



THE  
**LEGACY**  
CONTINUES...

# Daily Devotions 2022

## Are You Dangerous?

*“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

### **Joshua 1:9**

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When we are called by God our Savior out of sin's bondage, we begin to journey with Him. We follow Him as our Lord and Boss into the promised purpose of the future, our destiny. Along the way, God will stretch us and enlarge the horizons of our vision.

Jim Elliot, the great missionary who gave his life trying to reach the Auca Indians said, “Am I Dangerous?”

If we are honest with ourselves, we may feel we are utterly ordinary and commonplace. We profess to know a power the world cannot reckon with. But we are often spiritual pacifists in this battle to the death with principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Oh, that God would make us dangerous! That He would stretch us to places of risk!

How do we get there? According to Joshua there are several principles:

- *Choose to be strong.*
- *Choose to be courageous.*
- *Choose to be obedient.*

Read Joshua 1 and write down everything God commands him to do. Then reflect how these commands compare with what the Lord is calling you to do.

**Prayer Focus:** Pray 2 Chronicles 15:7 for our church, “But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.”

Ask God to equip you with strength, courage, and submission to Him to follow the path He has placed before you. Pray these traits for our church, as well.

## Acting on a Promise

*“Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, ‘Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful.’ ”*

### **2 Chronicles 20:20**

William Tyndale is perhaps the most important person in the illustrious history of the English Bible. He was, in fact, the father of the modern English Bible. His translation, first published in 1525, and used subsequently in virtually every other major translation for hundreds of years to follow, was the new standard for English expression. By quoting the Bible, Shakespeare quotes Tyndale more than 5,000 times!

William Tyndale did not live an easy life. He was hunted, persecuted, and eventually killed by those who considered his work evil. Can you imagine? Putting the Scriptures in a language common people could read? Preposterous! Yet he pursued this goal because he was motivated to communicate what he considered the “lost message of the church” — the message of faith. Tyndale defined faith as “acting on the promises of God.” It’s doubtful we could come up with a better definition.

**Prayer Focus:** As you consider that phrase — acting on the promises of God — how are you exercising faith today? What promises are you claiming, and how are you living out that reality? For today, identify one specific promise of God that is especially important and significant. Sit down right now, for real, and make a phone call or send an email to someone and share that promise. Then, consider how you can act on that promise... to be a doer of the Word!

## Don't Short Your Dreams

*"The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered."*

### **Genesis 39:2a**

In 1930, two young brothers named Dick and Maurice McDonald moved from New Hampshire to California to pursue the American dream of being successful. After a few failed ventures, they struck gold when they opened a small drive-in restaurant. By the mid-1950's, their annual revenue was \$350,000, and the brothers split \$100,000 in profits.

You might think, yes, the rest is history. But you may be surprised to know the rest of the story. In 1954, a man by the name of Ray Kroc came into the picture. Ray Kroc saw potential the brothers did not see. In 1961, Kroc bought the exclusive rights to McDonald's for the sum of \$2.7 million – now with 21,000+ restaurants worldwide, the rest of the story is history indeed.

The lessons learned from this story are:

- Don't pull up short of your God-given dream.
- Don't allow someone to out-dream you.
- Don't allow someone else to finish your dream.

Christians look to Joseph as the role model for dreaming big. Genesis 39 holds important lessons for all dreamers. Some lessons in this chapter can keep us from stopping short of accomplishing our dreams are:

- Know God is with us (verses 2, 21, & 23).
- Know God is aware of our actions (verse 9).
- Know God can make the bitter things in life sweet (verses 21-23).

**Prayer Focus:** Pray Sharon will pursue our God-given dream to the fullest potential. Pray that through the achievement of this spiritual journey we will become better Christ followers for the kingdom of God. Ask God to show you ways in which you have stopped short of His best for you. Ask for the boldness to identify and follow through with eliminating what is stopping you.

## House of Love

*“Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*

### **John 15:13**

George Matheson was a bright, promising young musician when he received the most devastating news of his life. He was going blind.

For several months, as his vision worsened, he had suspected the worst. But more painful than the crushing reality of his impending blindness was the reaction of his fiancée. When he told her of his condition, she tearfully returned the engagement ring. She said she could not live the rest of her life with a blind man.

Stunned by her reaction and overwhelmed with self-pity, Matheson was reeling like a boxer falling to the mat. Then, it was as if he were literally swept into God’s arms, encouraged and uplifted. Still disappointed, yet buoyed in spirit, Matheson sat down and composed a song.

In one poignant moment, George Matheson knew more deeply than ever what the true mark of the Christian is — the unmistakable mark of love.

That’s what his song was all about. It’s a song sung by believers all over the world, even to this day — the great hymn, “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go!” Through a hurtful trial, he was reminded of the love that would remain forever unaffected. In so doing, he was even able to love the one who had rejected him, as his Lord had loved those who took His very life.

There are so many reasons for us to express our commitment as members of this church body. We have been forgiven, blessed, protected, encouraged. But most of all, we’ve been loved. Our heavenly Father has demonstrated His love for us in that, while we were yet sinners, His own Son died for us! The commitments we make, the monies we give, the energies we devote, are simply expressions of our thanksgiving for all He has done.

**Prayer Focus:** In these crucial days, let’s look with gratitude to the past, let’s exercise faith in the present, let’s have true vision for the future; but, above all, let’s show a commitment to the challenge before us because of the love He’s shown for us. He has used this church and its people in so many incredible ways. Our response is tangible gratitude! What does that look like?

