



# Taking Action, Living Adventurously

by  
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*"The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed."*

New York Governor Martin Van Buren said these words in the winter of 1829 to warn against a grave national danger: the railroad. His letter to President Jackson pointed out the obvious hazard.

"As you may know, Mr. President, 'railroad' carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by 'engines' which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire to crops, scaring the livestock, and frightening women and children."

Van Buren preferred the canal boat. It was safer, more depend-able, and had already been tested. It worked. No risks. In his opinion, the canal system was "absolutely essential" for the nation's welfare.

Had President Jackson listened to Van Buren's advice, modern transportation could be quite different. Manhattan executives would line up on the docks after work to take the canal boat across town. Taxi drivers would paddle passengers in canoes through rush-hour spray. The Ford Escort would be nothing more than a dream... or a nightmare. And the Concorde? Well, if God intended for man to fly, He'd have given him wings.

Those who dare to dream take risks. They aren't content with what already exists; they look ahead to new directions, new solutions. Without that spirit of ambition and adventure, we never move ahead.

As a Christian leader, my privilege is to challenge and equip others to fulfill their destiny in life - to "go for the gold." This has been my magnificent obsession in ministry for almost two decades. Hence the ministry - People of Destiny International; the publication - *People of Destiny Magazine*; and the motto - "Helping you discover your destiny is not just our preference, but our passion."

I believe our highest calling is to know God and, out of intimate, personal union with Him, to discover the thrilling plan He has ordained for our lives *even before we were born!* Our goal in life should be to glorify God by accomplishing what He created us to do.

*"For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know*

*that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be." (Ps. 139:13-16)*

Yet fulfilling our destiny is not automatic. In fact, one of my greatest concerns for many people is not that they'll fail in life, but that they'll succeed - in doing the wrong thing. They'll finish the course only to realize they were in the wrong race!

"Every day we step on chords that vibrate throughout eternity," said evangelist Charles Finney. Whether or not you and I fulfill God's master plan is greatly dependent upon our response to His initiative and grace and our willingness to break out of the comfort zone and take faith-filled risks. Though the possibility of failure may intimidate us, author F. B. Meyer describes the safety net protecting those who rise to meet God's challenge: "A providence is shaping our ends; a plan is developing in our lives; a supremely wise and loving Being is making all things work together for good. In the sequel of our life's story we shall see there was a meaning and necessity in all the previous incidents, save those which are the result of our own folly and sin, and that even those have been made to contribute to the final result."

If our hearts are set to obey, then probably the main hindrance to seizing our unique destiny is the human tendency towards familiarity, comfort, and convenience. The Couch Potato Syndrome affects us all. But God seeks those who are willing to take action and live adventurously! These two essentials must characterize His followers.

## Taking Action

We serve a God of activity and action, not passivity and stagnation. He calls us to renounce passive living and be catalysts for righteousness within our culture. We're to pick up our cross (not our La-Z-Boy recliners) and follow Him *"to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do."* (Eph.

2:10) Nowhere in Scripture does our Lord beckon us to board some leisure cruise to Glory-land, but rather to get aboard His battleship and "rescue those who are perishing."

Remember the opening lines from the *Star Trek* series?

"These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: To explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly go where no man has gone before!"

Jesus Christ calls His radical, end-time disciples in a similar way. He challenges us to be world changers, not time wasters, as He closes out this age.

The Acts of the Apostles, recording the Church's early lifestyle that we long to recapture, is not the only book of the Bible where action is the norm:

- "... but the people who know their God will display strength and take action." (Dan 11:32 NAS)
- "They will be My people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear Me for their own good and the good of their children after them." (Jer. 32:38-39)
- "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22)
- "Faith, by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:17)

Many young people perceive Christianity as cold, lifeless, and boring. British Bible teacher Terry Virgo tells of a newly saved young man who, seeing a church nearby, sadly asked, "Now that I'm a Christian, do I have to go into that building?" A common cry against religion goes up from today's youth: "I want action, man, not boredom!"

God agrees! And that's why He is stirring His people to *action*. An explosion of authentic, Biblical, action-oriented Christianity is just around the corner as the Church enters the last decade of this century.

**The 60s:** decade of *experience*. The Jesus Movement and the charismatic renewal produced lots of excitement and spiritual flurry throughout the land.

**The 70s:** decade of *instruction*. Christian publications, cassette tapes, Bible conferences, and seminars abounded to provide much-needed teaching to the Body of Christ.

