

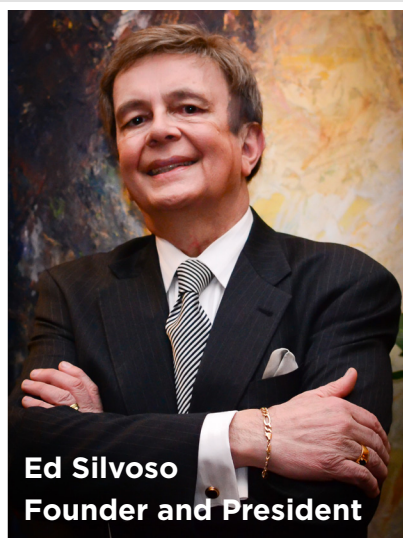


TRANSFORM
OUR WORLD

THE SCHOOL OF TRANSFORMATION



PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION
Week 1 **ANSWERING THE CALL**



Ed Silvano
Founder and President

Welcome to The School of Transformation!

On behalf of the TSOT Team we are so excited to be with you over the next 10 weeks! As we study the basic principles of Transformation together you will begin to experience transformation as never before in your *personal life* and in your *family*. Then along with your family you will begin to impact your *sphere of influence* as you develop a lifestyle of ministry together! This course will help you lay a firm foundation and further prepare you for your destiny of discipling nations!



Chuck Starnes
Director

As the Director of TSOT I want to welcome you and help you get ready for all God will impart to you over the next 10 weeks! Although this syllabus provides everything you need for a group experience you'll want to go deeper by reading each of the books we are using in the course. Here a list and you can find them on our web site at

<http://www.transformourworld.org/en/resources/filter/type/book>

- *That None Should Perish*
- *Prayer Evangelism*
- *Women God's Secret Weapon*
- *Anointed For Business*
- *Transformation*

It also gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Jill Robson and Benjy MacNaughton who will be helping to facilitating each video session.



Jill Robson,
Transformation News



Benjy Mac Naughton,
Youth and Family Track

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: ANSWERING THE CALL

Personal Transformation

WEEK 2: UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLEGROUND

Personal Transformation

WEEK 3: BRINGING DOWN STRONGHOLDS

Personal Transformation

WEEK 4: INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE

Transformation in Your Family

WEEK 5: PRAYER EVANGELISM AS A FAMILY LIFESTYLE

Transformation in Your Family

WEEK 6: CHANGING THE SPIRITUAL CLIMATE

Transformation in Your Family

WEEK 7: RECLAIMING THE MARKETPLACE

Transformation in Your Sphere of Influence

WEEK 8: THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

Transformation in Your Sphere of Influence

WEEK 9: ELIMINATING SYSTEMIC POVERTY

Transformation in Your Sphere of Influence

WEEK 10: GRADUATION DAY

SUMMARY WEEK 1

IN THIS SESSION YOU WILL:

1. Discover that God has more faith in you than you have in yourself.
2. Learn what Jesus meant when he said, “I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.” (Matthew 16:18)
3. Answer the call to be the Ekklesia in the marketplace and disciple nations beginning with yourself, your family, and your immediate sphere of influence.



Yes, God has more faith in you than you do in yourself. Once you hear the call to be part of Jesus' Ekklesia with the commission to disciple nations, you will begin to see the unlimited potential of your life. When you let God's faith in you jumpstart your faith in Him, you will begin to do extraordinary deeds that begin in your own heart, then in your family, and then in your sphere of influence. This is what the school of Transformation is all about and it all begins when you “answer the call.”

PREPARATION



READING

Read this article from chapter 19 in the book *Transformation* in preparation for the live web cast or video session:

GOD'S FAITH IN YOU

"Saddle up," said my grandpa while keeping a stern gaze on the eastern pasture. "Saddle up and go get 'em." He was staring at a herd of cows that had broken out of their corral during the night and were having the time of their lives eating what they were not supposed to have.

This particular herd was notorious for its propensity for mischief, which is why it was always locked up at night. It was led by a young bull that, if it had been born a human, would have launched a successful revolution in some South American country. It had an extraordinary capacity for leadership, coupled with a keen ability to spot weaknesses in the system that he quickly

turned into advantageous opportunities. Whatever it did, the others in the herd followed unquestionably.

