

# Insights

The Way to a New Life

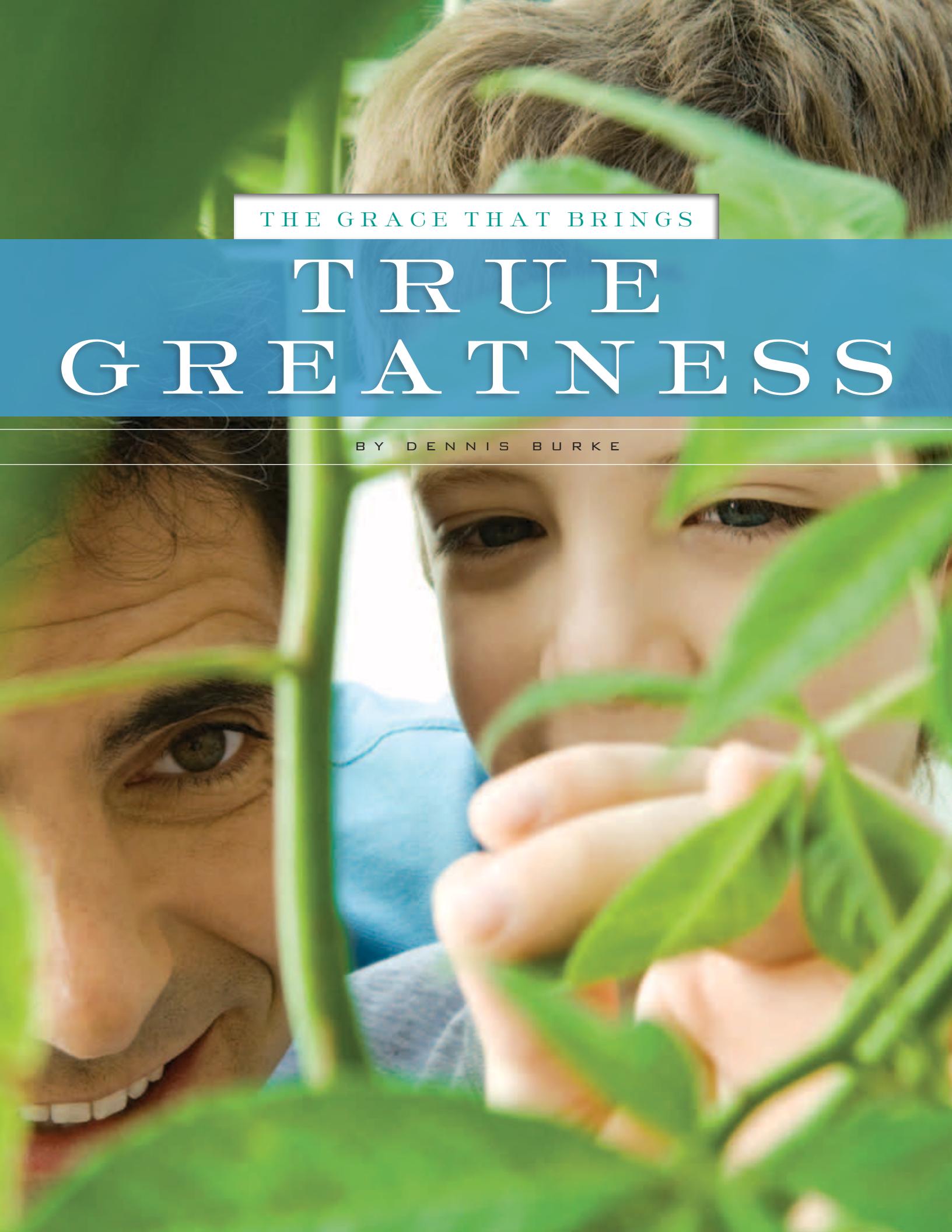
MARCH / APRIL 2012



HOW CAN YOU ACHIEVE

true  
greatness?





THE GRACE THAT BRINGS

# TRUE GREATNESS

BY DENNIS BURKE

**Then James and John,**  
the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying,  
“Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They said to Him, “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.”

MARK 10:35-37

Imagine what might have been going through the minds of James and John when they first considered making this bold request of Jesus. They seemed to have been thinking of their own future, elevated to a place of power with Jesus.

After all, every child in Israel grew up knowing about the Messiah. They had dreamed of a coming King in Israel—one who would restore to Israel its splendor and freedom and then rule the world. Convinced that Jesus was this King, James and John wanted to rule with Him in His glory.