**The 80s:** decade of *prayer, purification, and preparation*. As leaders like Yonggi Cho and Larry Lea brought a new emphasis on prayer, God began to purge prominent ministries of compromise and sin. Now a "highway of holiness" is being paved for the Holy Spirit to work powerfully as we launch into the 21st century.

**The 90s:** decade of *action!* Exciting days are ahead as we realize the Holy Spirit was not poured out primarily for personal blessing, but for power - that we might take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. He is also present to lead us and purify us as a spotless Bride for the return of our King!

We are now on the brink of the most dynamic phase of Church history, centering on the local church and culminating in the Lord's Second Coming. Church-based evangelism, church planting, and church-centered leadership development will be the focal points. To accomplish the task, God is mobilizing Christians worldwide to scrap meaningless religious ritual, and He is infusing them with one aggressive, godly ambition: to see the true Church of Jesus Christ emerge in the earth.

For too long we've been over-equipped and under-challenged. Now it's time to make our mark for the kingdom of God. Let's shake off apathy and indifference and take action like Jesus did, who "*came to seek and to save what was lost.*" (Luke 19:10) After all, "*the Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*" (Matt. 11:12 NKJ)

## Lining Adventurously

I once heard the following story:

A man found an eagle's egg and put it into the nest of a prairie chicken. The eaglet hatched with the brood of chicks and grew up with them.

All his life, the eagle, thinking he was a prairie chicken, did whatever the other prairie chickens did. He scratched in the dirt for seeds and insects to eat. He clucked and cackled. And he flew in a brief thrashing of wings and flurry of feathers no more than a few feet off the ground. After all, that's how prairie chickens were supposed to fly.

Years passed. The eagle grew very old. One day, he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. Hanging with graceful majesty on the powerful wind currents, it soared with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.

"What a beautiful bird!" said the eagle to his neighbor. "What is it?"

"That's an eagle... the chief of the birds," the neighbor clucked. "But don't give it a second thought. You could never be like him."

So the eagle never gave it another thought. And it died thinking it was a prairie chicken.

One of the resolutions we are making as a people of destiny is that we'll not grow old dreaming of what could have been done in this glorious hour of restoration. We're determined not to waste our life one day at a time. Our biography is being written *today*. We don't want to be bored reading our own life story - God has called us to live adventurously!

A Christian leader once stated, "Vital Christianity implies the element of hazard, of speculation, of splendid gamble. When there's no risk the so-called venture is dead." A. W. Tozer adds, "God works as long as His people live daringly. He ceases when they no longer need His aid."

Helen Keller, though blind and deaf from the age of two, refused to be overcome by her disability. Rather than retreating into the darkness of her world, she ambitiously pursued her dreams. "Security does not really exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it," she commented. "Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

Think about it: "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing."

Hasn't Jesus called us out from a ho-hum, mundane, predictable, routine existence to experience the abundant life?

It is our heavenly Father's intention that we follow in the footsteps of the disciples who were told to "*launch out into the deep*." Like Caleb, who was one of the few to inherit the land of promise, we need to cultivate a "*different spirit*." (*Num. 14:24*) At age 85 Caleb was still living adventurously, conquering Canaanites wherever he went! Paul and Barnabas "*risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*." (*Acts 15:26*)

Our *God* wants us to do the same.

## A New Day

"But what if I step out in some area and make a mistake? I'm afraid I'll fail."

Let it be said once and for all: God is more pleased with those who step out and make mistakes than with those who sit back and do nothing for fear of failure. Our sovereign God is well able to redeem our mistakes.

In the past, people may have lacked revelation and been slack in fulfilling the Great Commission. But a new day is dawning for the Church!

As we approach the 21st century there is a company of people emerging in the earth who have been captivated by God and His purposes, and out of their intimate relationship with Him are determined to take action and live adventurously!

Only one question remains: Will you stand up and join the ranks?

## **TAKING ACTION!**

### **PERSONAL DEVOTIONS**

Our highest priority must be intimacy with God. The Ephesian Christians, while praised for their activity, grieved God by abandoning their simple "*first love*" devotion to Him. (*Rev. 2:1-6*) If we feel spiritually dry, we probably need a second honeymoon with the Lord. By rekindling our personal relationship with Him through prayer and time in His Word, we will recapture the zeal and enthusiasm which characterized our newborn faith.

