



Team Devotional Guide

Spiritual direction for our Kairos Torch Team

Welcome to the Team Devotional Guide,

As we walk together on this journey of faith, obedience, and self-sacrifice, we strive to stay connected in the Spirit. The busy-ness and distractions of life tend to consume our attention. We end up being focused on the work the Lord has put on our hearts only when we can fit Him into our schedule.

This Team Devotional Guide is a tool we will use on the Kairos experience to help us stay focused on the work of the Lord as we go through each day. You'll find this Devotional Guide not only helps us to focus on the spiritual context of our joint work, but it also helps with our understanding of the foundations of this experience that we call "Kairos."

Let us pray that we make the time to allow the Spirit of God to speak to our hearts as we spend time each day being focused on His purposes during our time of preparation.

May God bless all you put your hands to do for His namesake!

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It's a dark and stormy night. The wind is really howling — there's a lot of lightning. The rain is pouring down. Aren't you glad that you're cuddled up in your easy chair with a cup of hot tea here in your cozy family room?

Outside, on the “other side of town,” the scene is quite different. There's a group of down and out folks. They're huddled under an overpass for shelter. Trying to start a fire from some trash, but it's too wet. It's really dark and cold out there. Look at them. Lost. How'd they get this way? What happened in their life that painted them into this picture? Made some bad decisions. Some really bad decisions. Didn't have a family life to speak of. Nobody cared. Maybe found acceptance with the wrong people. Now, just look at them —out here in the dark, stormy night.

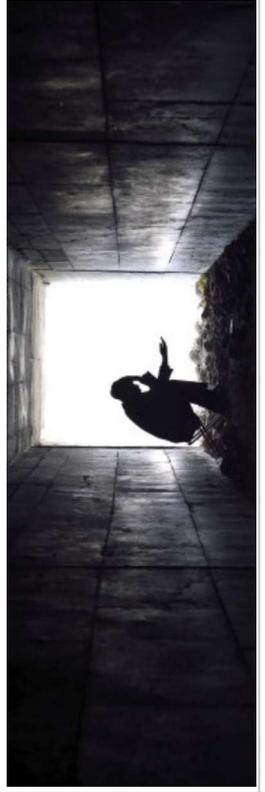
And then, something you can't imagine happens! You get up out of that cozy chair and go out into that stormy night with them! A couple of friends get in the car with you along the way, and you go out to that overpass where they are huddled together.

They are suspicious of you as you approach. You stand there with them in the dark. It's cold. You offer friendship. They respond. Laughter starts. One of your friends in the car brings over something warm to eat. Bet they haven't had a good, warm meal in a long time. Stories get told. Then, they want to know — “Why?” Why are you here? Why did you come from the comfort of your home to this dark overpass? Why?

With a lump in your throat, all you can do is to whisper one word. The reason you came, all rolled up into one word. Jesus. “I came because of Jesus, and He'll light up the darkness for you, too.”

Oh, what a journey, when you travel with Jesus. No telling where He may ask you to go, but one thing is for sure — He'll light up the darkness through you!

God bless you as you travel out to where it's dark and stormy. People need you to show them His light.





Servanthood-1

Servant Leadership

This is the image I have had in my mind for years about Jesus becoming the servant to those all around him. He was the leader serving others. Oh, how I want to serve like Jesus served...a behind the scenes servant...doing what pleases my Lord.

Then a friend shared an interesting word – *doulos* that has for centuries been translated as servant in the Bible. *Doulos* is defined as... "to ensnare, capture, serving, subject to, a slave, bondman, man of servile conditions" according to the New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon. *Doulos* translated servant - means slave. Wow!



I had to wrap my mind around the words and find my response to my Lord. I had to find my heart in relationship to my Lord. To the American Heritage Dictionary, I went. The definition of servant is one employed to perform domestic or other services. Slave is defined as a person who is owned by and forced to work for someone else or a person completely controlled by a specified influence, emotion, etc.

Wait! Jesus does not 'force' me to do anything, and I hope my motives are never to expect Jesus to 'pay' me. Maybe looking up the words wasn't my best course of action. Maybe I should have looked to the Word where the Greek: *doulos* is literally: **slave**. (Bible Dictionary)

I want to give myself up to the total influence and control of Lord Jesus Christ. I want to lift my hands up to Him as a child to the father sobbing, "Carry me..." In that moment – I am lifted in love, I have no control over where I go. I am taken on the journey of the one who holds me. I am His. And that is just where I want to be with the Lord...totally His.

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Servanthood-1

When you were **slaves** to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become **slaves** of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 6:20-23**

Simon Peter, a **servant** and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:" **2 Peter 1:1**

For he that is called in the Lord, being a **servant**, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's **servant**. **1 Corinthians 7:22**

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What does the Holy Spirit need me to understand about being enslaved to Christ?

Prayer Focus: Those who are struggling to fully submit to our Lord...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-2

Intent Listening!

Jesus said that we should love our neighbor just as we love ourselves. It is a good thing to develop a loving attitude toward others – even our enemies.

But, Jesus didn't stop there. He showed us that love is more than an attitude – it's an action. Wash the feet of others. Give the thirsty a drink. Visit the prisoner. Forgive those who have brought you great harm. Christ Himself was the essence of this love in action. The Word (love) became flesh (service).



One of the most basic ways of putting love into action is to listen. Are you a good listener? I struggled with listening – I was always preparing for what I was going to say next. Then I learned that intent listening requires surrendering my agenda to the speaker!

I began to realize why I sometimes have trouble hearing in my prayers, listening to God. It's because I don't surrender my "stuff." I'm thinking about my response. I'm focused on me, rather than on the speaker – God.

We become intent listeners when we surrender our agenda to the speaker. The speaker's message becomes more important to us than our response. When we listen with a pure heart, we have put love into action.

Most people don't listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply

Stephen Covey

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Servanthood-2

Answering before listening is both stupid and rude.

Proverbs 18:13

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What personal obstacles or "stuff" must I overcome to be an intentional listener and hear the heart of the speaker?

Prayer Focus: Those who are struggling to hear the whisper of our Lord...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-3

Listening with Our Heart

The theme of every Kairos is Listen, Listen, Love, Love. Most of us can understand the “love, love” part, but “listen, listen?” Why would listening be raised to the level of a key attitude that we should have?

In a restricted environment, the freedom to talk and honestly share life experiences is limited. Oh, sure there’s conversation about superficial stuff – the surface things – sports, fashion and the weather. But what’s going on inside the youth? How does a young man or young lady feel about something personal? How do they learn to verbalize their questions? How do they learn to “think out loud” while searching for their answers? How can they find a “sounding board” for their thoughts? It’s a rare event in the facility for sharing with depth, or listening with whole hearted interest. However, rare or not, it is so critical to learn to truly listen to others. In order for the Participant to be a part of a relationship – whether friendship, mentor/mentee or a Christian community – listening must be valued.

Kairos Torch volunteers listen to hear – not to react – but to hear. We come to the youth not as “experts” with all the answers. We come simply as Christians – the family of Christ, who loves because Christ loved us. We love by spending time and listening.

Psalms 18:6 reads: ***“In my distress I called upon the Lord, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, even to His ears.”*** David’s words depict how God not only listens to us with His heart, but He also listens to our heart and responds in wisdom, power and love. He listens...and He loves...and we strive to do the same....

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Servanthood-3

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;

Proverbs 20:12

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What blocks me from listening with my heart?

Prayer Focus: Those whose hearts are broken...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-4

Lessons in Listening!

Imagine the scene:

You are with someone who has asked you a hard question, a deep question, a very personal question. Your first sense is that they really want to know your heart. There seems to be a genuine caring in their voice and in their body language as they lean into the conversation.

How do you want them to respond to you as you begin to make yourself vulnerable and honestly answer the question?

Imagine what they are doing and saying as you open up with your heart felt answer. Are they paying attention, or are they becoming distracted after a few minutes? Are they talking as much as you, or are they truly listening? Are they understanding, or are they trying to counsel you?



How are they making you feel in this “shed all” conversation? Do they really care about you? Do they really want to know what you feel? Or, are they waiting for the moment to pounce and correct? If you sense that they really do care by their interest in hearing your answer, are you more likely to really share what’s going on inside? Are you more likely to trust them?

How a person listens is so critical in Kairos Torch. Not only does it say a lot to the person talking, but it says a lot about us! Are we really concerned, or are we just going through the motions? Are we more concerned about what we’re going to say next than what the person talking is really saying?

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Servanthood-4

Let’s imagine the scene again:

This time, imagine YOU have asked someone else the question, and they are becoming vulnerable to you in their answer. Can you respond like the listener you wanted?

Here’s the question that you have been asked:

“How do you deal with deep wounding by others?”

Now, imagine the other person answering this question. How will you respond? Will you be focused on them? Will you communicate your “judgment” or your “compassion” by your body language? What will your facial expressions say to the person talking?

Practice this scene in your mind. Play it over and over to help you “serve by listening.”

What is God saying to ME through this lesson?

In what area do I need to be a better listener?

Prayer Focus: Those who are struggling to find a safe place to express their feelings...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-5

Agape: Love, Sacrificially Given

If ever there has been a case of abusing a word in the human language, it has to be the word “LOVE”. There has certainly been the misapplication of its usage in my life. I used the same word (love) to express my admiration for a great steak as I have to convey my deep affection for my children. I also remember when that person raked me over the coals and ended with, “***I’m saying this out of love.***” Well, it sure felt to me like anger was speaking while love was on a long vacation.

In the Greek language, there are three distinctive words for love that characterize the specific feeling the user is experiencing:

1. **Eros**— is where we get the English word “erotic”; meaning sensual, deeply intimate, impulsive love. It is loving that which is lovable.
2. **Philia**— is where we get the English word philanthropy. The Greeks used this word for love of friends, spouse and youth.
3. **Agape**— as used in the Greek language, refers to a selective desire for something or someone. It means absolute, independent, un-necessitated, immutable, uncompromising, self-giving, other-orientated, desiring the best for all others. Wow, I sure don’t feel that deeply for my steak!



Agape love is sacrificial giving, and sacrificial giving is what results when we make a deliberate choice to dedicate our time, resources or our life to something or someone other than ourselves.

When Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him, He was asking, “Do you agape me?” After each response from Peter, Jesus explained that the cost of agape was the sacrificial giving of one’s life to spiritually feed those that came to know Him. Jesus said to Peter, “Feed my sheep.” Ministering to hurting youth calls for agape love.

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Servanthood-5

...for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.”

Luke 21:4

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What stage am I in my love-life to those Christ has called me to serve?

Prayer Focus: Those who feel unloved...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-6

Can Agape Love Ever Be Abused?

As a Kairos Torch team member, you are asked to give a lot! You give your time. Your financial support. Your prayers. Your passion and sometimes even your tears. Give, give, give— that seems to be the life of a Kairos Torch team member.

