that simmered. But God had a plan. Every time she drove her car alone, the voice of the Lord whispered, *Say, "I love my mother."*

At the time, Vikki had never heard anyone preach about the power of confession. She had never studied Mark 11:23. She didn't think her words made any difference one way or another. Baffled by the Holy Spirit's leading, she responded by reminding Him of her long-held feelings.

"*I hate my mother!*" she said.

After weeks of hearing the same instructions, Vikki finally gave in. "All right! I'll say it! I love my mother! But I really hate her!"

Say you love your mother.

God was so insistent that she gave up and said, "I love my mother."

"The Lord made me say that over and over," Vikki explains. "Finally one day I said it and the love of God flooded my heart for my mother! *I loved her!* What a miracle! *God said I could have what I said, and hatred couldn't stay in the face of those words!*"

In an instant, the rage that had simmered in Vikki's life was gone.

The Word of Faith

In July 1971, a friend of Dennis' attended a Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International meeting in Denver, Colo., where he heard Kenneth Copeland speak. In the lobby, Gloria Copeland handed him a brochure and he came home with all of Brother Copeland's teachings on reel-to-reel tapes.

"We held home meetings and played those tapes, and we prayed for people," Dennis remembers. "We started seeing miracles. In 1972, I attended a retreat and heard Kenneth Copeland again. I still remember the message: 'God: Feeling or Faith?' That message changed my life. The same year a group of us went to the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship World Convention in San Francisco and heard Brother Copeland every day. Afterward, we traveled wherever we could to hear him."

On June 23, 1973, Dennis and Vikki married. Soon after the wedding, Kenneth Copeland held a 17-day meeting in Fort Worth, Texas. Determined to go, Dennis and Vikki asked for time off from work. When neither request was granted, they quit their jobs. They wrote Kenneth Copeland and told him they were coming.

Borrowing a motor home, they drove to Fort Worth. In the first meeting, Jerry Savelle asked everyone from out of

state to stand. Sitting on the first row, Dennis and Vikki stood and introduced themselves.

"That's the honeymoon couple!" Brother Copeland shouted.

The next day, Gloria's mother, Mary Neece, introduced herself and invited the couple to park their motor home in her backyard.

"Mary became our Midwest mama," Vikki remembers. "She drove us to the meetings and introduced us to Southern cooking. Kenneth and Gloria lived two doors down and the family gathered at Mary's house after the meetings. We knew we belonged there, but we didn't say anything. When the meetings were over, we went back to our church in California where Pastor Herbert Ezell offered us positions on staff as youth ministers."

Two years later, the Lord told Dennis and Vikki to leave California and move to Fort Worth. At the same time, He told Kenneth and Gloria to hire them. Leaving everything behind, on Nov. 1, 1976, Dennis and Vikki went to work for Kenneth Copeland Evangelistic Association.

Life was good. From Dennis, Vikki experienced the kind of love she'd never known at home. Her work with the Copelands' ministry gratified, invigorated and kept her busy morning to night. Yet, it eventually became impossible for her to ignore the bouts of depression that had plagued her since childhood.

"With Dennis on the road with Brother Copeland, the depression blossomed," Vikki recalls. "For some reason, I started going home from work and listening to Brother Copeland for hours at a time as he sang anointed songs from the Word of God. I didn't realize I was being led by the Spirit. He used that music, among other things, to help me get free. The garment of praise helped destroy that spirit of heaviness. The anointing destroyed the yoke and depression fled!"

Stepping Out by Faith

At the direction of the Lord, in January 1979, Dennis quit his job to start Dennis Burke Ministries. He had no meetings scheduled and no prospects, but he knew how to live by faith. Within 10 months, Vikki left her job to join him.

Since that time, Dennis and Vikki have ministered around the U.S. and in 28 countries. Dennis has ministered in Australia every year since 1982. For nine years, he served as president of the International Convention of Faith Ministries.

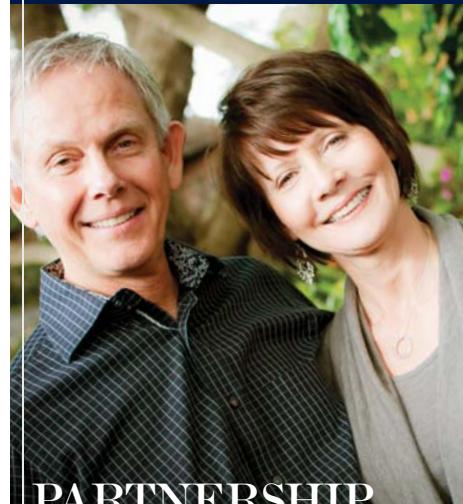
"We've been Partners with KCM since November 1973," Dennis says. "Partnership allows us to sow into the lives of people like us, who needed hope, and to sow back into a family that loved us, influenced us and imparted to us.

"It wasn't until 2000 that I realized I had lived with a sense of abandonment since my dad's suicide. The Lord took me to Psalm 27:10 in the *New Living Translation*. It says, 'Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close.' God has held us close through His love and His Word. But He has also held us close through the unfailing love of parents in the faith like Kenneth and Gloria Copeland."

