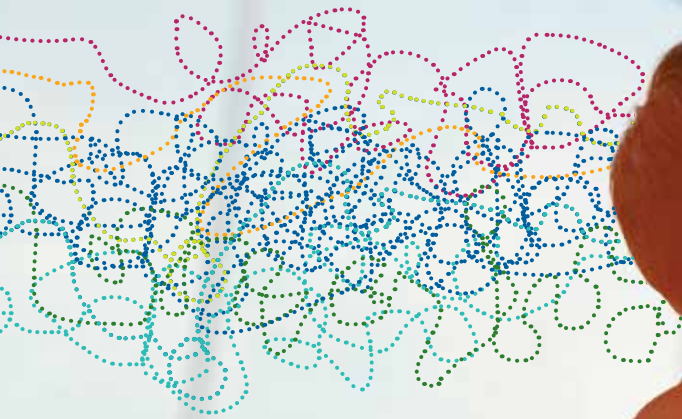


Insights

The Way to a New Life | JULY / AUGUST 2016



*learn how to
understand
the truth you
encounter*

THE POWER OF **RIGHT** **THINKING**

*Avoid the trap of **misplaced expectations***

Typically, we don't see things as they are, but more as we are. Everything we see and hear passes through the filter of our personal perspective and point of view. There is nothing wrong with this, and it is common to us all. However, it becomes a problem when we let our fears and failures dominate our thinking. To hear but fail to understand and to look but fail to truly see are all-too-common experiences, even among believers. The mind that is governed by wrong perspectives will not understand the intent of the truth it encounters.

THE POWER OF THE RIGHT

The Christian life is all about changing our perspective to see and think in harmony with God's Word and *His* point of view. If we are unable or unwilling to change the way we think, we will never really be able to change the way we live. If our thoughts are negative, resentful, or bitter, we will find these characteristics in abundance in our lives.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to help us be transformed in our minds. Notice what the

apostle Paul says in Romans 12:2 (*AMPC*):

Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and

perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

I also love the way the *Phillips* paraphrase reads:

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within....

Notice Paul says that



THINKING

by Dr. Dennis Burke

TO HEAR
BUT FAIL TO
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ARE ALL-TOO-
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the way change comes is by *renewing our minds*—in other words, by changing the way we think. When we change the way we think, we can change the way we *live*. It all starts in the mind — the soil of the soul.

Narrow thinking will always lead to a narrow life. God has provided everything for us to have a free, wonderful, and abundant life. But before we will have a life like that, we must have a *mind* like that.

One of the biggest hindrances to the free and abundant life God intends for us to live is in the way we allow our thoughts to be interpreted for us. Our enemy, the devil, continually tries to plant misleading thoughts and misperceptions in our minds, all designed to lead us to wrong conclusions.

In my travels, I have often needed a translator—someone who knows the local language and can communicate to me what others say and also tell them what I say. Everything said and

everything heard goes through the translator. If it is lost in translation, true communication is lost.

One of the devil's tricks is to work at causing things to be lost in translation. He will misstate or add his commentary in our thoughts to what is being said or to what we are seeing, trying to distort everything we hear

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Attacks don't come because of our HISTORY.

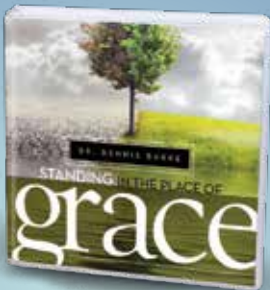
They come to steal our DESTINY!



Standing in the Place of Grace

by Dr. Dennis Burke

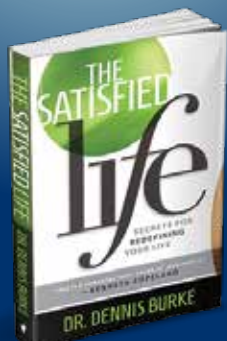
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and perceive until our conclusions line up with his evil agenda.

Here are some of the ways this happens:

- In the Garden of Eden, he misstated to Eve what God had said to Adam and, as a result, Eve was deceived into disobeying God's command.
- In the wilderness, the devil misstated the intent of Scripture to Jesus, unsuccessfully tempting Him to act contrary to the Father's plan.
- Satan will misinterpret God's Word to us, trying to use the Word of God to condemn us, discourage us or cause us to disobey what the Lord has told us to do.
- Satan will even misstate words that were spoken to us by friends or loved ones in an effort to drive a wedge of strife and division into our relationships.
- The enemy uses these tactics to sow the seeds of discontent, discouragement, and disbelief.
- He turns promises into questions: Has God said....?
- He turns a person's well-intentioned comments into what feels or sounds like an attack.
- He turns a person's actions to build up or value another into the perception of an insincere gesture.