Have you ever felt “all given out?” Or that you are being taken advantage of? Perhaps you are like me and have made one of the following statements: “***They need to remember that I am just a volunteer...I don’t get paid to do this stuff***” or “***Okay, now they are just taking advantage of me.***” Of course we can’t omit the favorite one... “***They’re working me like I’m some kind of a slave.***”



I’ve even gone as far as to launch my complaint with God in the form of a ‘what-about-me prayer.’ I let Him know that I was not happy with my love being abused and my work going unappreciated. After my ranting, He gently took me back to His word in I Corinthians and reminded me how authentic love is carried out.

We often start off wanting to give because of the joy it brings us. As we give, it seems that the need for giving goes up. The demands for giving increase. Then we begin to feel that our giving has become expected – rather than appreciated! Not really sure if we’re going to give any more, we pull back.

We pull back from what? From the very thing that got us started in the first place!

God put it on our heart to give and we did joyfully, and we found blessings in that joy! It was wonderful. Then, we started feeling used and unappreciated. Satan – he’s there. A little twist here, a little discontent there and before you know it, the joy’s gone. Don’t let Satan steal the joy that God pours out on us. Let us live with our hands open - allowing God to take and use whatever He wants of us. Give – give as freely as we have received.

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Servanthood-6

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails...

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Am I self-seeking in my service to others?

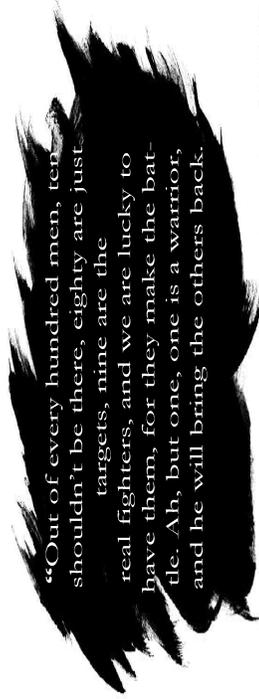
Prayer Focus: Those who are experiencing burnout in their service to God...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-7

Who Is The Real Warrior?



“Out of every hundred men, ten shouldn’t be there, eighty are just targets, nine are the real fighters, and we are lucky to have them, for they make the battle. Ah, but one, one is a warrior, and he will bring the others back.”

—Heracitus, circa 500 BCE

The Roman Army was organized in groups of 100, a century. Each century was under the command of a centurion. The organization was one of tenure, so to speak, as a soldier gained experience and survived battles, he was promoted in the hierarchy of the organization. The most experienced and one of greatest longevity was the centurion – he was THE warrior for the century.

Your team will not be significantly different than the Roman army century. You will have contacted potential volunteers that will pass on the opportunity to serve and quite frankly, some will accept the opportunity but haven’t prepared to serve– these make up the group of 10 related above. Most of the rest of your recruited team will be those that comprise the group of eighty. These excellent folks are the muscle and skeleton that will do the work of the Kairos Torch Weekend and Continuing Ministry. Their numbers are important to weight the “battle” in your favor, they are on the front lines. The Table Family Leaders, the Spiritual Leader, the Music Team, the Agape Team, the Prayer Team, the Kitchen Team, and last but certainly not least, the donors and the Advisory Council that got you to the institution make up this group.

Next comes another important component of your team, the Weekend leadership. In the illustration above, these folks, the Weekend Leader’s, the Advising Leader, the Observing Leader, the Spiritual Leader, the Agape Leader, the Music Leader, Lite ‘n Lively Leader and the Kitchen Leader make up the group of nine – the real fighters.

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Servanthood-7

They will have been present from the start of team formation and will have played a major role in preparing the team. They are the ones that will really implement the plan of the ministry, directing others to take action.

But you say, “Who is the one, the real warrior that will bring us home?” The One is none other than Jesus! He is the one that will guide the Weekend and Continuing Ministry. He is THE LEADER that has been there all along, it is Him we all are privileged to serve and He will bring us back.



What is God saying to ME through this lesson?

What more do I need to do to prepare for service?

Prayer Focus: Those who selflessly serve...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-8

The Art of Listening

As a child, I enjoyed making the “can and cord telephone system” with my two older brothers, but I often got frustrated when trying to use it. My irritation wasn’t because the phone system didn’t work.

In fact, it worked quite well when properly constructed. My irritation came from the fact that the can acted as both the transmitter and the receiver. I hated having to wait until the person talking was finished, and then let you know that they were now ready to hear your response.

Being the youngest, it seemed that they never gave me the opportunity to talk, and the few times that they did, they would quickly move the can from their ear to their mouth and start yelling out their next thought before I was finished talking.

It’s astounding how often we interrupt conversations to interject our perspective before the speaker has had an opportunity to finish theirs. We’re not much different from those can phones that get more usage as a transmitter than a receiver.

As I read the many accounts of Christ and His interaction with others, I never see a time He interrupts the speaker. Even though He knew their questions and the purpose for their asking before they asked it. Christ always let them get their full question or statement out before responding.

So often we wonder why we can’t get youth to talk to us about what is going on in their lives and why they act out in the manner that they sometimes do. Could it be that we are just not listening to them? I mean really listening; listening without correcting; listening without interrupting; listening without judging! Rather, join together in listening to hear THEIR hearts!

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Servanthood-8

¹³ Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

Matthew 19:13-14

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What steps do I need to take to become a better listener?

Am I more a transmitter than a receiver in my conversations with others?

Prayer Focus: Those who are alone and feel they have no voice...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-9

Serving Others with Excellence

I couldn't have been any older than 12 when I landed my very first job as a paperboy. I was so excited that my dad had talked to the Star & News Paper Company and got my brothers and me each our own route. Looking back on it, I think he was pretty proud of how he negotiated for his three sons as well.



Dad set down with the three of us and carefully explained how it all worked before taking us on the route to get us familiar with the most efficient way to deliver the papers. Ever since I could remember, he was a stickler for doing everything with excellence. When the papers were dropped off in our driveway, Dad would be the first to hurry out and make sure we had the exact number of papers we were intended to have. He showed us how to meticulously fold our papers, so they wouldn't come apart when tossing them on the patrons' porches from 10 - 20 feet away. Finally, he went over our route books with us and taught us how to collect the fees and make change. His motto was to always give one's best in serving others and you would reap rewards later on in life.

For the first week or so, I was really excited about my new job and the money I would be making for doing my job. After that second week I realized it was a JOB. It was taking up too much of my play time! This delivering newspapers everyday after school was a bit much, and I needed to find a way to cut down the time it was taking me. The first short cut was to stop carrying the papers into the house from the bottom of the driveway. I would just sit at the end of the drive, fold the papers there and then dump them in my delivery bag. It worked okay as long as it was not raining that day, but I was only shaving off a couple of minutes at best. So I had to think of something else that would help me save time. That's when I decided not to fold the papers at all. I would just do a quick fold before I tossed them. Well, that was a bad idea and it cost me more time to gather the wind-blown paper from the yards.

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Servanthood-9

The next bright idea that hit me was to just put the paper in the mailboxes and not worry about tossing them on the porches like the customers asked. Eventually, I lost my paper route because of poor customer service. I did learn a valuable lesson that year — serving others should always be done with a spirit of excellence and never with the attitude of cutting corners or doing what works best for me.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

Colossians 3:23

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What shortcuts have I taken that keep me from serving with excellence?

Prayer Focus: Those whom I am called to serve...

My prayers go out for...



Servanthood-10

Kairos Leaders' Prayer Woven in the Word of God

Lord, grant that we may understand the necessity for depth in Kairos, rather than surface luster.

Convince us of the truth that it is not colorful moments, but Your presence which bears fruit.

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Acts 9:31 (NIV)

Multiply, oh God, the self-sacrificing souls among us who know how to give everything for Your cause: our time, our faculties, our health and even our lives, if necessary.

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:36-38 (NIV)

Instill in us boldness in our initiatives, good judgment in our choices of the right means and that courage, which, in spite of failures, assures victory through Your redeeming love.

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13 (NIV)

Cleanse us of the tiny rivalries, sensitivities, vanities, discourtesies... everything which distracts from You, everything which divides or discourages us.

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalms 51:10 (NIV)

Help us to maintain, at a high level, meaningful, supernatural and mutual love among ourselves, so that each one will seek by preference the most humble tasks and will rejoice at the good performed by others.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

Grant that we may be united in a common purpose and share in a single spirit... Your spirit, Lord Jesus. Grant that Your attractive goodness may be seen in all of our faces, Your warm accents of love heard in all our words. In our lives, may we show something of You to the world, something which proclaims Your living presence among us.

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity."

John 17:20-23a (NIV)

Amen



Servanthood-10

Please spend time with this prayer and the scriptures written below each prayer line. Let it continue to bring clarity to your role of service to God and those He has called you to serve!

What's God saying to ME through His Word and this prayer?

Are there any tiny rivalries in me that can hinder God's work?

Prayer Focus: All those serving on this team...

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-1

Building a New Foundation

When I was in high school, I went to a junk yard and bought a 1946 Chevy panel truck. It was a mess - didn't run, but it looked pretty good. I mean, the body wasn't rusted and dented. I could do something with this! I worked on that old truck for months. Never did get it going. It took a lot more that I had in me to get it fixed.

You have to understand that what I saw in that old junk yard was the body. It looked good! A little sanding and some nice paint and it would really be something to show off. However, the problem was that the "guts" of my prized Chevy were no good. I kept trying to patch it up - you know, new spark plugs when it really needed new pistons and new wires when it really called for bearings deep inside. I was working on the surface stuff and missing the need to start at the beginning. I needed to rebuild that ol' truck from the foundation up.



Have you found your journey of faith to be a little like my journey with that truck? We focused on superficial things. We work at being "nice" people and we go to church. But what about building a new foundation? A new foundation??? What's wrong with the old one?

Yes, a new foundation! Our old foundation was built in a way that we find it so easy to focus on ourselves. We see everything from our perspective. How is this going to affect me? But, a new foundation is needed so we can focus on God! No simple tune up - no jazzy paint job will do it. Sometimes serious work is needed. Sacrifice! A sacrificial attitude in life. An attitude where I love others, even the unlovable, even above myself. Letting my focus turn to others and making room for a new way - a way where I think of myself last. A way where my love is focused on others.

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Vulnerability-1

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

Psalms 139:23

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What steps do I need to take in my life to stay focused on the depth in Kairos rather than surface luster?

Who have I loved that is unlovable?

Prayer Focus: Persons that are starving for love, but are hard to love...

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-2

Being Strong in Our Weakness!

I don't know about you, but I grew up being taught to be strong. Never show your weaknesses. Hide your faults. Emphasize your strong points.



Nowhere is the need to “be strong” more noticeable, and more important, than in a place where everyone is down but wants to climb to the top. A weakness makes you vulnerable — to being hurt or taken advantage of. In the free world, being vulnerable opens the door to being hurt, too. We don't want to be taken advantage of, so we keep our “be strong” face on.

“Being strong” is mankind's way, isn't it? I mean, Christ told us that it is in our weakness that we become strong. It is in our becoming vulnerable that the power of the Holy Spirit works. When we take off our “game face,” we let down our guard. We lower the wall that protects us. The very wall that shuts out Jesus finally comes down, and Christ's love shines in and new life begins.