Vikki echoes the same sentiments, smiling as she notes that over the years her spiritual family has expanded to include one rather unlikely member: her mother, Lavena Chavez. By God's grace, Vikki got to spend much of her adult life sharing the love of God with her mother. She felt honored to care for her during her final years, grateful that she went home to be with the Lord, not as a woman who failed, but as a woman forgiven.

Today, Lavena Chavez experiences in heaven the truth she used to sing. For her, as for her daughter, it is no longer a secret what a loving God can do. **VICTORY**

Editor's Note: For more on Vikki Burke's remarkable story, look for her new book, *Some Days You Dance*, at dennisburkeministries.org.



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GOD'S HEALING PROMISES



Good at ANY AGE!

I want My people well! :: These are the words God spoke to my heart many years ago when He told me to teach healing and lay hands on the sick in our Believers' Conventions. *I want My people well!* He didn't

say, "I want My young people well." He didn't say, "I want all My people under 80 years old well." He didn't even say, "I want all My people well, except those who are so old they must suffer from age-related infirmities."

BY GLORIA COPELAND



No, He simply said, *I want My people well!*

I know I heard Him correctly because He expresses the same desire throughout the Bible from beginning to end. In Genesis, when He created the earth and prepared the Garden of Eden for Adam and Eve, He didn't put sickness in it. He made it a good place, a healthy place, because He wanted His people well. In Exodus, when He delivered the Israelites from slavery, though sin had entered the earth and sickness had become rampant by then, He brought His people out of Egypt, healthy. Unlike the actors in the old movie, *The Ten Commandments*, who portrayed the Hebrews dragging sick folks along on stretchers and helping crippled, old people hobble along, the real Israelites—from the youngest to the oldest—marched out of Egyptian captivity in vibrant, good health. “[God] brought them forth,” says Psalm 105:37, “with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

Imagine aged grandmothers and grandfathers, white-haired octogenarians and centenarians, whose bodies had once been bowed over by hard work under merciless Egyptian taskmasters. Think of them with heads held high, striding with strong steps alongside their children and grandchildren. Not one of them was feeble—despite their age and the difficulties they had endured.

God meant for His people to stay well, too. He intended for them to leave sickness, disease and frailty behind them forever, in the land of bondage where it belonged. So He told them how to do it. He said:

❖ “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you” (Exodus 15:26, *New Living Translation*).

❖ “You must serve only the Lord your God. If you do, I will bless you with food and water, and I will protect you from illness” (Exodus 23:25, *NLT*).

❖ “Wherfore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee.... And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee...” (Deuteronomy 7:12-13, 15).

❖ “My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don’t lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body” (Proverbs 4:20-22, *NLT*).

It’s regrettable, but the great majority of Israelites didn’t obey those instructions. Even those who received them directly from the mouth of Moses, cast them aside not long after they heard them and brought sickness on themselves by their disobedience. God’s will for them remained unchanged, however. He still longed to heal them. So much that He lamented over their disobedience and said, “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that *it might be well with them*, and with their children for ever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29).

The Hebrew word translated *well* comes from the root word *yatab*. It speaks of being blessed in every area of life, spirit, soul and body. It means to make “well, sound, beautiful, happy, successful, right, be accepted, amend, benefit, make better, seem best, make cheerful, be comely, find favor, be glad, goodness, make merry, please, show kindness, and make sweet.” There is no doubt this word includes a sound, healthy body.

Throughout the Bible, God’s desire to provide physical health to His people never wavered. Thousands of years after those first wilderness wanderers died out, He was still saying, Obey these commands and “...thine health shall spring forth speedily. For I will restore health unto thee.... Behold, I will bring [Jerusalem] health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth” (Isaiah 58:8; Jeremiah 30:17, 33:6).

Notice, God didn’t put any expiration date on His healing promises. He didn’t say He would give health just to people who hadn’t yet celebrated their 70th birthday. He didn’t say that those who had already lived 90 or 100 years wouldn’t qualify for His cures. No, all the way through the Old Testament, God offered to all His people of every age the promise of radiant health. He desired for even the oldest of His obedient people to be able to say with the psalmist: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is the health of my countenance, and my God*” (Psalm 42:11).

Jesus Never Asked Anyone Their Age

“But all those healing promises are in the Old Testament,” you might say. “Do they really apply to us today?”

Yes, they do! In fact, they apply more fully to us than they did to the Israelites because we have “a better covenant... established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6). As believers, we are in Christ and, as we’ve already seen, all God’s promises are yes and amen in Him. God has said to us just as clearly as He said to the Israelites: “I am the Lord that healeth thee.” For us, as for them, His unchanging desire is: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper

and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

That one, short, New Testament verse captures, with perfection, God's will for all of us who are His children today. It tells us God still wants us to enjoy physical health. He doesn't just want our souls to be strong and blessed. He isn't concerned only about our spiritual well-being. He cares about our bodies too. Some have doubted that fact but according to *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 3 John 2 leaves no room for dispute. The Greek term *hugianio*, which refers to our health, in that scripture, is not a spiritual word. It simply means "to be healthy, sound, in good health." Its application is so distinctly physical that the English word *hygiene* is derived from it.