These two brothers' request seem so self-centered and self-serving to us. How very selfish for them to want the only two seats closest to Jesus at the exclusion of every other disciple!

Yet in reality, the motivation behind James' and John's request is not so different from every other person born on this earth. At the core of their appeal was the deep desire to be recognized as someone of significance. They simply wanted what everyone wants—they wanted their lives to count for something.

We see this same desire for significance play out today in so many different ways in people's lives. People



imagine themselves leading a parade, a company, and even a nation. When asked, young children will announce with passion that when they grow up, they will be the President of the United States, an astronaut, the captain of an aircraft, or some other lofty position.

Children don't have dreams of growing up, only to wander the streets homeless. They have grand imaginations, and they dream big dreams. Those dreams can be fed, encouraged, and guided—or they can be mocked, criticized, and trampled on. And unless a young person is very strong, his dreams

will remain alive only as long as people around him allow them to.

Sadly, the vast majority of children are cut down to size by over-pragmatic people who believe they are doing the children a service by bringing some reality into their lives and talk them out of their dreams. Too often children are shamed, embarrassed, or harassed until they let go of their "grandiose" ideas.

But Jesus didn't embarrass or reprimand James and John for their request. In fact, He used the moment as an opportunity to teach a vital truth about Kingdom greatness to them and to us.

"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant" (Mark 10:43).

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Jesus taught that true greatness comes through serving. Success isn't in how much we can attain but rather in how much

we can empower others.

Of course, that isn't how most people view success. Most would maintain that those who have the most people serving them are the greatest among them.

### Grace To Serve—The Greatest Grace

The concept of serving has long been an honorable thing. When soldiers serve their country, we see that as an act of honor.

Jesus demonstrated serving throughout His ministry. Acts 10:38 says, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

This was grace in action, for grace is more than something we receive from God. It is also the power by which we do God's will and His work.

In his book *Covenants and Blessings* (page 110), Andrew Murray describes God's grace this way:

"Grace is not only the power that moves the heart of God in its compassion toward us, when He acquires and accepts the sinner and makes him a child. It is also the power that moves the heart of the saint and provides it each moment with just the

disposition and the power which it needs to love God and do His will."

The same grace that provides forgiveness for our sins brings us the power to live in God's promises and to walk in His provisions. That is the gift we have freely received from Him.

The Apostle Peter gives us a clear picture of how this free gift goes into action.

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter 4:10).

The J. B. Phillips translation says it this way: "Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you, as faithful dispensers of the wonderfully varied grace of God." Our serving is described as faithfully dispensing the multifaceted and abundant grace of God.

The word "gifts" in this verse carries a very important insight. The origin of

this word is charisma. It is the same word used in Romans 12:6: "But the free gift [charisma] is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much

more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many."

The same Greek word is used again in First Corinthians 12:4:

"There are diversities of gifts [charisma], but the same Spirit."

The origin of the word "grace" is from the root word *charis*. In other words, the gifts we are to steward

and faithfully dispense are the product of the grace we have received. The works of the Spirit flowing through us are literally the grace of God in action.

Jesus revealed this truth during His earthly ministry. He healed and delivered people by the power of God. There were times that He healed all who came to Him, even when it was a multitude. Out of that multitude of people seeking Jesus' help, there were certainly imperfect and perhaps even ungodly people. Yet He healed according to the grace of God. The gift wasn't deserved or earned by anyone. It was simply received.

We, too, have received God's grace, not only so we can be healed ourselves, but also so we can steward and dispense His gracious gifts. These gifts are demonstrations of His grace—and they are what grace looks like in action.

Everything God does through His own people is wrapped up in His gifts of grace. He has freely given His grace to anyone and everyone who will receive.

James and John both stood as close to Jesus as anyone could during His time on this earth. They thought that meant they might be given a position of greatness and significance in God's Kingdom. What they discovered was that they were already living in the greatest grace of all—the grace to serve.



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## ◀ Continue Reading on Grace

Grace is God's empowering within your heart to do what you cannot do alone. If you will embrace the grace in which you are to walk and be a wise steward over it, you will flourish in the direction He takes you and complete all He has desired for you.