Becoming vulnerable is key if the Kairos Torch Participants are to come to that point where the love of Christ can penetrate those hardened walls. But, being vulnerable is not a natural thing — it is an uncomfortable thing. So, the team models vulnerability to show that it is okay in the family of faith to let our guard down and let the true person God created shine through.

Every speaker talks from a position of being vulnerable. They are modeling vulnerability for the Participants. And, perhaps even more importantly, the rest of the team is modeling how the Christian community responds to a brother or sister who is vulnerable. We don't poke fun at them, we embrace them. We speak of our appreciation of, and our love for the one who has become vulnerable. How we respond is critical. We are being watched, and our actions do indeed speak louder than our words. That's true whether we're in the youth facility, or at church, or at home—isn't it?

Continue on next page



Vulnerability-2

...quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength...

Hebrews 11:34

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How are love and vulnerability connected?

Prayer Focus: Those who are emotionally hurting but have built strong walls, so no one can get in...

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-3

The Problem with Love

As Christians, we know that we are to love one another. But, to love, to truly love, we must become vulnerable to one another. How can we really love or be loved by someone if we are not willing to let them know who we really are?

It's hard to allow ourselves to become exposed to one another. Our experiences in life, even in the church, may have taught us to be cautious - to be on guard - to build our own "hedge" of protection around ourselves - to keep others out of our sensitive areas.

Even in the loving environment of a Kairos Torch team, we may find it difficult to become vulnerable to one another. It may be risky, but it's nowhere nearly as precarious as the environment behind the prison fence. And yet, we know that to allow the gift of God's grace to be received, one has to become vulnerable. That's a very hard thing to expect of a Participant.

I have often found my finger on the off switch when it comes to sharing at a deeper level. The pain of being rejected after revealing some of my hidden problems has been very real in my life. It's when I fully released to God that I was able to truly share with others.

During the course of the Kairos Torch Weekend, every Participant has to be gently led over that "distrust hurdle." In order for them to become a viable member of the sharing Christian community, they have to take the risk of exposing their lives, their hurts, their disappointments, and their hopes.

As team members, we model the message. We too, must be open and show one another that real love springs forth in that vulnerability. One way we risk becoming open to one another is to share our susceptible moments with another person.

Use the following page to guide your heart to a deeper sense of how much you need Christ and how it is through Him that we can truly become vulnerable to one another.

Continue on next page



Vulnerability-3

If you love only the people who love you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners do that! No! Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back.

Luke 6:32-33, 35

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Who are my enemies and what ways can I show them love?

Prayer Focus: My enemies!

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-4

Tears Behind the Mask

Today I sat alone and cried. I didn't want anyone to see this side of me. I've been told so many times to be strong, don't cry and if I cried, "I'll give you something to cry about." I've learned to set my jaw, walk away and stuff the feelings ... drying up the reflex to leak on my cheeks. But the struggle to master the tears, tears me up inside. I wonder if there is a better way...



There seem to be three types of tears. Ones that continually keep your eyes moist, those that flush out the intrusive dust particle and the emotional ones. These emotional tears are just a little different than the first two. They contain stress hormones with toxins and stimulate the production of endorphins in our body to make us feel better. So the implication is that crying for emotional reasons is therapeutic. The tears on my face were a part of a healing process. I will freely choose to cry. I will freely choose to allow others to see my need for their support.

Leading tear researchers, Vingerhoets and Trimble, share that tears show others that we're vulnerable, and vulnerability is critical to human connection. "...The tear became something that automatically set off empathy and compassion in another. Actually, being able to cry and being able to respond to the hurt is a very important part of being human."

"May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy!" as the writer of the Psalms puts it, "He that goes forth weeping bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him." Gospel of Luke—"Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh"—and John—"your sorrow will be turned into joy"—and John 11:35 is the shortest verse in the Bible, but it speaks volumes to us about the depth of Christ love for us— **'Jesus wept.'**

Continue on next page



Vulnerability-4

He will wipe every tear from your eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Revelation 21:4

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How have I suppressed tears?

Prayer Focus: Allow healing to wash over you...

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-5

Fortified Weakness

God's way is so different than ours! With God we find strength in our weakness. It's not our strength, but in realizing our weakness, we find God's strength. It's been there all along, but we miss it because we keep trying to live from our own strong point.



When you meet that Kairos Torch Participant on Friday night, don't be surprised to find them express a great deal of self-confidence. Don't be shocked if some tell you that they have very close, loving families that write and visit often. Don't be astounded, because they often are living through the "wall" that they have built to protect themselves against their reality.

Becoming vulnerable is not a part of their mindset, as they see it, it's a very unsafe place to stand. What they have learned is that telling their REAL story is risky... that private stuff must remain private! If they tell too much, they may be rejected and hurt... they would become vulnerable!

Our calling is not to pry them open and force them to tell us their deepest secrets or greatest fears... It is our charge to make **ourselves** vulnerable to them before God... to teach by doing and not by preaching. God will use the tender spirit and the openness of the exposed heart to break down the barriers that prevent the Participants from living joyfully in the spirit. Don't worry, just listen and love.

It is in the acknowledgement of our weakness that God's strength is proven in our lives.

Continue on next page



Vulnerability-5

My grace is enough; it's all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:9

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Where is the one place in my life where I truly need Christ? That one place where I know that I was in so great a need that it was only because God carried me through it that I was able to make it?

Prayer Focus: Those that feel they are strong enough without God...

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-6

All Have Sinned

Heavenly Father,

I pray that you forgive me. As a police officer, I did not think it was possible to share my love for you with someone I placed in jail. I never thought I could share my God with someone who broke the law. I never thought they earned the right to know you, God.

God, I remember the night you spoke to me. You said "...you have two children. I need you to pick one to go to heaven and one to go to hell." I yelled back, "What? God that is not fair!" You showed me then that this was what I was asking you to do... to let some children go to heaven and those in jail to go to hell without a chance of redemption. Regardless of what anyone has done, we have all sinned...and a sin is a sin no matter how big or small it seems.

BOY was I wrong about who has the right to know you, Lord. It has taken me several years to understand that you have paid the price for all sins and invite all to come to a relationship with you.

Lord, I pray that police officers move from judgement and looking down on others.

As a volunteer in Kairos Torch, you have blessed my socks off!

Amen



Continue on next page



Vulnerability-6

Basically, all of us, whether insiders or outsiders, start out in identical conditions, which is to say that we all start out as sinners.

Romans 3:11-12

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

When have I thought myself better than another, withheld the grace of God from another or stifled the call to share the good news of Christ's redemption with another?

Prayer Focus: Crushing the spirit of superiority...

My prayers go out for...

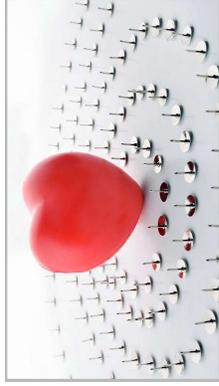


Vulnerability-7

Putting My Heart on the Line

It was awkward and uncomfortable to put it mildly... but it was the door that God had swung opened and it was too late to turn back.

There I was standing in the center of the adult prison for women- setting up and preparing a two day training for 30 plus women that were serving life sentences. I've trained hundreds of men and women in the free world to work in ministry and Christian mentoring. I've trained dozens of incarcerated men as well. This would be my very first experience training incarcerated women; and in all honesty, it was a bit disconcerting that I would be the only man present.



The women were very open and engaging when my co-trainer (a female) took center stage and began the training. But the climate quickly changed when I stood and began to do my part. It was obvious that a man was not welcome in their inner circle, and it became even more evident when we were asked to complete an activity that called for us to circle up and hold hands. There was a very noticeable moving and shifting away from me. Out of personal embarrassment and discomfort, I slowly eased out of the circle for a few seconds to plot my next move. It was then that I decided to put my heart on the line and address our tension. Quickly stepping back into the circle, I took the hand of the women on both sides and completed the activity. When it was time for me to do the next part of the training, I addressed their discomfort with me, and spoke of mine as well. After the closing prayer that day, one of the ladies walked up to me and asked for a semi-private audience with me. We stepped over to

Continue on next page



Vulnerability-7

the side and she began her conversation by saying: "You sure got a lot of nerve coming in here talking to us about anything! You represent everything that I hate, because everything bad in my life that has happened to me, happened at the hands of a man. In fact, I am in here because of a man! The first thing that I felt when I saw you was anger and hatred! But, I also want you to know that the way you put your heart on the line and expressed God's love to us has torn down several bricks in my wall, and I am able to at least look at you without anger and hatred." She concluded by saying, "Please don't get it twisted, I still have my wall up with you, but it is only waist high and it was over my head when you came in."

The following day we finished the training and she came to me again and said, "I really appreciate you sharing your heart with us and want you to know that my wall is only ankle high. May I step over and give you a hug?"

But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Luke 6:27-36

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Prayer Focus: Those who have brought great harm to me or those I love...

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-8

Transformations

Something really special happens on a Kairos Torch Weekend. There is a transformation that happens. You get a glimpse of it during the Closing Ceremony on Sunday afternoon when the Participants reflect on the most important thing they learned during the Weekend and how they think that can change their lives. They may come lost, broken, rejected, angry, or closed off. They are offered unconditional love, a safe place to share and a glimpse of Jesus.

You will see this transformation occur. It happens differently for different people. For some, the person you met on Friday night has been replaced with a new spirit on Saturday morning. Others will hear “their” story given during one of the seven talks and imagine a new chapter in “their” life. Others will find a change through worship experiences or through table discussion. Still others will find transformation in the weekly mentoring of the Continuing Ministry.



The point is that change takes place – but that change is different for every person. As a team member, it is best to avoid bringing any kind of expectation of this transformation. Just be willing to be a tool of the Holy Spirit. You will not transform anything. But through you, the Spirit can work miracles!

Our role, as team members, is to represent Christ to the Participants. Listen, don’t talk. Love, don’t preach. Eat last, not first. No agenda. No expectation. Just be yourself, loving simply because Christ loved you.

Transformation will occur. And, if you listen and love, you might even realize that you too are being transformed!

Continue on next page



Vulnerability-8

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

2 Corinthians 5:17

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Do I show God’s transforming power in my life? How?

Prayer Focus: Be open and positioned to change...

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-9

J-U-M-P!

Oliver was at work and several miles from home when he received the call. When told that his apartment was completely engulfed in flames, he got quiet—almost despondent. But when he learned that his nine year old son, Jason, was still inside the apartment and hanging out their third story window—Oliver went into fight-mode and ran for the closest exit door he could find.



The fire department had already arrived and was working feverishly to put the fire out, but it looked like the third floor of the apartment building was going to be a complete loss. Knowing it would take him at least 20 minutes to get to his apartment at his normal driving speed, Oliver pressed down on the gas pedal and took every shortcut he could think of.