Rounding them up was not going to be easy. It never was. During the summers that I usually spent with my grandpa, I had ridden with him on similar occasions and it was always a challenge. But this morning he told me to go and do it by myself!

I could not believe my ears. The "old man" believed that I, a little eight year old me, could do it? Part of me was almost terrorized at the prospect of facing that cunning bull and its gang of "illegals" who broke through the fence. But another part of me felt an exhilarating surge of pride, knowing that my grandpa believed I could do it.

Continue reading...go to the Appendix and read complete the article from chapter 19 in the book *Transformation*

GOING DEEPER

MENTORING

Watch Mentoring Session 4: “Intimacy with God – God Likes You”
at <http://www.transformourworld.org/en/mentoring/intimacy-with-god>

Welcome to Mentoring



Welcome to Mentoring
by Ed Silvano

WEBCAST

TEACHING

The subject today is “Answering the Call” but the question is to what? Answering the call to be the Ekklesia.

Ekklesia – **ANSWERING** *The* **CALL**

Putting the Church (Ekklesia) Age on a timeline:

Starting Line

**Go...and
make
disciples
of all
nations**

Matt. 28

[us]

Finish Line

**...The kings of
the earth...will
bring the glory
and the honor
of the nations
into [the
heavenly city].**

Rev. 21

So we know how it begins with the charge to answer the call to change nations, and we know how it ends with changed nations.

NOTES:

Impartation: Picture your nation and its flag. Now envision that when Revelation 21 comes, your president, your prime minister, your governor will say, “Yes Lord, our nation has been saved!”

Between these two “book ends” we are caught in the middle. We know we must disciple nations but we haven’t disciplined a nation yet. The key is understanding the relationship between the church and the kingdom of God.

NOTES:

There are three key religious institutions in the Scriptures

The Temple,
The Synagogue
and The “*Ekklesia*”

Jesus did not create the Ekklesia. It was invented by the Greeks and later adopted by the Romans. What was the Ekklesia? A group of influential people deputized by the emperor, with full authority to take his will to a region just conquered or colonized.

So what was the Ekklesia in the Roman Empire?

It is significant that Jesus did **not** say, “I will build my *Temple*,” or “I will build my *synagogue*.”

He said, “I will build my
“Ekklesia”

The “*Ekklesia*” in the Roman Empire

- *Was a gathering of those called out by the emperor to validate the law of his kingdom.*
- *It was a group of Roman citizens, called out to go into a conquering region.*
- *They would teach the language of Rome, the culture of Rome, until everything walked, talked and acted like Rome.*

Jesus is telling a group that has never disciplined anything, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Now I’m deputizing you, I’m calling you to go out and do what Rome did in the natural but in the spirit realm.”

“Church” in the Bible is never a building. It is never an organization. It’s always people. When the early church heard the word “Ekklesia”, they didn’t think of a place where they went, they thought of an institution like city hall, or the county board of supervisors, or in a corporation, the board of directors. That’s where the power was.

Jesus didn’t say I will build my temple or synagogue. He said I will build my “Ekklesia”. Why?

NOTES:

The “*Ekklesia*”

What was the Lord doing when He employed this term?

- He was **co-opting an institution** that was already operational with imperial authority and **infusing it with kingdom DNA.**

Jesus mentioned the church only on two occasions (Matt. 16 and 18). Why? Because people already knew what it was. But he mentioned the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven many times, because that was the new element.

Jesus in effect was saying that there is already an Ekklesia out there. It's called the gates of Hades. I'm going to die for everything, I'm going to descend to the lowest part, I will take away the keys of death and Hades. I will rename them the keys of the kingdom, and I am sending you with the keys of the kingdom to lock and unlock the gates of Hades.

So what are you being called to today? You are being called to the Ekklesia. You are being called to take the presence and power of God with divine authority where the kingdom of darkness is.

This changes the way we look at labor, at how we look at Monday morning. Because on Monday morning, as the Ekklesia, we take the kingdom of God to where the gates of Hades are. And Jesus says when these two meet, I win and the other guy loses.

Examples include: A police officer, a four star general, and the CEO of an oil company who see their job as a ministry.

These people Monday through Saturday are doing church (Ekklesia) in the marketplace.