Even if we didn't have that verse to rely on, we could still be certain that God's will for us is health and healing. The New Testament practically shouts it from the rooftops in one book after another. All of the Gospels show Jesus demonstrating His heavenly Father's desire to heal. The book of Matthew alone should be enough to convince the greatest skeptic that God delights to heal people as much now as He ever did. Keeping in mind that Jesus came to earth to do the will of His Father, consider the following statements about His ministry:

❖ "His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them" (Matthew 4:24).

❖ "They brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:16-17).

❖ "And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all" (Matthew 12:15).

❖ "Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw" (Matthew 12:22).

❖ "And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick" (Matthew 14:14).

❖ "And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them" (Matthew 15:30).

❖ "And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there" (Matthew 19:2).

❖ "And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them" (Matthew 21:14).

Anyone who might be tempted to think Matthew was in some way overemphasizing Jesus' commitment to heal all the sick who came to Him needs only to read the Gospel of Luke to put that thought to rest. Luke confirms all Matthew said and even provides additional reports. He says:

❖ "Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them" (Luke 4:40).

❖ "But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities" (Luke 5:15).

❖ "And a great multitude of people out of all Judaea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all" (Luke 6:17-19).

❖ "And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. And...she was healed immediately" (Luke 8:43-44, 47).

❖ "And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing" (Luke 9:11).

❖ "And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God" (Luke 13:11-13).

❖ "And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus...healed him, and let him go" (Luke 14:2-4).

❖ "And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed" (Luke 17:12-14).

The Gospels of Mark and John include similar verses and cite only one occasion when Jesus wasn't able to heal all who came to hear Him. It was in

Nazareth. The reason some went away without receiving there is no mystery. The Bible explains it by saying, "He could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6:5-6).

Do you know what amazes me about that incident? Even when people's unbelief short-circuited the fullness of the divine power flowing through Jesus, He still endeavored to get them healed. No wonder the book of Acts sums up Jesus' entire ministry in this one statement: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). Those words are a glorious confirmation that what God said to me so many years ago is undeniable and true—I want My people well!

For those believing for Bible longevity, that's especially good news. Who would want to live to be 120, if it meant putting up with years of arthritis, or dragging around with what are often referred to as "age-related diseases"? I certainly wouldn't. So the older I get, the more I appreciate Jesus' ministry to the sick and how it demonstrated God's will for our healing. I'm happy that the Bible says when the multitudes came to Him, He healed them all.

Aren't you glad He healed all? Aren't you grateful He didn't ask anyone their age before He ministered to them? Isn't it a relief that Jesus didn't say to even one person, "You are too old to receive healing. You just need to go home and die."

No, praise God, Jesus never once said those words to anyone during His ministry on earth and He never says them to anyone today. He still heals all who come to Him in faith because He is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever"

(Hebrews 13:8). He is still the "same Jesus" (Acts 1:11) and His healing power and promises are good at any age. **VICTORY**

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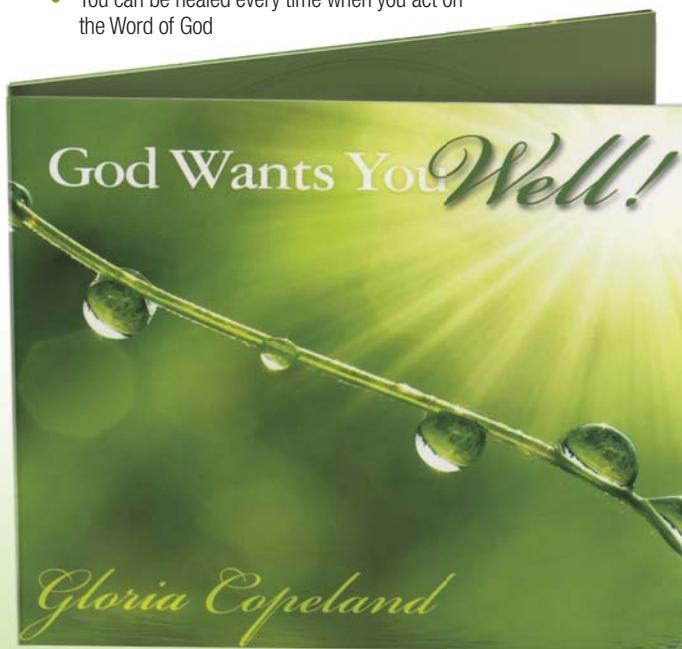
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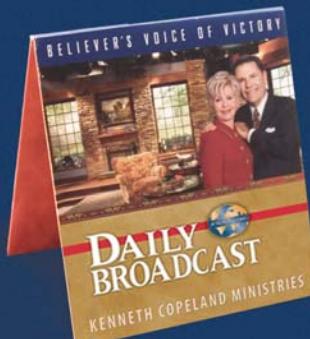
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