In contrast, Jason was paralyzed by fear and couldn't move. Although the heat from the flames was beginning to make itself know to him. He found himself mentally and physically stuck. Sitting on the window ledge with both feet dangling outside the window, the firemen repeatedly yelling up at him, "**Jump into the net! JUMP NOW!**" Even the neighbors began chiming in and screaming at the top of their voices, but to no avail. As the crowd grew larger, so did the unified message to Jason, "**JUMP!**"

From his flaming perch, Jason's eyes darted between the fireman to net and back to the fireman again. The hearts of the bystanders began to faint as the building became more and more consumed by the fire. It was obvious that Jason was not going to jump and within minutes... the fire was going to overtake him.

Continue on next page



Vulnerability-9

It was at that moment that his father sprang from his truck and quickly pushing through the crowd, he calmly called out to his son, "**Jason, jump.**" Locking his eyes on his father, Jason jumped into the net without hesitation.

Later the reporter asked Jason why he wouldn't jump in the net until his father arrived and called out to him. The boy buried his head into his father's chest and quietly replied, "**I trust him.**"

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.

Psalm 13:5

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Do I display the kind of love that frees others to trust me?

Prayer Focus: Those who struggle with trust

My prayers go out for...



Vulnerability-10

Is This a Safe Place?

Although I was physically safe, my past experience from being inside the prison's death chamber and witnessing the execution left me emotionally insecure and feeling utterly defenseless.

I remember it like it was yesterday—feeling like I had just witnessed something that I was not suppose to see. It was like secretly peeking through a keyhole or a small opening and hoping I wouldn't be discovered. Even when I got in my bed that morning around 2:00 AM, I drifted off with the thought that someone would soon be kicking in my door and taking me into custody for what I had just observed.



A few years later, I reluctantly agreed to get involved with Kairos and go back into another prison. The only reason I finally gave in was because the person that asked me to participate was someone that I literally trusted with my life. I found it interesting that during team meetings there were statements made about prisons being the devil's playground, yet strong emphasis was put on creating a safe place for the incarcerated during the Kairos Weekend. In my mind, incarceration and safety were as far as the east is from the west. This was one of the most absurd statements I had ever heard.

After years of serving in Kairos and opening myself up to go wherever the call of ministry takes me, I've learned that places rightfully branded as perilous or unsafe are no match for the environment God creates when two or three are gathered in His name and for His cause. I've learned that I too have the ability to create a safe place for those incarcerated youth that have no voice and no trusting place to share their feelings and their story. The team and the Participants on Kairos Torch Weekends often remark, "***I completely forgot I was in prison.***"



Vulnerability-10

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; Thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.

Psalms 23:17

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How can I create a safe environment for the youth in Kairos Torch?

Prayer Focus: Those paralyzed by feeling defenseless...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-1

A Heart of Prayer

The film director knew the homeless were in hidden pockets of the downtown Orlando area, and that filming them would make good “b-roll” footage for the Kairos Torch documentary film, **“Locked Up: More than a Statistic.”** B-roll is what TV broadcasters and film makers use as supplemental footage inserted as a cutaway to help tell the story. Armed with camera and lights, she gathered her crew and we headed for the agreed upon filming location. Once we got into the downtown area, it was decided that we would park the cars and walk to the location while letting the cameras roll as we walked.



We approached several homeless men and women that day. Some were willing to have their pictures taken for a couple of dollars and others didn’t want to be bothered at all— but Jerome (*not his real name*) was different.

We did not approach him, he gently approached us. Standing just a few feet away, I noticed the curiosity on his face as he watch the camera crew film the buildings and the night life that was taking place. I greeted him as he stepped closer into our circle. I began to tell him who we were and what we were doing. “I am with Kairos Prison Ministry, a Christian organization that ministers to those who are incarcerated and their female loved ones.” As I looked at his bent over body and into his weathered face, my heart broke for him. Most of the camera crew did not profess Christianity but they seemed to be equally moved by Jerome. At the leading of the film director, they began frantically searching their pockets for dollar bills to give him. No coins she exclaimed; bills only. As she pressed the bills into his hands, it was immediately obvious that this is not what he came for.

With broken English came his request... **“Would you pray for me? I’ve done too much for the Lord to save me.”**

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Compassion-1

Therefore confess your sins to each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

James 5:16

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Where can I position myself in order to pray for others?

Prayer Focus: Those who feel their sins are larger than God’s grace...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-2

The Struggle Within

This is the struggle I have.

I see someone who needs - needs another set of hands to carry the load, a ride to the doctor's office, a bag of groceries, a cup of coffee or maybe a listening ear, a tender smile.

The need is real— very real; but a dark place within me pulls my attention away saying, “Your hands are full, you will be late to your appointment, you have your own family to worry about, you can’t spare that dollar, you don’t have time for this right now... Just keep walking, don’t make eye contact, look the other way and that feeling will pass!”



It’s interesting how we pick one or two days out of the year to show compassion to the hungry/homeless. We seem to feel really good about ourselves when gearing up to go out and feed the hungry on Thanksgiving or Christmas Day. Yet, we’ll walk past the man eating from the garbage can two days later in disgust. Some will extend their compassion throughout the Christmas holidays, but rapidly return to self-interest once the season has past.

From the book of Matthew 25: ³⁵“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”

⁴⁰“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”

Yes, Lord, I am called to see the need and respond to that need whenever I can—not just during a particular season... I won’t turn my head and walk away.

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Compassion-2

He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself.

Luke 10:27

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What struggle do I have in responding with compassion?

Prayer Focus: Those who are sick, hungry or in trouble...

My prayers go out for...

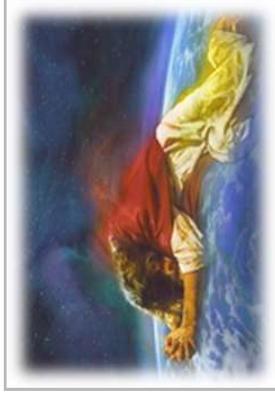


Compassion-3

Laying It All on the Line

It was well after 1:00 AM on January the 1st, and I was on the way home from our church's annual "Watch Night Service". Still a few miles from home, I was more than ready to "hit the sack" before really starting the new year.

I was deep in thought about the message I had just heard and setting my goals for this wonderful new year's journey. It was then that I spotted a group of teenage boys directly in front of me. Why are they in the middle of the street, and why aren't they moving?



As I got a few feet away, I quickly switched lanes so as not to hit them. That's when the group took off running down the middle of the street. As I approached the spot they had been standing, I saw a fairly large mass laying there in the middle of the street... that mass was a young man around 15 years of age. Pulling up beside him, I got out of my car. He was badly bruised and beaten. As I helped the injured youth into the back seat, I noticed the fleeing teenagers pursuing another young man—he too was about to be overtaken in the middle of the street. Quickly shutting the door, I jumped back into the driver's seat and headed toward the boys. As I pulled up beside them, I saw that they had reached their target before me and were now stomping and kicking him. Jumping from my car once again, I yelled out at the group of assailants, "Get off of him now!" As they turned to see who had the audacity to scold them, I seized the moment to launch into my fatherly speech about their conduct. The harvest day would come when they would reap what they were sowing. It never occurred to me that I was putting myself in harm's way until they spoke of jumping me. I slowly and disappointedly peered into each of their eyes. All I felt in those moments was the pain of the two wounded teenagers. When I came to myself, I told the young man laying on the ground to get up and get in my car. During the drive, there was time to witness about life choices and the safe place within the church nearest their homes.

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Compassion-3

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:13

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Am I willing to lay it all on the line for others?

Prayer Focus: Those youth that have been/are being abused inside the institution...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-4

A Response of Compassion

Compassion as defined in the scriptures is so much more than simple feelings of sympathy or care. Based on the Latin roots of the word, the meaning of compassion is to "**suffer with**". The response is to recognize the suffering of another, then take action to help.

We see an example in the 7th chapter of Luke. Jesus is headed for the city of Nain with His disciples and several of His followers. As they enter the city's gate, Jesus comes face to face with a large funeral procession. The young man they are carrying out to be buried is the only son of a widowed woman who is in deep grief. The biblical account reads: ¹³ **“And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her (suffered with her), and said unto her, Weep not.”** It was out of His compassion that Jesus responded to the suffering of the woman—by giving her son life and returning him back to her.

How amazing it is to recognize our call to compassion and respond! In the moment we feel the need to help—and without even making a plan, meeting the need of another to ease their discomfort. Wow—we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves!

I see a man offering his sandals to a young lady with bare feet. I see the sunshine, the cobbled walk and I feel the heat on that surface stinging their tender souls. This man has exchanged his comfort for her discomfort... his shoes for her tears.

This act of compassion is more than give and take — this is more than subtracting and adding — this is more. This is Christ bringing two souls together in a way that both have more than they had before this moment.



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Compassion-4

As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

Luke 10:27

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What resource do I hold that can be used to respond with compassion?

Prayer Focus: Those who are sick, hungry or in trouble...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-5

Switching Places

It was in the high 90's outside— I was slightly dehydrated, thoroughly frustrated, completely exhausted, utterly infuriated, and felt deeply betrayed as I pulled the large U-Haul truck in to the gas station. Moving is one of the things I least enjoy doing, but I had to get it done before leaving the country for three weeks. The managing agency that leased the house to me three years earlier knew that my home was being foreclosed on. I was not notified until all was said and done. I was given only a few days to strip the walls, purge the closets, get things packed and move everything into storage before my home was confiscated by the new owners.



For the past three years, I took meticulous care of my home. Packing up the contents of this 2,750 square foot home with no place to go - was devastating (especially since I had to travel out of the country for my job in a few days). All I could do was try to find a large enough storage space for a four bedroom home and dump everything into storage as quickly as possible. I was not in the mood for anything else to go wrong, and I was not interested in being bothered by anyone. All I wanted was a large bottle of cold water and a full tank of gas.

It was when I started moving towards the gas pumps that my disposition changed. There he sat up against the wall of the gas station - a young, disheveled looking man with sweat pouring down his face. It was that very moment that I heard God speaking to my heart about taking my eyes off myself and seeing those around me that had dire, immediate needs. I was to switch places with that young man for a moment. In that second I heard God's voice within saying, "Give that man something to drink." As I got out of the truck and walked up to the door, I stopped in front of the young man and ask him if he would like a cold bottle of water or a cold bottle of ice tea. Startled by my approach, he asked me

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Compassion-5

what I said, and I repeated "Cold water or cold ice tea?" Looking at me with bewilderment, he responded with a simple whisper, "Anything."

As I entered the door of the gas station, I heard that voice again saying, "Get him both." When I handed him the two bottles, his eyes lit up and his head tilted slightly as if to ask, "Why?" Before walking to the truck, I spoke words of blessings over him. That's when I felt the heaviness of my own spirit lift. Christ was pleased that I gave a drink to one of His little ones and He rewarded my heart with peace.

And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.

Matthew 10:42

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How will I respond when I see those that are thirsty?

Prayer Focus: Those who thirst for God...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-6

Finding God's Compassion in ROLO's

Do you have one thing in your life that reminds you of God, and life's lessons you have learned over the years? For me it is ROLOs - the chocolate candy with the caramel center.