## More Changed Lives

*"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service."*

### **1 Timothy 1:12**

After Watergate, there was an abundance of books that were published by the various personalities involved. One of the most famous was Chuck Colson who wrote the very famous "Born Again." This book detailed his conversion to Christ. All these years later, we think of Chuck Colson as a great man who has had such an impact on the world through his prison ministries. We forget that before his conversion he was known as "the hatchet man." It was a common saying in Washington that Colson would walk over his own mother for Nixon! Another player in the Watergate scandal was the very boisterous G. Gordon Liddy. One of the great quotes from his book tells of a time when a certain court date came around. Everyone had been discussing Colson's conversion to Christianity. As Colson walked into the courtroom, Liddy was overheard to say, "Oh, no, if Colson would walk over his own mother for Nixon, just think what he will do for Jesus!"

Time has proven Colson's conversion genuine. He certainly is one more example of how God can change a life. In 1 Timothy, the Apostle Paul is encouraging Timothy in the faith to cherish, protect, and preach the Gospel. The reason is the Gospel's message changes lives. Indeed, at Sharon, the Gospel is taught so the goal of seeing more lives changed can be met.

**Prayer Focus:** Pray our church will always be a place that impacts the world for Jesus. Pray each one of us will join together to help expand God's kingdom.

Be more like Christ as we do our part to accomplish the things God has led us to do. What is God doing in your heart with regard to the future? Listen to Him. Is He challenging you some place?



## ***What if Everyone Does It?***

*“Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.”*

### **2 Corinthians 9:13**

As we look to the future, we see thousands upon thousands of people all around us who need Jesus. Some are falling away. Many, many more are waiting to be reached out to by loving laborers. Our Sharon church community continues to grow with hundreds of new residents. Who will reach out to these precious souls with the good news of Jesus?

We must take on this challenge. We must invite them in and open our hearts to receive them with love and acceptance. How will we do this? First, by understanding this is an opportunity God has given our church. This demands the right spiritual vision. In the days ahead, together, we are going to believe God will give us the insight — and the foresight — to do great things for His Kingdom’s sake.

**Prayer Focus:** Today, think about a close friend, family member or someone you don’t even know yet being reached with the Gospel — someone you are praying will one day worship the Lord with us at Sharon Baptist Church. Pray about what it will take to get them in the Kingdom. Then envision them in a seat at Sharon. Awesome, isn’t it?

## Freedom Compels Us to Reach Out

*“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”*

### **2 Corinthians 3:17**

Several years ago, in the unlikely town of Fulton, Missouri, the town fathers directed huge chunks of concrete to be hauled onto the local college campus. They knew there would be no better backdrop for a historic speech to be given in their little city.

As chunks of concrete go, they weren't particularly attractive. In fact, they were pitted, scarred by blows, and smeared with graffiti. But to those who saw them, carefully situated behind a podium on the broad green campus lawn, they were beautiful.

The speech was by Mikhail Gorbachev, former leader of the former Soviet Union, in commemoration of another speech given decades before in that same place by Sir Winston Churchill. In that earlier speech — on the same campus, behind the same podium — Churchill coined the phrase “Iron Curtain” to describe the conditions in Eastern Europe.

Half a century later, an ex-Soviet strongman stood at the microphone to talk about freedom... against a backdrop of large chunks from a fallen Berlin Wall, the actual remnants of that once-daunted “Iron Curtain.” What a visual of freedom.

Freedom. Such a wonderful word. Here in the U.S., we are blessed with a measure of freedom that is remarkable in the annals of modern history. Yet this social freedom pales in comparison with the spiritual freedom we know and experience in Jesus Christ. In Him, we have been liberated eternally.

And, because of the freedom He has given us, we are motivated to commit wholeheartedly and unreservedly to Him.

As we seek God in this spiritual journey, we ensure the message of freedom in Jesus Christ continues to go forth from this place. It is because we are free, we must do everything possible to spread the message of freedom to our community and beyond.



**Prayer Focus:** What are some practical ways you can share the joy and reality of your freedom with others? To go deeper in our walks, we must not forget the tens of thousands of lives within driving distance of our church that need that freedom in Jesus too. It's because we're free we can go and reach out to our community and invite them into a walk with Christ as well!

What is one practical way you can reach out to someone today... right now? For real! They need the freedom you have! What will you do? Send an email? Make a call? Write a letter? Pay a visit? Do something today to reach OUT!

## In God We Trust

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”*

### **Proverbs 3:5-6**

There are two ways people live their lives as they pass through this world – either remembering God or forgetting Him. They either acknowledge His presence and live their lives in dependence on Him, or they pay no attention to His claims on them and live a life on the basis of their own understanding and abilities. The worst tragedy and cruelest deception is the man who says feebly with his lips, “I trust God,” but an examination of his calendar and checkbook shows no difference between him and the man who does not make that claim. The question we must ask ourselves today is, “Do we trust God?”

The very nature of this question produces two possible meanings: First – “Can you ‘trust’ God?” That is, is He trustworthy? Can He handle the decisions and the problems in your life? Secondly – “Can ‘you’ trust God?” That is, do you have the ability to trust Him?

These verses reveal some important things about trusting God:

- The matter of trust is an all or nothing thing. Notice how many times the word “all” is used.
- The command to trust precedes the promise. Blessing comes after trust is expressed.
- The promise is conditional. Unlike many of the unconditional promises in the Bible, this promise of direction is given only to those who exercise trust in God.

**Prayer Focus:** Pray your faith and trust in God will grow. Pray you will allow God to be in control and you will utterly depend on Him and desire His will be done. Pray the fruits of our deepened trust in Him will result in guidance from Him. Ask God to identify an area of your life where you need to yield to Him.

Then give it to Him and look for His provision. Hey – we say we trust God. We want to trust God. And now it's time to actually take that to the next level.

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