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*Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures are taken from the New King James Version.*



THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD  
IS UPON

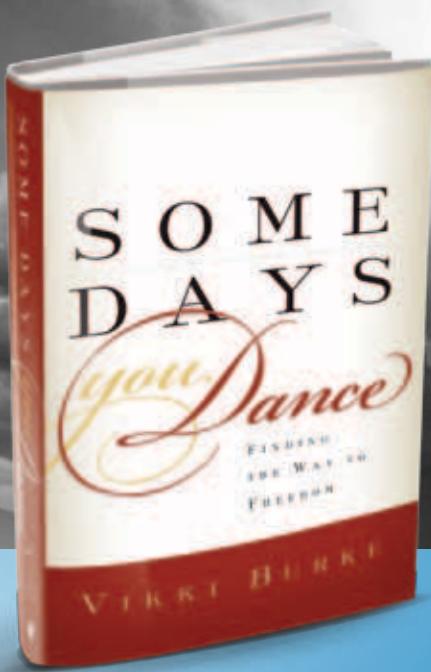
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VIKKI  
BURKE

Whenever Jesus visited His hometown of Nazareth, He kept His habit of going to the synagogue on the Sabbath. One Sabbath day, He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. Jesus purposely found the place where the prophet foretold of the anointing that would rest on the Messiah and began reading:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come" (Luke 4:18-19).

After reading this passage, Jesus said the unthinkable! "...The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!" (v. 21). Everyone present knew this passage referred to the Messiah and the work He would do in the world. Yet Jesus' personalization of this passage was crystal clear: "God has anointed *Me* to do this work."



Jesus' words so enraged the kingdom of darkness that the enemy's forces did everything possible to shut Him up—even to the extent of attempted murder!

What gave Jesus the confidence that He was qualified to carry out this work? *The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him.* The anointing on Jesus wasn't limited as with other prophets. In fact, the power of the Holy Spirit would be given to Jesus without limitations (v. 14). God commissioned, appointed, and sent Jesus into service to fulfill His will and accomplish His purposes.

Those whom God appoints, He also anoints, and those He sends, He empowers with the Holy Spirit. So what exactly would this anointing do in Jesus' earthly ministry? Three times in these verses, it says that God anointed Jesus to *proclaim*, and three things are specifically mentioned that He was anointed to proclaim: deliverance to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Gospel is a proclamation of liberty. It brings light to those in darkness, proclaiming to the world that God

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—Kenneth Copeland

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accepts them on new terms; that this is the age of His goodwill toward mankind; and that it's the "day of jubilee" when all debts against humanity are wiped out.

Jesus came to sound the jubilee trumpet so all of humanity could participate in the freedom God's goodness offers. Today we live in the age of freedom! The debt owed by all humanity was paid by Jesus. Now all we have to do is act on the freedom God promised in the New Covenant! We don't have to try to earn the blessing—it already belongs to every believer. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection opened the age in which God's free favors profusely abound.

Once the kingdom of darkness had been defeated, Jesus gave authority to the Church to finish the work He had begun by giving believers this commission: "...Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone" (Mark 16:15). What has Jesus commissioned the Church to do?

To proclaim the Good News that the Son of God has freed humanity from the tyranny of sin and Satan. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the

yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing" (Isaiah 10:27 KJV). *This is that day!*

In the same way that God empowered Jesus by the anointing of the Holy Spirit to do the work, Jesus has empowered believers as well. When the responsibility for a task is given to someone, the authority to accomplish it must also be imparted. It would be unjust to expect someone to fulfill a task without the power and authority necessary to accomplish it. Jesus imparted this authority to His followers as He proclaimed, "These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name..." (Mark 16:17).

We have been given authority to do the work of fulfilling God's purposes in Jesus' name—the name that conquered death, hell, and the grave! This transfer of authority is similar to our using a legal power of attorney to conduct business on behalf of another person.

Along with Jesus' commission to the Church comes God's power to cause that divine commission to be fulfilled. In Christ, we can say as Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to proclaim the Gospel. He has sent me...."

Those God appoints, He anoints. That means everyone who receives Jesus can tap into the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit to do Jesus' works. Bear in mind that Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I

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go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:12-13).

What gives us confidence to act on Jesus’ commission and to receive His anointing to proclaim freedom to the world? Confidence only comes when we *know* we are acting according to God’s plan. First John 5:14-15 (*NKJV*) says, “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” Our confidence soars when we have the assurance that what we ask is in agreement with God’s plan. When we know this to be true, we also know that He will grant our requests. This is the confidence that gave Jesus the boldness to expect God to work with Him and confirm His Word with signs following.