When I was growing up Rolos were always my candy of choice. If I got to pick a treat out at the store, I picked Rolos. But Rolos also remind me of God's grace and mercy, and of my dad.



Why you ask? When I was six my parents and I moved across country from California to North Carolina. My dad, who was a Marine, had been transferred again. One day on our trip we stopped for lunch and my dad bought me a pack of Rolos. After lunch we got in the car and started down the road. A few miles later my mother asked me for a Rolo. I immediately said, "No!" Mom didn't say anything, but with great authority my dad very calmly said, "Let's try that again!" Taking his hint, my mom again asked me for a Rolo and without delay I again said "NO!" Dad repeated his earlier statement - giving me another opportunity to comply with my mother's request, but I again said "No," adding "they're mine! Daddy bought them for me!" As soon as the word "no" was out of my mouth the 3rd time—a big hand, palm up, reached over the front seat, and my dad very calmly said, "Please give me your Rolos." I reluctantly put my Rolos in his hand. I knew he was mad by the look on his face, and the authority in his voice. After taking the candy from me, he offered my mom a Rolo. Then he calmly rolled down the car window and threw the rest of the Rolos from the car. I sat on the back seat in disbelief—I couldn't believe he had thrown my candy away. In the hour or so that followed, my dad talked about the importance of sharing with others, about the fact that God is the source of all good gifts, about the importance of loving others, and of course about honoring your father and mother in all things. 51 years later I can still remember his calm gentle voice as he explained to me the error of my ways...lovingly impressing upon me the importance of

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Compassion-6

sharing, and of making good decisions daily. Now every time I see a pack of Rolos, I think of my dad and the lessons he taught me throughout my life about God. My dad was a wonderful, humble, Godly man. He loved the Lord, and he often used situations in my life, both good and bad, to teach me about God, His grace, His mercy, His faithfulness, and His extravagant love for me. Dad would show up with a pack of Rolos, and we would talk.

Rolos reminds me of God's constant and abiding presence, and His compassionate love.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Luke 6:38

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How can give of myself to the youth I am mentoring?

Prayer Focus: Those that lack compassion...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-7

A Trunk Load of Compassion

The air is turning crisp. The leaves are transitioning from greens to reds, oranges, yellows and browns. The brisk winds are prompting the earthbound flight of the leaves. The leaves engaging in a tumbling race along the grass and dancing on autumn's playground. The wind begins to cut through cotton sleeves and stings reddened cheeks. The dusting of the first frost is changing the wardrobe of those out and about during the day ... from the linemen at work to the children at play. People must prepare - for the harshness of winter is on the way.



It's funny the way some people prepare for different seasons. Maybe you know a guy that goes on a peculiar shopping trip when he first feels the nip of autumn in the air. At Walmart he finds winter gloves, socks, hats, sweatshirts and coats. The shopping cart fills up with multiples of every item...why does he need so many? Wouldn't one of each be enough? Look closer and you see men's and women's clothing. Just like sizes, the color doesn't matter. From the clothing side of the store, he moves to the food side. He packs some pull-top canned goods, snack bars and water in the cart. Making his way to the checkout, he exchanges smiles with other shoppers. It is a busy day for the clerks...shoppers are lined up four or five deep at every register. Reading the nametag of the cashier, he gives a personal greeting - and makes a peculiar comment. "Is it my time to be checked out?" The cashier gives an affirmative nod with a tightened lip as if ready to hear one more complaint about the wait to get to the front of the line. This guy smiles and says, "Then I give you permission to take a deep breath. You are doing a great job today. You have been kind to everyone ahead of me ... even when it wasn't easy. Thank you for that. Take your time checking me out if you need to - you deserve a little break. Okay?" Just a second or two passes, and the message sinks in. A smile breaks across the cashier's face, and the items

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Compassion-7

glide across the scanners. Thank you and smiles are exchanged as the cart is pushed to the parking lot. There you watch the guy pack the purchases into the trunk of the car. Alongside today's purchases is a box with four or five Bibles. A person never knows what's needed.

I went for a ride with that guy one day. I thought we were headed to a meeting when a sudden turn to the right took us into a fast food parking lot. "Weren't we headed to..." Before I finished the question, the car was parked alongside a man in his 30's wearing a t-shirt and jeans on a winter day. The driver was out the door in no time, starting up a conversation about the weather and wondering if a warmer shirt or coat would be a help. Popping the trunk and fitting a sweatshirt took only a little longer than the handshake and prayer. We didn't miss a minute of the meeting, and I'm glad I didn't miss seeing a quiet act of compassion.

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Matthew 6:3

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

When did I last show compassion?

Prayer Focus: Prepare hearts of compassion in our world...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-8

Compassion Changed My Life



Compassion is deep sympathy for something, someone or a group of people. When was the last time you felt deep sympathy or compassion? A compassion that interrupts your life or time? A compassion that cost you time or money? A compassion that changed your life or someone else's?

A few years ago a friend of mine's dad became very ill. She was his only daughter and was still living with him, so she was his go to person. He spent time in the hospital where I worked. Since he was my friend's dad, I would join him for early coffee and we would visit for about 20 minutes before work. During the next 6 months this man was in and out of the hospital a couple of times before he had open heart surgery. I took the day of surgery off so I could sit with her, pray and be a friend. The crisis period of the surgery passed and her dad was moved to a regular room. Then I got a call one morning at 2 am from my friend to come to the hospital, it was her dad. I jumped up, got dressed, and went. When I got to his room, he was sitting in the chair and called out, "I accepted Jesus into my heart!" The excitement poured out of his room into the hallway. A couple of days later he was transferred to the nursing home and I continued my morning coffee and visits. Then came a morning when his breathing was labored and his chest hurt, so I called the nurses and my friend. When she arrived I moved to the hall to wait as she said 'goodbye' to her dad.

Time has passed and our friendship remains strong. I would never change that time in our lives. During that time my life was interrupted, it cost me sleep and time but most of all it changed my life.

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Compassion-8

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Matthew 25:36

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Do I allowed God to interrupt my schedule to help others?

Prayer Focus: Those who are sick, hungry or in trouble...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-9

Loving the Unseen

It doesn't seem humanly possible to love anyone we have not known in some measure of experience, yet we are instructed to love everyone—seen and unseen; known and unknown.

Loving those unseen and unknown, is accomplished through a soul connection that God as put in us. As strange as that may sound, we all experience a linking with those we have never met.

In 2017, there were a series of natural disasters that shocked our planet and traumatized hundreds of thousands of lives: Hurricane Maria in the Dominican Republic; the earthquake in Mexico; monsoon flooding in Bangladesh; a huge mudslide in Colombia; Hurricane Irma in the USA and Caribbean islands, flooding and landslides in Sierra Leone and Hurricane Harvey in the USA.



Many that understand the power of prayer spent hours praying for those that had been affected by these shattering events. Others gave their finance, and still others traveled to the area that had been devastated to help however they could. I watched while millions of dollars were being collected to assist those that lost everything. One man who raised several thousands of dollars during Hurricane Harvey was asked why he was doing so much to help (people he didn't know). His answer was that he loved them and wanted to do all he could to help them get back on their feet.

This is the awesome mystery of how the Body of Christ works together to fulfill Gods divine purpose on this earth. Somehow Christ impresses on our hearts the condition that exist. Although we may not have the answer or even understand the situation (*it is a mere shadow*) we respond in love to His tug in prayer, and God our Father answers with great wisdom and love.

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Compassion-9

And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

I Thessalonians 3:12

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How much time will I pledge to aside to pray for and assist others that I don't know?

Prayer Focus: Those on todays news that have been harmed and those that have harmed others...

My prayers go out for...



Compassion-10



Compassion-10

Unconditionally

When the smoke finally cleared, all evidence pointed straight to me! I tried my best to get out of it, but there was no doubt that I was culpable and 100% guilty!

When my brother learned of the consequences I was facing, he quickly maneuvered his way into the situation and took full responsibility. It cost him some time in the juvenile center and his reputation, but he was more than willing to do it because I was his brother and his love for me would not allow him to see me suffer. As wonderful as my brother's love is towards me, God's love is so much greater and is without conditions at all times.



God loves us all! Imperfections, inadequacies, warts, wounds, defects, deficiencies, blots, blotches, stains, spots, shortcomings, flaws, failures and severe limitations didn't cause Him to turn away from us...It moved Him to chase after us and pay the highest price that could be paid. Jesus not only put His reputation on the line and served a stint in confinement, He gave his life for the whole world and even now sits on the right hand of God making intercession for us daily. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

God sees the sacrifice of His Son when He looks at us and calls us to see others through His eyes. We're called to accept others the way He does—as dearly loved, broken children of God—created in His own image and in His likeness. God loves us as we are, and he challenges us to live a life worthy of our calling.

Accepting each other and loving each other in spite of our faults will benefit one another, but, more important, it will bring praise to God. When Christians care for one another, God is glorified.

He's accepted us as we are with the gifts we offer. Likewise, we're to affirm and encourage others... team members and youth on the Weekend. God uses each of us to uplift others.

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you."

Romans 15:7

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What can I do to give at the level God has gifted me?

Prayer Focus: To discover creative ways to affirm others...

My prayers go out for...



Humility-1

Body Ministry

It was my 12-year-old son that first made me aware of the idiom “**Body Ministry**.”

I had received a call at work that he and my wife were on the way to the hospital due to a broken finger. My wife explained that he cried a bit, but he was okay. They would call me once they got to the hospital, if there were any serious concerns.

When I got home, he came bouncing towards me and greeted me with a big hug, his signature grin and his normal acknowledgment, “**Hey, Dad!**” We kidded around for a few minutes, and then I asked him how he had broken his finger. Carefully, I was given a play by play review of their full court press and his final drive to the rim for a sweet layup. It was when he and the boy guarding him jump up in harmony that my son released the ball and the young man came down hitting, jamming and breaking his finger. I secretly winced from hearing his story and quickly switched to ask what any ‘he-man’ father would ask—“**Did you hit the basket?**” With that big grin, he sprang from the bed and replied, “**Of course, Dad!**” as he mimicked that stellar shot.

I took a closer look at his hand and asked him which finger he broke, because two of his fingers were taped up. Pointing to the finger next to his thumb he said, “**This one.**” I

thought it was a bit strange that only one finger was broken, but two were taped together. So I asked why. It was then that my 12-year-old son gave me a message that spoke to me about how the Body of Christ was designed to work. “**Dad, the broken finger is taped to the good finger so that during the healing process it will heal straight, and also I can’t bend it and do more damage to it. It’s called ‘Body Ministry.’ The strong part of the body is helping to heal the broken part.**”

My heart was overwhelmed at that moment, and I understood more fully Christ’s message on humility, self-denial, being jointly fitted together, and ready to consider one another—who are

Continue on next page



Humility-1

members one of another. Coming alongside broken and hurting youth should never be seen as a weight that we are tied to! It is our honor in humility to live out Romans 15:1 which instructs—“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

From Him the whole body is fitted and held together by every supporting ligament. And as each individual part does its work, the body grows and builds itself in love.