Each of these strategies are designed to derail our confidence in God and in people. That's why we must always remember that these attacks don't come because of our **HISTORY** — they come to steal our **DESTINY!**

How many family relationships have been devastated by misunderstandings of things said or the intent of a person's actions? How many times have sincere believers been talked out of believing God's promise by not hearing clearly or entirely what He was saying to them?

Several years ago, I saw firsthand how this can happen. Vikki was working as a volunteer

during elections, putting in long hours for the days of early elections. I wanted to do something for her and decided I would drop by some flowers that she could enjoy at her desk. When I arrived, I asked one of the other people there to take the flowers into her and tell her that they were from her husband. Oh, she was surprised and delighted!

While some of the people around Vikki were admiring the flowers, one man working with them weighed in with his opinion. "You know what that means when your husband brings flowers to your work, don't you? It means he's having an affair."

What an awful thing to say. Of course, Vikki knew that wasn't at all the reason I brought her flowers that day. I brought them to express my love and to brighten her day. But those words are the kinds of seeds that the enemy loves to plant in someone's mind so they can grow into a devastating harvest.

The battlefield is in the thought life. Let the Holy Spirit help you filter out thoughts, intent, and seeds of deceit. Filling yourself with the right kind of thoughts will bring you into the right kind of life.

Paul's final admonition to the church in Philippi (Philippians 4:8, *Mirror Translation*) is such a powerful instruction for planting the right seed into the soil of your soul. On this subject of right thinking, it provides the perfect conclusion:

Now let this be your conclusive reasoning: consider that which is true about everyone as evidenced in Christ. Live overwhelmed by God's opinion of you! Acquaint yourselves with the revelation of righteousness; realize God's likeness in us. Make it your business to declare mankind's redeemed innocence. Think friendship. Discover how famous everyone is in the light of the gospel; mankind is in God's limelight! Ponder how elevated you are in Christ. Study stories that celebrate life.

*Unless otherwise indicated, scripture references are taken from the *New King James* version.

the Crippling Power OF MISPLACED EXPECTATIONS

BY VIKKI
BURKE

Have you noticed that Jesus never allowed people's actions to affect Him—even when they mistreated Him, misunderstood Him, or accused Him? If modern-day believers were mistreated to the degree society abused Jesus, many would fall by the wayside, never to be seen again.

Jesus was able to remain unmoved by people's mistreatment because "...he knew what people were really like. No one needed to tell him about human nature."¹ Jesus

understood how fickle and easily swayed human beings can be. He knew that they may believe in you one moment and oppose you the next.

Jesus knew all human beings have disappointing character flaws so He didn't count on them; instead, He put His complete trust in God. But don't misunderstand—just because He didn't trust in people doesn't mean He was cynical toward them. Jesus was completely impartial, loving, merciful, and forgiving toward everyone. He just knew better than to rely on them.

Jesus wants to have an intimate relationship with everyone, but He can't force anyone into a close relationship. Each of us chooses how close of a relationship we want to have with Jesus.

Because Jesus knew where to put His confidence, fair-weather followers and double-minded disciples weren't able to trample on His heart. He realized that when times got

¹ John 2:25





WHEN DISAPPOINTMENTS ACCUMULATE,
THEY CAN LEAD TO HOPELESSNESS AND
A GRIEVOUS HEART.

tough, some followers would hit the road, so He didn't expect anything from them.

When we expect people to act or respond in a particular manner, we set ourselves up for repeated disappointment—and when disappointments accumulate, they can lead to hopelessness and a grievous heart. Proverbs 13:12 says, “Hope deferred has made our hearts sick.” Unfulfilled expectations can cause a person to get burned out and lose hope. These false expectations can become crippling.

Naaman, a commander in the Syrian army, is an example from Scripture of misplaced expectations. Naaman suffered from leprosy. A servant in his household was certain that if he'd go see the prophet Elisha, he would be healed. But when Naaman arrived at the prophet's house, Elisha sent a servant telling Naaman to dip in the Jordan River seven times and he'd be cleansed.

That made Naaman as mad as a hornet! After all, he was a very important man and expected to be treated like one. How dare a lowly prophet send a flunky to speak to a high-ranking commander! The least the prophet could do, Naaman thought, is speak to me face to face and then perform a spectacular miracle! He had imagined something much more dignified than dunking in a dirty river—something more distinguished and consistent with

his rank. When things didn't turn out the way Naaman expected, he went away enraged.²

But one of his officers reasoned with Naaman, saying, “Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, ‘Go and wash and be cured!’”³ Evidently that made sense to Naaman, because he did as Elisha instructed and was healed.

Naaman demonstrated faith to be healed when he went to see the prophet of God, but he had false expectations of how it would all take place, and it nearly cost him a miracle.