### **LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM**

Loneliness plagues our society. As people are rejected, exploited, and wounded, they retreat into themselves, despairing but defiant. Though they may well resist the thought of religion, they'll respond to a genuine offer of relationship. As Jesus was a "friend of sinners," let's go forth each day expecting divine appointments and then "*return with joy*" (*Luke 10:17*) as God changes lives through us.

### **GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT**

This high-tech generation of microcomputers, VCRs, compact discs, and Star Wars space programs deserves to see a supernatural demonstration of the living God. Let's give expression to any impression the Spirit gives us, stepping out in gifts such as a word of knowledge, healing, or working of miracles. God tells us to "*eagerly desire spiritual gifts*." (*1 Cor. 14:1*) He will never refuse his gifts to those who are actively seeking!

### **PRACTICAL SERVICE**

"*We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*" (*Eph. 2:10*) Opportunities for practical service are all around us. Our job is to recognize and respond. Love in action - meals delivered to the family that just moved in, assistance for widows, orphans, and the sick - will totally amaze a cynical world. Let's rely on God's strength and creative direction as we make ourselves servants of all.

## PROPHETIC SOCIAL ACTION

As the salt of the earth, we are meant to preserve righteousness and prevent decay. Time after time we're confronted with evil - pornography in our communities, abortion, neglect of the poor and oppressed. While society has taught us to turn the other way, we must be people of compassionate conviction who courageously speak out for the cause of righteousness.

## POWER HEALING

Whether faced with a common cold or an inability to conceive children, let's take action! God answers faith-filled prayers both to bless His people and to confirm the power of the gospel. Let's not merely throw out a "God bless you" to those in need; let's seize the opportunity and pray!

## RESISTING THE DEMONIC

We often let the enemy beat us down without even realizing that he's there. When there is an obvious demonic root to a problem, let's resolve to resist the heaviness, the lingering condemnation, or the unexplainable lust. *"No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord (Is. 54 17)*

## LIVING ADVENTUROUSLY

### JOIN A CHURCH-PLANTING TEAM

Explore the options and prayerfully consider involvement with a team of people, under the leadership of an apostolic church-planting team, that serves as the nucleus for establishing a New Testament church in a new city. It's never too late! My parents relocated with a team seven years ago while in their late sixties. (A church of almost a thousand now exists, thanks in part to their service.)

### EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHORT-TERM EVANGELISM

Seek out the possibility of joining a church-based team to give yourself to extensive evangelism and expand your horizons in another city or culture You'll never be the same!

### PURSUE FURTHER BIBLICAL TRAINING

As God is restoring an understanding of fulfilling the Great Commission through apostolic domestic and cross-cultural church-planting ventures, opportunities are surfacing for training, service, and giving that will bear *"fruit that remains."* Have you sensed that you should evangelize in other lands such as Mexico, Asia, Europe, and Africa, yet neglected the call? By all means, don't let the flame die out!

### FIND A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

If you're languishing in a lifeless situation (identified in 2 Timothy 3:5 as *"having a form of godliness but denying its power"*) maybe it's time to graciously, yet courageously, heed the counsel given in the next line: *"Have nothing to do with them."* Expect flak for not "blooming where planted," but if you're obeying the Holy Spirit in a right attitude, He'll more than amply provide for you!

### INVEST YOUR FINANCES TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION

In addition to regular tithes and offerings in our local church, God wants to challenge us to reach higher realms of heroic giving as we underwrite His world mission. Proven church-based ministries that are extending the Kingdom of God through church planting, leadership development, and proclamation of a current word from God need our partnership in both prayer and financial giving. The promise holds true: *"Whoever sows generously will also reap generously." (2 Cor. 9.6)*

### COME OUT OF SELF-IMPOSED RETIREMENT FROM LOCAL CHURCH LIFE

The most subtle, yet most dangerous, form of worldliness is letting the twin gods of our society - comfort and convenience - lure us out of active service in Christ's Kingdom for seemingly legitimate reasons ("I'm not as young as I used to be... I've got a family now... Lots of work around the house... Let others have their turn"). The "you deserve a break" mentality has seduced much of the Western Church at a time when God is calling for a new ruthlessness against self-indulgent tendencies. If you've noticed a loss of your radical edge, now is the time to rouse yourself from a Laodicean slumber (better know as AILS - Apathetic, Immobile, and Lukewarm Syndrome) and recommit your time, talents, and treasure to things of eternal value.

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