**The path of the righteous is like
the light of dawn, that shines brighter
and brighter until the day is full.**

Proverbs 4:18

This is not a new doctrine. The church is already doing things in the marketplace. The problem is that we call that “ministry” or “outreach” and we say that the real thing is what we do on Sunday.

Change your paradigm because Jesus said where two are three are gathered together in my name, I am there, and they have authority to bind and release.

**For now we see through a glass darkly; but
then face to face: now I know in part; but
then shall I know even as also I am known.**

1 Corinthians 13:12

Paul was seeing with more clarity the more he looked into it. That is the transformation journey. It’s progressive.

When I received the Lord I realized he saved my soul. Then I realized that he also saved my body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. It got a little bit brighter.

Then I read, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your household, your family, the people around you, shall be saved.”

Later on I learned not only me, my soul, my body, my family, but Jesus died for the marketplace, for business, education and government. We are learning progressively.

Now the basic tenets of our faith never change:

NOTES:

The **unchangeable** tenets of our faith

- The immutable character of God
- The deity of Christ
- The finality of the atonement
- The inerrancy of the Scriptures
- The centrality of the Church

We are not talking about these unchangeable tenets of our faith, but of our progressive understanding of our operational paradigms. You are being called not just to be a committed believer, you are being called to take God's authority to where the darkness is.

In the city of Resistencia, we would pray in order to evangelize. And then we discovered "prayer evangelism". It was progressive. This journey is in *That None Should Perish* and later in *Prayer Evangelism*.

Moving from Prayer and Evangelism to "Prayer Evangelism"

- *Not an option*
- *But a lifestyle*

Then I realized that at least 50% of the Lord's army was downgraded and that led to *Women: God's Secret Weapon*. And now we know that the devil is afraid of women and the book shows that biblically.

Then I realized we didn't have all the players. That led to *Anointed for Business*, a book that empowered pastors to equip marketplace ministers. And that led to the book *Transformation*.

So we see that on one hand we have the unchangeable tenets of our faith, but on the hand our operational paradigms, how we apply it, changes. And we talk about for transformation to happen it takes two banks: Prayer Evangelism on one side and on the other the 5 Pivotal Paradigms.

NOTES:

The **unchangeable** tenets
of our faith

The **operational** paradigms
for our mandate

This is so important because today we are going to call you to answer the call and you have to understand the "What".



And the "Why"



The “How”

NOTES:



The “Where”



And finally the “What For”



A moment of reflection:

The most important of these five paradigms is #2. Why?

NOTES:

5 Pivotal Paradigms for Nation Transformation

***#2. The Marketplace, which
is the heart of the nation,
has been redeemed, and
now it must be
reclaimed. Why?***

***Because it
illuminates the scope
of the Atonement***

The Lord will not call you into the Ekklesia without a proper understanding that you are going to go into the marketplace, that at this moment is taken over by the devil. And you will know in your heart that Jesus died for business, education and government so that you can represent your leader, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 19:10

***For the Son of God (Jesus)
came to seek and to save
THAT
which was lost***

When we understand that, we see it begins with you as a part of the Ekklesia.

NOTES:



So with that as our backdrop let's look at some examples:



JILL: Transformation News from the Philippines and from Cuidad Juarez, Mexico



BENJY: A young man named Benji started a Bible Study in the marketplace and from there they are going out and blessing and serving people as the Ekklesia.



CHUCK: Gordon and Gail Okuley have seen transformation in Allentown, Pennsylvania. In addition to seeing a surge in development and an infusion of money for development, they saw the suicide rate at a local bridge drop, from one of the worst in the nations to zero suicides last year.

IMPARTATION



ED: You may say I'm there conceptually but I don't have the faith of those people. But when it comes to faith, it doesn't really matter how much faith you have. What really matters is how much faith God has in you.

And that's why you were asked to read the article in the syllabus above from chapter 19 in the book Transformation. What is the title of the chapter? "God's Faith in You". And it's based on Gideon who did not believe in himself, but God said you are a mighty warrior. He was weak and he was a coward, but God said I see something in you.

So let the Lord speak to you now. So that what you have heard and the impartation that you are receiving will help you see that God is saying "Saddle up and go and get them! I have faith in you!" like the story of my grandpa in the book.

NOTES:

NOTES:

When we understand that when we gather together in the name of the Lord and take the Ekklesia of Jesus where the Ekklesia of the devil is, we are basically taking the Kingdom of God to the workplace.