Like Naaman, we get tripped up when we get a mental picture of how someone should respond or how something will transpire. About 25 years ago, I had a physical problem that I knew God could heal. I began declaring healing verses daily, but after a year had passed, I asked the Lord where I was missing it. I knew He never failed, so the problem had to be with me.

Frustrated with the situation, I picked up John G. Lake's book and randomly flipped it open. To my surprise, it held the answer to my problem. I didn't need healing—the thing in my body needed to dissolve. I realized I had never asked God how to resolve this problem. I just jumped in with what I thought I needed to do. But after the Spirit of God

WHEN WE EXPECT PEOPLE TO ACT OR RESPOND IN A PARTICULAR MANNER, WE SET OURSELVES UP FOR REPEATED DISAPPOINTMENT.

showed me where I'd missed it, I changed my approach—and it was completely gone in two weeks, never to return!

When we imagine how God will do something a certain way, we may sabotage the very results we expected, whether we realize it or not. False expectations lock us into a way of thinking that may cause us to miss out on God's blessing altogether. He may show up with the answer, but because we are expecting something all together different, we won't even see it.

Jeremiah tells us that when we trust in man's strength or wisdom, we don't see when good things come our way. Misplaced expectation blinded this man from seeing the goodness of God. But it's different with the man whose expectation is properly placed. This latter man is unscathed by heat and continues to flourish even during a drought.⁴

We will suffer a backlash from misplaced expectations whenever we put our confidence in people. I experienced this when, as a teenager, my dad told me that if I work harder than anyone else, I would be noticed and rewarded. I believed him for over four decades, but after many disappointments, I began mentally complaining to myself about how wrong Dad's work ethic had been. Then God interrupted my thoughts, saying, “Your dad was right, but you've suffering from a case of misplaced expectation. You've expected

the person you worked for to reward you when you should have expected ME to repay you.”

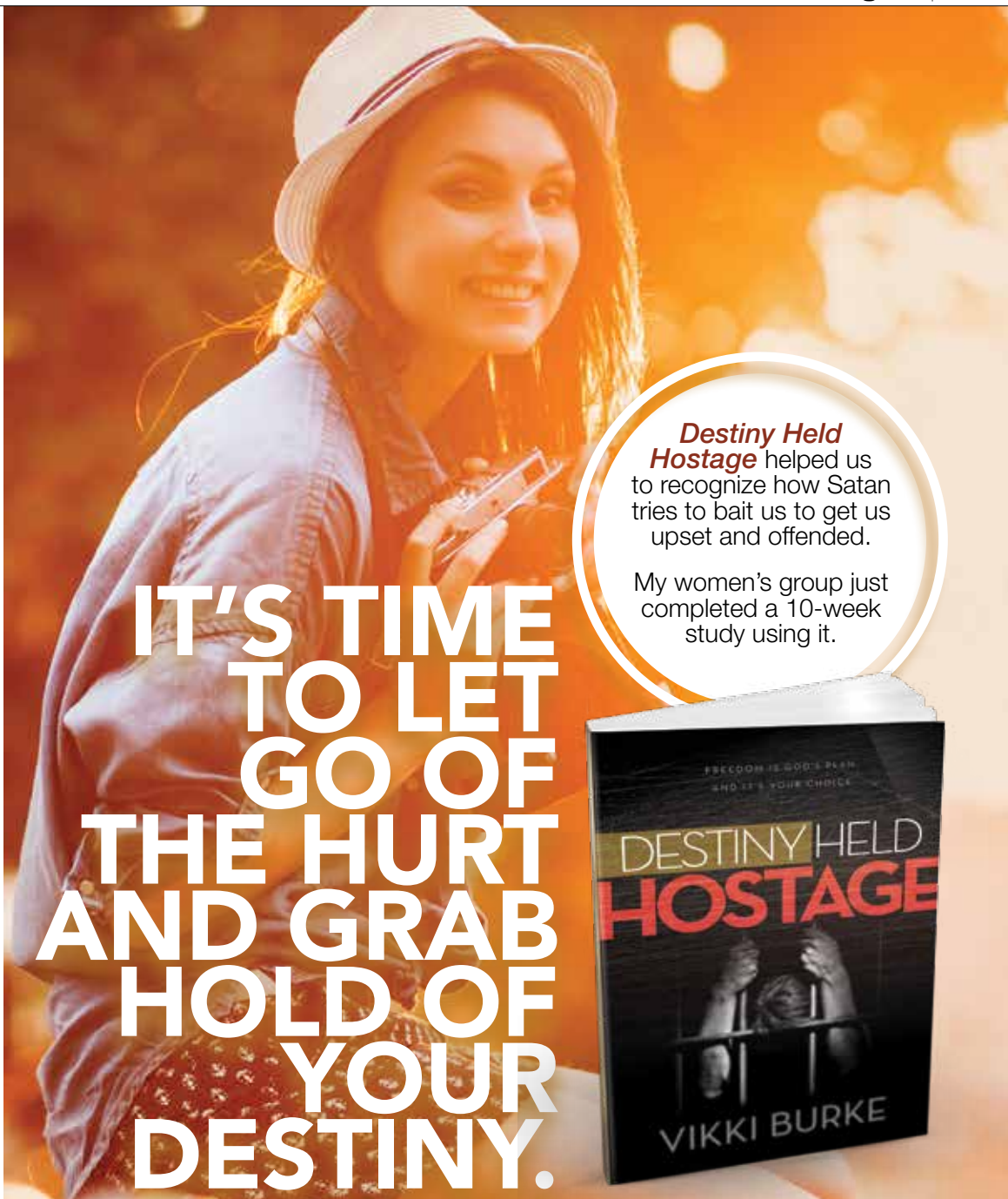
That put everything into perspective. False expectations will always result in disappointment.