Ephesians 4:16

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Who and where have I come alongside to support?

Prayer Focus: My need for greater humility to serve...

My prayers go out for...



Humility-2

The Best of Mistaken Identity

Let me share with you Royce and Suzie's story of mistaken identity during a Kairos Torch mentoring session years ago.

"Each Monday night we would travel to Manitou. We were mentoring two boys and doing it together. During one of the mentoring sessions one boy said he had a hard time believing in a God who cannot be seen. The other boy assured him that God could be seen. The first boy asked, "Have you seen God?" The second boy said, "Yes...every Monday night."

We had never before been so taken aback by a statement. It blew us away. Many emotions flooded our minds. Unworthy of such a statement, wanting to assure the young man that God is so much more than two faltering senior citizens, but realizing that he already knew that and being so grateful that he did."

This is what can happen when we set ourselves aside for Christ. We have to die to our self so we can rise as a new creature. That seems a bit extreme, doesn't it? Extreme? You bet! Nothing lukewarm about Christ!

That dying "to self" is a deep inward process of yielding to the will of Christ. Humility is the outward presentation of that person who has died to self. It's kind of like being able to look through yourself to Christ. It's like you become a transparent window through which people can see Christ – they don't see you any longer.

In humility, we set our self aside – not to degrade ourselves, but so that we empty ourselves of ourselves! Empty – so Christ can fill us with the joy of the Spirit. We no longer carry around an agenda – we don't have to have our way. We step aside for others—and let God step in!

Continue on next page



Humility-2

You did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so the Father will give you whatever you ask of Him in my name.

John 15:16

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How do people see God through me? How do I reflect the spirit of God?

Prayer Focus: Those who are bearing fruit for Christ...

My prayers go out for...



Humility-3

Self-Esteem's Link to Humility

There's a gross misconception of what self-esteem and humility actually are. A closer look at their definitions and characteristics may help us understand what scriptures are teaching us about living out our lives in humility.

Self-esteem-

- *a proper respect for oneself as a human being*
- *a healthy confidence and satisfaction in oneself*

Humility-

- *freedom from pride or arrogance*
- *the quality or state of being humble*

Nowhere in the description of these two words is there an exaggerated opinion of one's own qualities or abilities. Nor does it depict an attitude of superiority manifested in an overbearing manner or in presumptuous claims or assumptions. Rather, humility is fully displayed in those that have self-worth, absent of conceit and self-importance.

It's actually a slap in the face of God to ascribe worthlessness and insignificance to us - His greatest creation. Yet, it's equally affronting to attribute the miraculous work of God's hands to ourselves.

Humility is recognizing we are God's special creation while bowing in submission to Him who has made us extraordinary. In our humility, we do not think less of ourselves, but think of ourselves less and more about others. How might we come alongside others and help them recognize their unique God given qualities?

Humility is displayed in modesty, meekness and an unpretentious attitude. It is knowing that the great things we will accomplish in our lives are because of the eminence of God that directs our path.

Real healthy humility is not the absence of self-esteem, it is the key to it.

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Humility-3

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

James 3:13

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Are my good deeds done in true humility?

In what areas do I need to humble myself?

Prayer Focus: Those who lack confidence in God's ability to work in their lives...

My prayers go out for...



The Road to Greatness

It wasn't enough that they had been individually chosen for a close and personal relationship by the greatest man to walked this earth. Nor did they seem to understand the magnitude of being the twelve elected of all the world to sit under the tutelage of God's only Son. Not recognizing the awesome honor of being personally called out by Jesus, His disciples came to him and asked, "Who is the greatest (human) in the kingdom of heaven?" Without hesitation Jesus calls a small child to come over to Him. He sits the child right in the middle of them and said,



"This is what greatness looks like in God's palace." Jesus went on to tell them, if they wanted to be great in God's sight, they would need to go through rehabilitation and take on a childlike spirit.

I can only imagine their bewilderment at Christ's strange response. They were probably expecting Him to call out one of their names since He had personally chosen them to carry His message.

Perhaps they were expecting to hear the name of Abraham, or Moses, or David, or maybe one of the prophets that had performed great miracles. Really? A child? You mean those little people that should "be seen and not heard?" Children that can't even protect themselves from predators and bullies? That's the greatest in the kingdom of the God of the universe? YES, not just great but the greatest!

I can almost hear the next question ringing in their minds, "Why???" Here is the answer. Within their very DNA, children carry the genetic factor for humility. Somehow, we seem to lose the chromosome of humbleness as we grow older.

The message that Jesus shares with His disciples is the same message He shares with us today—rehabilitate to humility.

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So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 18:14

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How important is it that I leave a legacy of greatness as opposed to walking humbly with God?

Prayer Focus: The return of "One nation under God" ...

My prayers go out for...



Humility-5

Humble Hearts Don't Humiliate God's Purpose

We had finished our offsite meeting and decided to stop at the Panda Express for lunch before driving back to the office. Thankfully the long line at the counter moved quickly, because I was especially hungry.

As we sat down in the crowded restaurant, I prayed over our meal and took my first bite. That's when I noticed a large, muscular man walking from table to table asking each person that would give him an audience for money to purchase a meal. I felt sorry for him as I watched him being quickly turned away. Some physically turned away before he got to them as if to say, "Don't even come over here."



As he arrived at our table, I was instantly struck by the very strong body order coming from him. Looking directly at me, he gently stated, "I am very hungry. Could you give me some money to buy a meal?" I seldom carry cash on me, and that day was no exception. "Yes," I said. "Go ahead and get in line and order what you want, but don't break me. I will be up to pay for it with my card as soon as you get to the cash register."

Once I saw him reach the register, I got up and stood next to him. As the cashier rang his order, I noticed that he had not gotten a drink, so I asked if he wanted a beverage. As he ordered his drink, I paid the cashier and went back to my seat feeling very proud of what I had done. Thinking that the gentleman was going to follow me back to the table and eat with us, I was surprised that he went to the furthest side of the room and sat alone to eat his meal.

In all honesty, I was relieved that I wouldn't have to smell him or try and strike up some kind of conversation while trying to eat. However, I did expect my co-workers to praise my wonderful act of humility and compassion. To my amazement, they didn't say a word. Even when I hinted about what I had done, they sat quietly and ate

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Humility-5

their meals. (By the way, I purchased my co-workers' meals as well.)

We had finished eating before our new acquaintance. As we walked past him, I quietly said, "God bless you." If he said thank you, I certainly didn't hear him. Truthfully, I was bothered that he didn't show any gratitude for my kindness.

As we drove back to the office, I once again hinted about what I had done for the man and felt that I deserved at least an honorable mention from my co-workers. Still they sat silent - which gave the Holy Spirit an opportunity to speak. And speak it did! "**You didn't invite him to sit with you out of shame. You didn't even offer him a few minutes of fellowship. Yes, you gave him a meal, but you didn't tell him about the bread of life - ME. Your perceived act of humility was a display of humiliation to me. Check your motives.**"

As I began to examine my heart, I realized what I heard in my spirit was pure truth. My motions were merely religious actions, but my real motive was pride. God is not just looking at our actions, He is also looking at our intentions.

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micha 6:8

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Prayer Focus: A humble heart...

My prayers go out for...

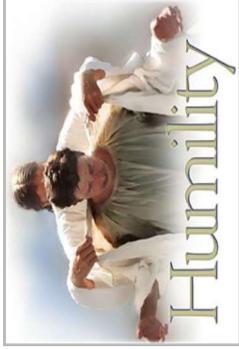


Humility-6

Getting All Dressed Up

Have you ever considered how much of your time and finances you invest in your appearance and persona?

Not long ago Today/AOL released a study that found women spend 335 hours, or two weeks, on their hair and makeup per year, which equates to about 55 minutes a day. In 2007 the American cosmetics market totaled \$38.698 billion dollars— with American men spending \$11.059 billion dollars while woman spent \$27.638 billion dollars. In 2015 the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the U.S. apparel industry was \$12 billion business and the average American family spends \$1,700 on clothes annually.



A new report from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) reveals that Americans spent more than ever before —\$16 billion — on cosmetic plastic surgery and minimally-invasive procedures in 2016. According to data by Marketdata Enterprises, a market research firm that specializes in tracking niche industries, Americans spend upwards of \$60 billion annually to try to lose pounds, on everything from paying for gym memberships and joining weight-loss programs to drinking diet soda.

Someone once said you only have to look at two books in each persons home to know what is most important in their lives—their checkbook and their appointment book. We spend our time and money on what is most important to us and as you can see in the statistics above, we heavily invest in our appearance and image.

I do believe we should take reasonable care to keep up our appearance, but it seems we have made our outer shell more important than our inner character.

William Penn, the English real estate entrepreneur, philosopher, early Quaker, and founder of the Province of Pennsylvania, wisely stated, “*Humility and knowledge in poor clothes excel pride and ignorance in costly attire.*”



Humility-6

Therefore as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:12

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How much time do I spend dressing up my inner character?

Prayer Focus: Those who lack compassion for others

My prayers go out for...



Humility-7

Bring Humility to the Podium

There are some people that just have a special gift for oration. They know how to place just the right words together with just the right vocal inflections at just the right time. Even those subjects that are difficult to understand are enjoyable when great expositors take the podium. You can almost reach out and touch the subject they are addressing at that very moment. Even if their information is incorrect, the highly skilled speaker can often convince the multitudes that what they are saying is correct.

We often see those that have a large platform or a talent to speak to the masses use that as an opportunity to lambast others that don't hold their same views. Their eloquence to speak turns into a tool to humiliate and decimate those that hold another opinion.



It was never Paul's position to destroy others with His words, even when others attempted to physically slaughter him. Paul always answered with truth through a spirit of humility. Yes, his words, both in his speech and in his writings, often challenged. Although eloquent, he spoke and wrote with grace and humility. It was Paul who wrote to the Colossians using these words: "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

On the Kairos Torch Weekend, we are each given an opportunity to share our journey. Some will share from the podium, some at the family tables. Some will share during guide meetings or the dinner table. It is imperative that we share with humility and purpose.

One religious leader said it this way—"Being humble means recognizing that we are not on earth to see how important we can become, but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others."

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Humility-7

To speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, to be gentle, showing all humility toward all men.

Titus 3:2

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What do I need to do to ensure that I speak with humility?

Prayer Focus: That our witness is filled with grace...

My prayers go out for...



Humility-8

Humility Breeds Success

As I think about my experiences as a youth, I think about all the many ways I felt like a failure and how that failure affected my actions and life at that time. I found myself doing things with my group of friends that I would not have done by myself. Some of the things were minor vandalism, like shooting out streetlights and shoplifting. Some were hateful things that we did to someone that was different from us. Maybe they made better grades and made us look dumb, or maybe they dressed differently than we did and did not “conform to our liking.”



Many of those actions actually continue to affect me to this day, fifty years later as an adult. When I go back home, I can still remember the acts of vandalism and the hateful personal things I/we did. Today it is only me, and I know that I am the person that did those bad things. I am the only one left to remember. Even though God has forgiven me. I struggle to forgive myself.