Why would Brian Burton from Phuket Thailand rebuild a Muslim school in a Buddhist nation? Because the kingdom of God is righteousness – to make right what is wrong. That school was destroyed by the tsunami and Brian said we will rebuild it. That gives people peace and opens the door to joy. And every year Brian Burton is invited to that Muslim school to teach on the meaning of Easter and Christmas. What is happening there? He is taking the Kingdom of God, as a representative of the Ekklesia, to the marketplace.

That's why Jesus taught about the Ekklesia only twice. People knew what that was. So we need to evolve from being a building, something we do two hours a week, to being a lifestyle where we take the kingdom of God everywhere we go.

How does a lawyer deal with this?

Video Clip: Clayton Trotter, General Counsel, Justice Foundation – “How does one approach the gates of hell as a lawyer? Well in the name of Jesus, that's how you do it.”

What is going on here? The Lord is taking you captive and if you say yes he is saying, “I will release you into enemy controlled territory.”

EPH 4:8

*When He ascended He led
captive a host of captives and
He gave gifts to Men
**ARE YOU READY TO
SAY YES LORD?***

He died on the cross, he saved us and now Paul says I'm a bond-servant of the Lord and he gave those captives as gifts to people to take the Kingdom of God where the gates of Hades are.

Question: Are you ready to say yes to the call to be the Ekklesia?

Nations shall be saved. Rev. 21:24 says...

NOTES:

Nations shall be saved.

Rev. 21:24

*And the **nations** of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the **kings** of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.*

What will it look like?

You see there is no distinction in the Bible between the Ekklesia and the kingdom of God. When people took the kingdom of God the Lord was able to build the Ekklesia – more people in the marketplace. When a church was planted, and we should be planting churches, the kingdom of God was anchored in a region.

So let the Lord speak to you right now. Let the Lord tell you that this is the moment.

It's going to get better if you say the two most powerful words any one can say in any language...and do you know what those words are? Yes Lord!

Would you answer the call? Would you say, "Lord beginning today I'm going to take your presence and your power, knowing that you are fully backed by the power of God."

And when you do that you are taking the Ekklesia. If you have any doubts, look at this African American crosswalk guard.

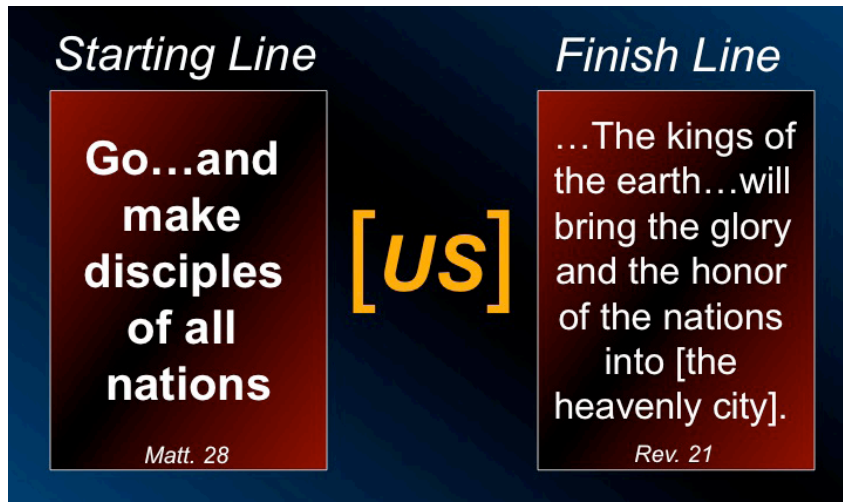
VIDEO CLIP: Street Crossing Guard being the Ekklesia

VIDEO CLIP: Woman who turned her window into a window to the marketplace

So wherever you are unless you are driving, lift up your hands and say – "Yes Lord, I receive the commission."

DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP



1. The age of the Ekklesia begins with a charge to answer the call to disciple nations (Matthew 28:18-20) and ends with nations that are transformed (Rev. 21:24). What direction and hope does this give you personally? As a group?

2. Describe the Ekklesia as it was conceived by the Greeks and then co-opted by the Romans. How does this change your understanding of Jesus saying “I will build (not my temple, not my synagogue, but...) my church (Ekklesia)”? How does this change the way you see Monday morning?