If we don’t know what God has already promised, we will pray with uncertainty, “If it be Thy will,” wondering if we’ll receive what we’ve asked for. Our faith is activated when we are confident that we know God’s will, but the opposite is true as well. Our faith ends when we question whether what we ask for fits in God’s plan.

The primary way we discover God’s plan is by growing in our knowledge of His Word. Yet the fact that we know His plan doesn’t mean the enemy won’t oppose us. We see that in the way the kingdom of darkness was stirred up against Jesus after His proclamation in Luke 4:18-19. In the same way, when we claim these words for ourselves, the enemy will try to shut *us* down. Satan takes his mission to steal, kill, and destroy God’s plan very seriously. But we must never forget that Jesus defeated the devil and forever took

away his authority through His death, burial, and resurrection.

Matthew 18:19 says, “And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be

forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.” Jesus conquered death, hell, and the grave; then He turned over the responsibility of defeating the enemy to the Church.

Believers have all the spiritual tools required to fulfill their God-given commission—yet too often they lack the necessary passion and boldness. Ouch! That hurt, didn’t it?

In order for the world to hear the Good News, this message has to be proclaimed by Christians—not just by preachers. The world doesn’t typically go to church, so the church must go to the world! This was the reason Jesus issued His commission: “Go into all the world, and proclaim the Gospel.” The world is suffering, and believers are called to have compassion for those who don’t know the Savior, the One Who died to set them free.

*continued on back*

## upcoming meetings



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### March 4-7

Faith Family Fellowship  
420 N Wakea Ave | Kahului, HI  
96732 | (808) 244-4992

### March 11

Word of Life Christian Center  
550 Queen St | Honolulu, HI  
96813 | (808) 537-2409

### March 16

Joy Church International  
Vikki (Ladies Meeting) | 1019 Charlie Daniels Pkwy  
Mount Juliet, TN 37122 | (615) 773-5252

### March 17-18

Joy Church International  
1019 Charlie Daniels Pkwy | Mount Juliet, TN  
37122 | (615) 773-5252

### March 25

Houston Faith Church  
5630 N Eldridge Pkwy #400 | Houston TX 77041

### March 29

Living Word Christian Center  
Vikki (Ministers Meeting) | 7600 W Roosevelt Rd  
Forest Park, IL 60130 | (708) 697-5000

### March 30-April 1

Family Worship Center | 4925 E Bonne Femme Church Rd  
Columbia, MO 65201 | (573) 441-1140

### April 14

Word of Life Christian Center  
Vikki (Ladies Meeting) | 3100 19th St NW  
Rochester, MN 55903 | (507) 289-7575

### April 14-15

Word of Life Christian Center  
3100 19th St NW | Rochester, MN 55903  
(507) 289-7575

### April 15

Living Word Christian Center  
Vikki (Evening Service) | 9201 75th Ave N  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55423 | (763) 315-7000

### April 27-28

Living Word Family Church  
Vikki (Ladies Meeting) | 10520 Star Rd  
Wake Forest, NC 27587 | (919) 570-2007

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Remember how good it felt to be cleansed and free from guilt? Stir up the excitement you had when you first discovered that God had forgiven your sin. Remind yourself of the emotions provoked when you learned that you were totally loved and accepted by God. Everyone deserves to know the freedom you so liberally enjoy! Jesus commissioned His followers to spread that Good News as He commanded us, "Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!" (Matthew 10:7-8).

Be bold about proclaiming what Jesus has done for you. Don't cower under Satan's intimidation or suggestion that someone might be offended. Paul said, "Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God himself" (Philippians 1:28). When you refuse to be intimidated by the enemy, it becomes a clear sign that he is defeated and unmistakable evidence of your own deliverance! To put it in today's terminology, one might say, "Don't let the devil see you sweat"—because the enemy's threats are groundless!

The only power the enemy has is gained through fear and deception—so it's up to you to refuse to cower under his tyranny. Never forget—Jesus freed you from every one of the devil's strategies! Colossians 2:15 (*Message*) says, "He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets."

So don't put up with Satan's sham. He's an imposter! Make a fresh decision to fulfill the commission Jesus has given you. The Spirit of the Lord is upon *you*. He has anointed *you* to proclaim the Gospel; to set the captive free; and to proclaim the day of God's free favors. Be passionate and bold about what He has done for you. Freely you have received—now it's time to freely give!

*Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures come from the New Living Translation.*

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