God blessed me with good caring parents and a small close community where everyone knew me and my parents. A community that cared enough to catch me and set me straight. Today God is still blessing me and He is always watching me. He is always guiding me. He is my closest friend and – “I AM NOT A FAILURE BECAUSE GOD DOES NOT WANT ME TO FAIL!”

Dear God,

I thank You for all Your many gifts and blessings, but most of all I thank You for Your perpetual grace and mercy as I stumble through life. I thank you for the confidence I have that You choose for me to be a success – not a failure. In Jesus’ name, Amen !

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Humility-8

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin.

Colossians 1:14

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Knowing I can't fully teach forgiveness to the youth if I can't forgive myself, what can I do to walking in reconciliation?

Prayer Focus: Those who struggle with self-disapproval...

My prayers go out for...



Humility-9

Break Free—Anchor To

Pride is an inwardly focused emotion that carries two opposing meanings. Pride in the positive sense is a humble and content sense of attachment toward one's own or another's choices and actions, or toward a whole group of people, and is a product of praise, independent self-reflection, and a fulfilled feeling of belonging. Negative pride refers to a foolishly and irrationally corrupt sense of one's personal value, status or accomplishment. Negative pride is our focus today.

I'm intrigued that the definition of humility is "**freedom from pride and arrogance**". This definition of humility yanks at my curiosity because many that display a great sense of negative pride and superiority appear to be on top of the world. Why would they need **freedom from** it? The necessity for freedom indicates that one is trapped or enslaved by something that they need to be emancipated from. It's within the definition of humility I realize the harsh effects of those that don't possess it.



When our lives are absent of humility we are enslaved to an over exaggerated sense of self-worth which leads to utter failure and personal ruin. In Proverbs 16:18, Solomon states; "**Pride precedes destruction; an arrogant spirit appears before a fall.**" It was pride—the irrationally corrupt sense of self that caused Satan to fall into ruins, and it is what we are constantly warned against in our own personal lives through God's instructions concerning abundant living.

When we allow humility to reign in our lives, it not only makes us approachable, but it **frees** us to do great exploits for God through the call He has placed on our lives.

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Humility-9

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion. Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father. What I'm getting at, friends, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I'm separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is God's energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.

Philippians 2:5-13

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What areas in my life do I need to be free of negative pride?

Prayer Focus: Those who are to proud to cry out for help...

My prayers go out for...



My Assignment

The young mom walked into the front of the church with her three young children and set on the front pew. Her sundress was very revealing. She sat with her children on the front pew. Everyone noticed the new family that walked in to church that day.

Many had noted that she talked with the male minister often, and the males of the church seemed to be drawn to her like flies to honey. As you can guess, the ladies of the church were very cool toward her, and I was no different.

The following week, I sat and watched her ... glancing her way like everyone else. I was trying to figure out what feelings her presence triggered in me – jealousy, anger, sadness. She was a beautiful woman with full bodied hair flowing over her shoulders. Her movements were sleek and graceful, even in the heels adding another three inches to her height. Her beauty attracted the eyes of men the way the “other woman” had drawn my ex-husband’s eyes. Was I jealous? Here in my church, I was beginning to build my relationship with a forgiving savior ... and my mind is turning to this woman and her children. Was I angry with her for drawing my attention away from my Christian walk? Was this feeling I had sadness? There was not a ring on her finger, and no gentleman sat with the children hugging and smiling the way dads do. There was no longer a ring on my finger and no one to help carry the load around my house. Was I remembering the sadness? I had random thoughts about her story, yet dismissed all thought of her as I left the church. Weeks went by and the woman kept returning to church with her children. My judgmental comments were now passing over my lips with greater frequency until the day the minister took me to lunch. At lunch, he corrected my attitude. He reminded me Jesus loved this woman and then he gave me my assignment. I was assigned to befriend this woman.



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It started with me sitting with her during every service and church meal. Then I invited her to my home for meals and Bible study. The other members of the church started whispering and asking me, “What are you doing?” Some even tried to make me walk away from my assignment, which caused me to lose friends.

In the beginning we were both uncomfortable and standoffish, but over time we became friends. Over the next 5 years our friendship grew and changed. We cried and laughed together sharing our hearts, dreams and struggles. The assignment that was hard, uncomfortable and something I wanted to run from became a blessing. I was blessed to see this woman begin and establish herself in a career to support her three children. I was blessed to share verses from the Bible with her over the phone as she struggled to understand and love the ways of her Lord. I was blessed. Setting “me, myself and I” aside was humbling for a season until I could glance at the glory of the Lord through a single mother’s smile and stories.

What shall I do, Lord? I asked. “Get up,” the Lord said, “and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.”

Acts 22:10

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Where is my compassion invested?

Prayer Focus: hearts of compassion to do your bidding...

My prayers go out for...



Affirmation-1

Loving Leads to Worthiness

Kairos Torch is a ministry of encouragement and affirmation. A ministry that says, “You are worthwhile to God—Creator of the Universe!” As Kairos Torch team members, we offer loving affirmation to the Participant and each other. How? We listen, we love, we give moral support and we earnestly pray!

Affirmation is so important to the human experience. Without it, we eventually wither away on the vine. We fall away from the community, and the Lord. But when we are inspired and supported, our souls soar to unimaginable heights!

Worthiness – where does it spring from? It comes with the courage to make ourselves vulnerable. In our vulnerability, we often find healing for our souls. We become whole. We become God’s ministers... Listen to the letter from a Torch Participant:

Before the Kairos Torch I thought of me as a failure or some that couldn't make it in life. Just thought I was meant on this earth to be a disgrace to the environment. But when Kairos Torch came upon me, I felt love and looking around the class I see people enjoying their selves. I've seen that they went out there way to help break down the wall and personal stuff that has been with in me. They helped me realize that the world wasn't against me and that there is a purpose for me in life. I just must be patient and make positive choices threw out my life. And I just think I owe all of you the same love and kindness you gave me.

Thank you!

Praise God for the gift of affirmation overflowing from a mentor. The transition from “a disgrace to the environment” to one who knows “there is a purpose in me” is the power of God’s love awakening a soaring soul.

Continue on next page



Affirmation-1

He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God.

2 Corinthians 1:4

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How has God helped and affirmed me?

How can I help others?

Prayer Focus: Let me see where to help and affirm others...

My prayers go out for...



Affirmation-2

Whispers from God

I love you! Aren't those special words? When you hear those words from people who are important to you, doesn't your spirit soar? When you are walking through troubling times, those little words whispered to you can change everything!

Who do you want to hear whispering those words to you? I wonder what youth would want to hear a whispering "I love you?" Can you imagine the Master of all life, the very Creator of the universe, the author of love itself, the one who existed before time, the one and only God whispering those words to you? Think about that—the Holy Creator of life itself wanting you to know that He loves you. You! Can you imagine the impact it has on someone who hasn't known love very much to hear God whispering, "I love you?"



God does that on a Kairos Torch Weekend, you know. Oh, He uses His family to speak the words. Their words may not literally be those three little words, but there is no doubt that the Participant hears, "I love you!"

On Sunday of a Kairos Torch Weekend, the Participants hear two messages of affirmation. "Celebrate You" speaks to the hope that "You have immense potential to love, to care, to create, to grow, to sacrifice... if... you believe in yourself. So love yourself and nourish the seeds within you. Today can be a new beginning." "A Letter to You from God" is written to the child in whom God's pride knows no bounds because that very child was His ultimate creation. A complete living being! The letter closes with the very words we all long to hear, "I love you." Signed, God.

Words of love and affirmation always bear repeating.

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Affirmation-2

And so encourage one another and help one another, just as you are now doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Who do I need to encourage on this team and Weekend?

What do you want to say to the youth on behalf of God?

Prayer Focus: Kairos Torch teammates and Participants...

My prayers go out for...



Affirmation-3

Accept, Appreciate and Affirm

Not long ago, a study was conducted by a large United States company to find out how they might improve efficiency and boost productivity. Multiple interviews were held with their employees in various levels of the company. What employers found out was that appreciation and affirmation topped the list of what employees wanted most from their superiors.

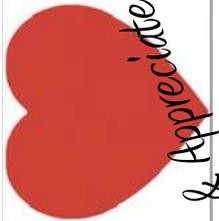
The Apostle Paul understood the value of affirming people. He always started his letters to Corinthian believers with statements of affirmation and appreciation. We should do likewise. When we see people obeying God, we should take the time of affirm them and to thank God for what He's doing through them.

As team members, we need to remember this. How much effort does it take to tell someone they are doing a good job whether it is a team member or a youth sitting at our table? We can always find something to show appreciation for what they are doing or how they are doing it.

One of the best ways to affirm people in everyday life is to show them acceptance.

Our goal as a group is not to mold people into our image but to accept and affirm each other and help each other discover who God made them to be.

By the way, we want you to know this:

WE  & Appreciate
Kairos Torch
VOLUNTEERS!



Affirmation-3

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Who can I affirm this week in my family, church, small group or workplace?

Prayer Focus: Those around me that I will affirm...

My prayers go out for...



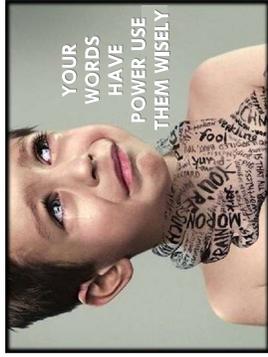
Affirmation-4

Replacing Negative Labels

I have always had a tender place in my heart for youth. I think it stems from the abuse in my early childhood.

It was at the hands of my grandmother that fear was deeply rooted in me. All while my parents were out working and making a living for us, the one that I looked to for love, affirmation, guidance and protection was living out their frustration on me. You see, she too had experienced abuse in different ways.

I knew that I would never amount to anything because those were her constant words to me. What made me know that she was right was her resilient stance in “living godly” and the respect she received by all the church members. My male siblings got it pretty good too, but not quite like me. My oldest brother turned his pain into pure rage and became a ferrous warrior and a force to reckon with. Grandmother quickly learned to back away from him as fighting became a daily routine for him, and he didn’t care if he won or lost—the last battle took his life.



It’s taken a long time for me to realize why I have negative messages often bombarding my thoughts. As much as I feared the unprovoked whippings, what really shaped my young life was the onslaught of abusive words. These words broke my young spirit, so much so that many of my school mates didn’t think I could talk.

I was sixteen when mom died, and all my siblings eventually left home. That’s when my father turned his full attention to me. He taught me about things I never realized were possible. Up until his death (*thirty-six years later*), he continually poured affirmation into me by expressing fatherly pride and extending undying support.

I still hear those crippling words playing in my head from time to time, but my father taught me to hear beyond the negative and live purposefully in God’s unlimited possibilities.

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Affirmation-4

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable— if anything is excellent or praiseworthy— think about such things.

Philippians 4:8

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

TODAY I will begin to find only those positive attributes in those around me to affirm, and voice my affirmation to them!