3. Ed said that basic tenets of our faith cannot be changed but our operational paradigms must change. Explain what he means and why is this important?

4. Go around and share what paradigms are changing in you personally and how this helps you see your life purpose in a new light. What hope does this bring for you personally, for your family, and for your world.

5. In what ways do you relate to Gideon in Judges 6 (see v. 15)? What is God saying to you about your fear and lack of faith in yourself?



APPLICATION

REFLECTION AND ACTION

1. The age of the Ekklesia begins with a charge to answer the call to disciple nations (Matthew 28:18-20) and ends with nations that are transformed (Rev. 21:24). Picture your nation and its flag. Now envision that when Rev. 21 is fulfilled your president or your prime minister will declare, “Yes Lord, our nation has been saved!” Make that declaration yourself and say “Yes Lord, let transformation begin with me!”
2. Go to a high place in your city with your core team. There make a declaration over your city that your city belongs to God and declare in the heavenly realm that you have answered the call to disciple nations. Tell your city, “You are no longer an orphan” and adopt your city.
3. Report your steps and results in the forum for next week.

APPENDIX

GOD'S FAITH IN YOU

"Saddle up," said my grandpa while keeping a stern gaze on the eastern pasture. "Saddle up and go get 'em." He was staring at a herd of cows that had broken out of their corral during the night and were having the time of their lives eating what they were not supposed to have.

This particular herd was notorious for its propensity for mischief, which is why it was always locked up at night. It was led by a young bull that, if it had been born a human, would have launched a successful revolution in some South American country. It had an extraordinary capacity for leadership, coupled with a keen ability to spot weaknesses in the system that he quickly turned into advantageous opportunities. Whatever it did, the others in the herd followed unquestionably.

Rounding them up was not going to be easy. It never was. During the summers that I usually spent with my grandpa, I had ridden with him on similar occasions and it was always a challenge. But this morning he told me to go and do it by myself!

I could not believe my ears. The "old man" believed that I, a little eight year old me, could do it? Part of me was almost terrorized at the prospect of facing that cunning bull and its gang of "illegals" who broke through the fence. But another part of me felt an exhilarating surge of pride, know-

ing that my grandpa believed I could do it. Grandpa was not the touchy feely type.

Grandpa was not the touchy feely type. He was born at the end of the 19th century and was part of a generation that, rather than saying "I love you," demonstrated their love by working hard to make sure there was food and provisions for everyone. He was also a man of very few words. His facial muscles did not add much to his words. But his eyes did. He never raised his voice, but with his eyes he added the necessary emphasis to what he wanted to say. And that morning there was a glint of "something" in his blue eyes. I sensed it was confidence. He was communicating to me, "You can do it. I believe in you. Now go and prove me right."

Seeing that glimmer in his eyes was all I needed. It conveyed to me that grandpa believed in me, and that was all it took for me to tackle the task he had assigned to me. Besides, there was no recourse to challenge his command. I had received a direct order.

I sprinted towards the small corral in the back of the house to saddle "Manchado," my pinto horse, the one grandpa had given me a couple years earlier as a birthday present. When I mounted and pointed Manchado in the direction of the pasture where the bovine rebel leader and his confederates were setting up camp, I felt like a combination of Zorro, Superman and Captain Marvel, my three cartoon heroes. I was fully energized by the faith grandpa had shown in me. On my own I would



have never come up with the confidence to do it, but grandpa's words, framed and accentuated by the glint in his eyes, had energized what little faith I had, and here I was, riding to do what I had never done before.

Surprisingly, everything went well. It was not easy, but after a while I had the entire herd where it was supposed to be. When I rode Manchado back to the house I felt like a victorious Roman general returning from a successful campaign. But I knew better than to expect an accolade from my non-touchy, reserved grandpa. He was a man of very few words, but his eyes...that's what I was going to concentrate on.

By the time I unsaddled Manchado, Grandpa had already hitched another horse to a buggy, the kind of vehicle used for short runs. He did not comment on my triumphant expedition to put down the bull's rebellion, but with an approving glint in his eyes he said, "Let's go to town."