We can also experience deep disappointment and hurt when we give our time, money, or support to people who don't reciprocate the way we expect. But we sabotage our return when we expect that person to repay us. On the other hand, when we expect God to repay our generosity, we will never be disappointed. He promised: “Their deeds will never be forgotten.”⁵

Mordecai was a man who put his confidence in the proper place. After he'd exposed a plot to assassinate King Xerxes, the would-be assassins were executed; then the event was recorded in the king's history book. Much later, a man named Haman was promoted to the position of most powerful man in the empire, second only to the king, and the king commanded everyone to bow before Haman as an act of respect. But Mordecai refused to comply, and it so enraged Haman that punishing Mordecai wasn't enough—he engineered a plot to kill all Jews.

Then one night when the king suffered from insomnia, he got up and decided to read a book—a history book. (That's sure to put anyone to sleep!) It just so happened that the king read the story of Mordecai exposing the attempted assassination. Just about that time, Haman arrived for work, so the king asked him what he should do for a man who pleases the king.

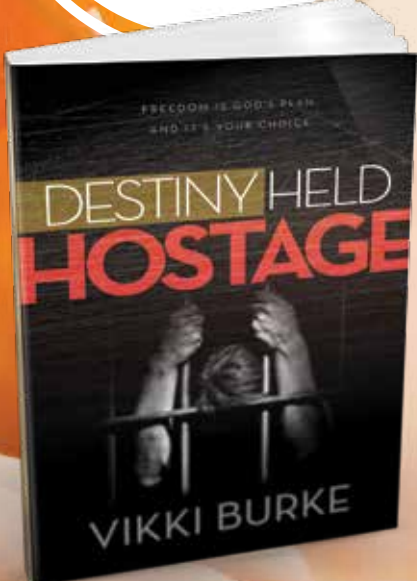
Of course, Haman thought, Who would the king want to honor more than I? Wrong, Haman! After Haman spewed a number of lofty rewards, believing that he himself would reap them, the king said to Haman, “Excellent! Hurry and do just



IT'S TIME TO LET GO OF THE HURT AND GRAB HOLD OF YOUR DESTINY.

Destiny Held Hostage helped us to recognize how Satan tries to bait us to get us upset and offended.

My women's group just completed a 10-week study using it.



Such a powerful life changing book! Vikki unlocks some powerful truth!

— M. S. R.

Destiny Held Hostage is a wonderfully written book that is full of history, facts, advice and general life lessons.

I think everyone who reads it will take away something beneficial to them.

I found myself in an uncomfortable situation. Instead of getting angry and throwing a fit, I stepped back, changed my approach and had a positive outcome to my problem.

— Jean Marcotte

continued on back

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continued from pg. 7

as you have said—to Mordecai the Jew...⁶ God remembered Mordecai's good deed and richly rewarded him.

The Bible is full of people who suffered from false expectations. Moses never expected it would take 40 years before he entered ministry. Israel didn't expect the Messiah to come from Galilee.⁷ David never expected his "bestie," Ahithophel, to betray him.⁸ Peter was greatly disappointed when Jesus didn't fight the soldiers who arrived to arrest Him in Gethsemane.⁹ All of these disappointments are designed to cause us to lose our faith in God and miss

out on His blessing.

We can overcome the crippling power of false expectations when we follow these guidelines. It's a choice—and it's doable!

Understand human nature the way Jesus did. Although we love and forgive others, we don't put our trust in them. We put it where it should be: in God alone.

Ask God for His plan instead of assuming we know the way things will go.

Openly express our expectations to our friends, children, spouse, or coworkers so they aren't left to read our mind.

Expect God to reward us when we give to others, and never look to people for our reward.

Allow God to heal our hearts from the effects of past disappointments so we can receive the good things He has planned for us!

⁶ Esther 6:1-10 | ⁷ John 7:41

⁸ Psalm 55 | ⁹ John 18:11



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