Prayer Focus: Those in my home and my workplace...

My prayers go out for...



Affirmation-5

You Really Want Me to Succeed

When I hear the word *affirmation*, my mind goes to encouragement, evaluation, and even, perhaps, compliment. When I looked up the definition, this is what I found:

affirmation – noun; 1) the act or an instance of affirming; state of being affirmed. 2) the assertion that something exists or is true. 3) something that is affirmed; a statement or proposition that is declared to be true. 4) confirmation or ratification of the truth or validity of a prior judgment, decision, etc. 5) Law. a solemn declaration accepted instead of a statement under oath.

That led me to *affirming*.

affirming – verb (used with object); 1) to state or assert positively; maintain as true: to affirm one's loyalty to one's country; He affirmed that all was well. 2) to confirm or ratify: The appellate court affirmed the judgment of the lower court. 3) to assert solemnly: He affirmed his innocence. 4) to express agreement with or commitment to; uphold; support: to affirm human rights.

When volunteers complete Kairos Torch Team Applications, we “assert solemnly” and “express agreement with or commitment to” the Kairos Torch Program and its guidelines.

Perhaps I wasn't so far off the mark with my original understanding either. When we affirm someone, we are making “the assertion that something exists or is true.” When we hear a talk during a Kairos Torch Team Formation Meeting, we evaluate the talk that was presented to ensure that it follows the guidelines of the Kairos Torch Program Manual and that the presenter's message will be understood by the Participants and help to fulfill the goal of the Weekend.

When we mentor one of our Kairos Torch Participants, we use the Kairos Torch Mentor's Guide. The guide has all manner of activities that serve to affirm the truth of the Scriptures and lead the Participant through learning objectives that will help the young person see what in their life is good, what is lacking, and how to make their life better and honorably productive.

One of my mentees was a pretty strapping lad, buff and handsome in his own way. He had hands at least twice the size of my hands. I bet he could palm a basketball without too much



Affirmation-5

difficulty. Michael had some challenges with reading and writing. We would work on the appropriate lesson from the Kairos Torch Mentor's Guide for the evening, and then we would work on communication skills and reading (since we didn't really like to play games). I would often correct his grammar, spelling and capitalization. Occasionally, refining pronunciation and decoding words would help him understand what he read more completely.

One evening, as our mentor group was meeting at the facility, Michael and I worked on filling out a generic job application. After a few minutes of working side by side, Michael suddenly realized something for the first time. He turned to face me and raised his hand. (This movement startled others that caught a glimpse of what was happening, but couldn't see Michael's face. They weren't sure how much damage Michael could do to me with his big hand positioned for my back). With a grin that eclipsed his cheeks, he exclaimed, “You REALLY want me to succeed!” and then patted my back – man to man.

You see, as a man, I had been affirming Michael, showing and telling him that he could do it. He could be successful at an honest life. He could be a producer of good things for our culture and society, and not just a consumer. He could be a good dad for his little boy and a successful provider for his family. I stated facts, affirmed his abilities and declared a bright future for him. Michael affirmed me when he came to the realization and made his exclamation.

What is God saying to ME through this message?

Prayer Focus: Help me help others succeed...

My prayers go out for...



Affirmation-6

Checking the Box

I've always been big on visioning, goal setting and then checking the box at the completion of each task.

I thoroughly enjoy checking off the box. It gives me a great sense of accomplishment, at least for those few seconds that I am putting that big red checkmark in the box. To be perfectly honest, this devotion you are reading right now is on my To-Do-List and there is a nice square box right next to it that is itching to be checked.

I seldom take the time to celebrate my accomplishments or enjoy the fruits of my labor. My normal practice is to check off the box and then immediately add another task, directly under the completed ones. The rule of thumb for me is to have 10 items on my list at all times.

I have found that I sometimes bring that same practice into my conversations and mentoring assignments. Being task oriented may be beneficial in getting things done, but if we are not careful, we will forget the real purpose of why we are doing the task. When my focus is primarily on getting the box checked, I often forget the small details that eventually have enormous effects on the success of the assignment. When we approach mentoring as a checked box activity or a task to be completed on our "To-Do-List", we fail to develop authentic relationships with our mentees. We fail to give them the affirmation that is needed from us. The message we are sending them is that they are just a project that we have agreed to take on.

I was recently reminded that I am not just one of Christ's projects. He deeply desires to be in relationship with me and confirmed it through His work on the cross. Even now He is at the right hand of God making intercession for me (Romans 8: 34).

Our attitude towards those God has called us to can never be a task of checking the box. Mentoring is a mission of relationship and not a task to be completed.

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Affirmation-6

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross.

Philippians 2: 5-8

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How can I best nurture the relationships Christ calls me to?

Prayer Focus: Having the mindset of Jesus Christ...

My prayers go out for...



Affirmation-7

Being Present

Have you noticed how fixated we get on the ripple that the rock makes when we toss it in the lake? It's not the initial splash in the water, but the aftermath (the ripple) that seems to grab our attention, and we just keep gathering rocks and tossing them in to see the next set of ripples.

Recently I found slow motion video footage of a water droplet merging with a tranquil body of water on YouTube. There is much more to the impact than ripples. The droplet plummets into the water, splits in half, rises above the water to dive in again, and repeats multiple times. The power of the drop is in its thrust into the water and its recoil above to go again. It is the same way we often live our lives. Seldom do we live in the power of the moment or appreciate the joy of what we have in front of us right now.

Long ago I stopped asking young people what they wanted to do when they grew up, where they would be how they would see themselves in five (5) years. This line of questioning always positioned young people to build their lives to reach an uncertain future. We are so absorbed in what's coming - that we fail to immerse ourselves in "the now". "The now" that becomes a strong stepping stone to that future. So, I want to know where they are right now, what burns in their hearts at this very moment, and what brings them to a place of great passion to live right now.

God knew Adam was going to fall long before he fell, but he never treated Adam as a fallen creature until he actually fell. I finally realized why that was. Although God covers all space and all time at the same time, He lives in the present moment with us.

The important act in affirming someone is being physically and emotionally present in that very moment.



Affirmation-7

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself...

Matthews 6:34

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

What can I do to be fully present in my time with others?

Prayer Focus: The needs of my child and/or those persons God has placed in my life...

My prayers go out for...



Affirmation-8

Affirmation Blesses the Giver and Receiver

Hear this inspiring conversation of affirmation posted on a parent and their son's Facebook pages:



25 years ago this week Joe and I adopted the first two of our six children from Russia, Alex who was 4, and Max who was 2½. It hardly seems possible that it has been 25 years. I still remember that first experience like it was yesterday - 6 weeks in Russia is hard to forget. It was an exciting time. It was a scary time, but I would not trade a moment of the days I spent there in Orphanage No. 9 in Moscow- or any of the time I spent there bringing children home for us and others. So much has happened since that first trip. It is also hard to believe that Alex has been gone for 12 years - I still think of him every day. His Asperger's Syndrome made it difficult some days, but I would not trade one difficult day we spent with him. And Max, well Max is still bringing sunshine into the lives of all he meets. He is a very special young man, and we are so proud of him and Lauren, his wife. I always knew the Lord had a call on his life, and now he is ministering on the mission field in Belgium. Please pray for them when you think about it. It has been a wonderful 25 years. God has blessed us tremendously, and I am truly thankful today for my children.

I am a truly blessed young man today. My mother labored not for a few minutes, nor a few hours, but rather 6 weeks to adopt two young Ruskiets from the freshly post-soviet Russia. 25 years ago today I was given a new beginning, a new life...a second chance. I have never been angry at my biological parents for what they did because I was given the greatest gift. The gift of being honored with a phenomenal mother and father. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for the amazing life that you have given me!



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Affirmation-8

Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.

Psalms 127:3

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Am I continually affirming the children God gifted me?

How can I affirm those youth whose parents abandon them?

Prayer Focus: Those experiencing the void of a parent...

My prayers go out for...



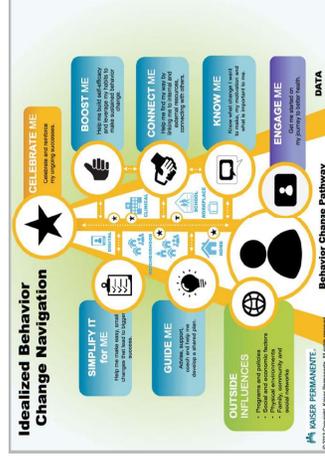
Affirmation-9

Affirming the Pathway of Change

The widely known expression, “Pull yourself up by your (own) bootstraps” refers to boots and the straps that some boots have attached to help the wearer pull them on and to the imagined feat of lifting oneself off the ground by pulling on one’s bootstraps. This impossible task is supposed to exemplify the achievement in getting out of a extremely difficult situation by one’s own efforts.

As notable as this may seem, scripture points to the fact that we need one another in times of weakness and failure. In Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 we are told: *“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have warmth; but how can one be warm alone? And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”*

According to BJ Fogg, PhD, founder of Stanford University’s Persuasive Technology Lab, the formula for behavioral change reads like this: **Motivation + Action + Triggers (all occurring at the same moment) = Behavior.**



Looking closely at Fogg’s equation, you will see that this verified formula for behavioral change involves having others connected to our lives. The influence of others around us give needed direction, gentle correction and a large dose of affirmation - vital in negotiating positive transformation.

If affirmation is a main ingredient necessary to grow healthy, well balanced children, it only stands to reason that it would be vital in assisting others to navigate constructive behavioral change as well.



Affirmation-9

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: “The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”

Romans 15:1-3

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

How can I affirm those that are experience personal failure?

Prayer Focus: Those who need encouragement in times of weakness and failure...

My prayers go out for...



Affirmation-10

God Called You

The calling to belong to Christ goes deeper than a vocational “calling.” For this reason, it is essential to start our exploration of calling with the call to follow Jesus. It is a beckoning call to a restored relationship with God and with other people and with the world around us. It encompasses all of a person’s being and doing. It reminds us that the call to a particular kind of work is secondary to the call to belong to Christ and to participate in His redemption of the world.

The secondary call is your call to Kairos. You are in the right place doing the right things. God called you! This Kairos Torch Weekend is God’s. God has called all that are needed for



this Weekend. He has called you to use your talents in music, in art, in administration or to use your gifts of understanding, counsel and knowledge. God has chosen you and the team to use as He will. You are each part of the chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession.

In my experiences, God sometimes has called me to a team position or task that I have never shown any interest or talent for...I just couldn’t possibly do it. I have had to step out in faith that God would give me all I needed to get His work done. I still need to remember from time to time that God doesn’t call the equipped – He equips the called.

So despite our failures and insecurities, God will use us in incredible ways! And the best part is that it won’t be us doing the work! It will be Christ’s power in us proclaiming the good news and calling others into His marvelous light. What amazing affirmation that is!

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Affirmation-10

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9

What is God saying to ME through this Word?

Am I properly prioritizing my “callings?” How?

Prayer Focus: Kairos Torch Team, Torch Bearers and the Participants...

My prayers go out for...