Once in town, a small pueblo, we went to the Cantina where he ordered drinks for both of us. That was not unusual. He had done it before. He normally had a glass of wine, or he and I would each get a glass of grenadine. But what was different this time is what he said and how

he said it. In a louder than usual voice, intended for others to hear him, he intoned, "Bring the usual, for me and my partner."

He called me partner in front of his friends! That morning, his show of faith in me electrified the faith I had in me and empowered me to perform a task that until then I had viewed as impossible. What triggered this breakthrough was his faith in me. And now he had just announced that we were partners! Awesome!

GIDEON —"MIGHTY WARRIOR"

When it comes to faith in God, we are often buffeted by similar feelings of inadequacy because we mistakenly root our faith in our capacity to believe. We measure faith by how much faith in God we have. And we often end up discouraged because we fail to factor in how much faith God has in us. We seldom think of that possibility. However, the truth is that God uses His faith in us to prime the pump for our faith in Him to grow. All through the Bible, in book after book, He eloquently states how precious, holy, and victorious we are. These statements come to the rescue when we find ourselves stuck in feelings of unworthiness, sinfulness and defeat. Reading how assuredly He expects us to win provides us with the second wind necessary to pursue it and attain it.

This issue is eloquently illustrated by the story of Gideon, in the book of Judges, chapters 6 through 8. Usually when we think of this Old Testament hero we picture a brave, fearless man who knew nothing but an unending string of victories. However, Gideon lived at a time of tragic national devastation. Year after year, when harvest time arrived and God's people were ready to enjoy its fruit, their enemies the Midianites descended on the land like locusts, overrunning the crops, and raping the land.

They drove God's people to hide in caves in nearby hills from where they helplessly watched the fruit of their labors being plundered.

On one such occasion Gideon was hiding wheat inside of a wine press before taking off to hole up in a cave. Gideon was not planning to fight, not even to passively resist the invaders. It was not a very uplifting picture.

It is at this juncture that an angel visits him and declares: "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior" (Judges 6:12). This was a strange salutation since it did not match the facts at hand. Gideon was certainly not a warrior, he was a fleeing civilian seeking refuge. And by no stretch of the imagination could he be considered mighty. On the contrary, he was crushed inside and devoid of hope. How then can this declaration, so at odds with reality, be true? The reason why Gideon could be truthfully called a mighty warrior is because God has a better opinion of us than the opinion we have of ourselves.

GOD'S OPINION OF US IS DETERMINED BY VICTORIES STILL IN THE FUTURE

God's opinion of us is, like my grandpa's was, determined by victories still in the future, whereas our assessment of our own capabilities (or lack thereof) is shaped by past failures and by what we have not done. God saw Gideon as the general he was going to be.

Like the Israel of those days, many Christians today often become prisoners in caves of resignation and fear. Like Gideon, they have fallen into a cycle of failure, riding a merry-go-round of defeats until hope has vanished and faith has been discarded as an option.

If this is your case, you need to make a decision: Whose report will you believe, God's or the enemy's? God has tremendous faith in us because He sees what we are capable of, and to that effect He is willing and eager to invest in us. Remember, the enemy of faith is not unbelief, it is memory, because negative memories bind us to the past, whereas faith



reveals all the positive things that are yet to happen (Hebrews 11:1).

Gideon obviously was not convinced that God was with him nor that he was a mighty warrior, because he began to argue with the angel that if God was indeed with him, then why hadn't he seen miracles like the ones his forefathers talked of so much.

WHY? THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

Bq. Why? Is the question Satan likes to resort to when we are immersed in a deep personal crisis.

The more we fixate on this question, the more prone we become to doubt the power of God and the reality of miracles, which are precisely what we need to get out of our predicament. So it was that with Gideon (see Judges 6:13).

It is very revealing that at this point God Himself replaced the angel in the scenario. I can imagine God saying, "This is a tough case that requires My personal attention." Then, ignoring the "why" question that will lead to nowhere, God proceeds to give a direct command—illogical, improbable and without explanation: "In this your strength, go and save the nation (Israel)" (Judges 6:14). I say improbable, Gideon had hardly any strength left, and whatever strength he had was not adequate to save himself, much less the nation.

But there is a powerful principle at work here. In essence, God is telling Gideon, Stop thinking about personal survival and trust Me for something that will save you and everything around you.

If we remain fixated on mere survival, struggling to come up with well meaning (albeit temporary), short-serving solutions, then

we will never reach our destiny. We need to believe the report of the Lord instead of a report that is the sum of our fears and doubts.

A PERSONAL ILLUSTRATION

In 1980, following a week of medical tests, I sat down with my doctor to hear him state that I had a maximum of two years to live. A neurological disease had taken up residence in my body and medical science did not have a cure for it.

I vividly recall how he walked up to a black-board (this was 1980 and we were meeting in a teaching hospital) and drew first an "x" to indicate where I was, health wise, that day, and then drew a line that at first was level but after a short while took an abrupt turn downward. At that point he said, "Sooner or later, this will happen to you." His descending thrust caused the chalk to hit the chalk-holder tray and it broke in two pieces. One fell to the floor and began rolling in my direction, and the shocking, sobering reality of the moment gripped my mind. I thought, "This chalk represents my life today. I am still rolling but it will soon come to a stop."

My doctor's prognosis was confirmed by other specialists and by the body of literature I read on my illness. All this information got stored in my mind and became a bulwark in my memory. Every visit to the doctor was a reminder of what I had been told. "Two years and counting." Two years is a frighteningly short time when you are 35 years old with a wife and four children ranging in age from two to eleven.

All I heard were "medical facts" that pre-empted any miraculous intervention. That was the case until I discovered the power of intercession. I made a decision to set aside three days to seek God and inquire not into



the past, but into the future. My question to God was direct and simple, “Is this an illness unto death or unto life?”

For nearly three solid days I interceded, beseeching God and seeking His face. After two days, 23 hours and 45 minutes had gone by with nothing but divine silence. and only fifteen more minutes to go! I said to God, “I have enjoyed your presence and I am grateful for the privilege of being able to bring up this matter. I submit to your will. If your silence is the answer, as much as I dislike it, I accept it. But with all due respect, allow me to say that it would have been very nice for me to hear from you, even if it was to confirm what the doctors have already told me.”

I was heading toward our retreat center in San Nicolas, Argentina. With just minutes before the self-imposed deadline and less than a mile to go before I would have to resign myself to what my memory had been saying all along, all of a sudden the presence of God invaded the car. It was so powerful that He became tangible. I could feel and sense Him all around me. The car became a chariot of fire, and as if riding on the wings of angels, I made it to the retreat center and for the rest of the night I was praying with Him with groans too deep for words, as Romans 8:26 teaches.

When dawn came, I had received, by faith, a promise that God was going to heal me. I had nothing in the natural to pin it on but

just plain, raw faith. I had come to a “Y” in the road. If I looked at the past, I would die. If I dwelt on my present condition, I would wither. But if I gazed into the future, penetrating the ever-present memory-fed fog of doubts with my newfound faith, I knew that I would live. And I chose life!

For the next six months I went through medical hell. My days were measured from injection to medication to time for another injection. But every day I would choose to look into the future—often from a deep rut in the road—to salute from a distance the promise that I would live and not die. It was a gargantuan battle between memory and faith. And faith won. The two years that were to have ended in death have become twenty-seven years to date filled with the most exhilarating life, fully focused on bringing transformation to cities and nations.

HEADING FOR VICTORY

Your true destiny awaits you at the end of a path guarded by menacing giants, and fear is one of them. You must press on knowing that God has a very positive opinion of you and He is commanding you to shift from survival mode to conquering mode. Firmly take hold of your Father’s hand in fullness of faith! Let Him lift you up and lead you to where He has destined you to go. He is there to enable you. He believes in you as He believed in fear ridden Gideon when He told him to save the nation.



Next, God instructed Gideon to go to his father's house to tear down the altar of Baal and the image of Ashera adjacent to it, and to use the stones from the former and the wood from the latter to build an altar to the Lord upon which to sacrifice Gideon's dad's prized bulls.

Gideon was again struggling with fear because he was the youngest in his father's household and his own family was not a prominent one in Israel. His dad would be more than angry when he discovered that two of his prize bulls had been sacrificed. Not yet bold enough to do it in the daytime, Judges 6:27 tells that he carried out the assignment under cover of darkness when no one was watching. But he did it.

The next morning when the elders found the altars missing, they wasted no time in finding out that it was the work of Gideon, and reported it to his father. All of Gideon's fears were about to become realities.

But against all odds, Gideon's father took sides with him and told the elders, mockingly, that if Baal had an issue about what his son had done, then Baal should defend himself. In fact, his dad became so pleased with Gideon's actions that he changed his name to Jerubbaal, which means, "The one that Baal has to contend with." In other words, he was saying, "My son can knock Baal down. Now Baal, if he is who he says he is, needs to get up and defend himself

against the God my son is serving" (see Judges 6:28-32).

Why such a dramatic turn in Gideon's life? We find the answer in the second principle: not only does God have a better opinion of you than you have of yourself, but when you agree to shift from survival mode to overcoming mode, He will cause your family and elders to develop a better opinion of you than you think is possible.

Today, too many believers are pinned down in their faith by what others think of them or what they think others might think or do. Memory of past failures has erected altars of impotence on the hills surrounding the valley of helplessness, where they struggle in spiritual indenture. And what makes those shrines formidable is that their elders have built them, which means that to tear them down we will have to do what they have not been able to do; in essence, to fear God more than men.

TEAR DOWN THE STRONGHOLDS

Chuck Ripka, the banker who is one of the key players in the transformation of Elk River, Minnesota, grew up in a dysfunctional home devastated by the alcohol that both of his parents consumed, and the misery that it brought upon the children. Fights between his Dad and Mom had to be broken up by Chuck and his brothers. Insults and abuse were common all around. He did not study past high school. He did not have a trade or a career.

As a young man, when he looked around, everything was dotted with monuments to family failures, some small, some big. But Chuck and Kathi met Jesus and decided to set their gaze beyond those hills and received the strength to tear those altars down.

Today, Chuck and Kathi have a loving marriage, precious children, and a home that is a haven of peace to friends and strangers. In addition, Chuck has become the founder and president of an international bank that invests 51% of its profits to transform nations. His testimony and his actions have touched and impacted Presidents, Generals, CEOs, and so myriads of common folks. But none of that would have happened had Chuck and Kathi not dared to tear down ancestral curses.

If you are struggling with shrines of ancestral failure... Believe God, not the past!

If you are struggling with similar shrines of ancestral failure, it is time that you choose to obey God. Reject the notion that it cannot happen because it has never happened before. Believe God, not the past!

Imagine the impression that a timid Gideon must have made on his father with this sudden but calculated demonstration of godly courage that dismantled every false spiritual anchor the family had,. You must obey the

word of the Lord and walk through that challenging threshold that is always framed by fear on one side and faith on the other. You will be surprised by the unexpected results once you tear down those altars because it is impossible to develop faith while living in the shadow of failure.

When Francis Oda was asked suddenly and unexpectedly by the President of Tahiti to find a solution to a problem that had baffled 13 top French engineers for the previous six months, Francis knew that he needed to look beyond those shadows—and quickly, since in a few hours before he was expected at the President's residence for dinner.

He accepted the assignment and looked to God. That was the turning point. God loves that childlike faith and He delights Himself in bestowing extraordinary answers to those who dare to pray extraordinary prayers. Francis' wise choice resulted in the salvation of the President and key members of his family and inner circle.

Once Gideon's self image and the opinion of his family and peers had been reshaped to reflect God's perspective, God instructed him to go to the enemy's camp. As expected, this worrier-now-makeshift-warrior stuttered to a halt, and to counter it, God made another incomprehensible and almost comical proposal



to Gideon in Judges 7:10: if Gideon was afraid to go down by himself, he could take his servant Purah with him! What difference would it make for Gideon to go by himself or with one other person?

All we know is that Gideon decided to exercise the option offered by God and took Purah with him. Upon arriving in the camp in the dead of night, Gideon became privy to a conversation going on inside one of the tents. A Midianite soldier was relating a strange dream in which he saw a loaf of bread blown into the camp and striking the main tent, causing it to collapse. His tent mate immediately provided an interpretation that I am sure surprised Gideon more than anyone else: “This is no other than Gideon, into whose hands God has delivered us” (Judges 7:13-14). And that is exactly what happened shortly afterwards.

That reveals the third principle: not only does God have a better opinion of you than you have of yourself, and not only will He cause your elders, family and friends to think better of you than you think is possible, but God will make your enemies develop a better opinion of you! But for this to happen you need to go to the enemy’s camp. That is where that type of divine revelation is bestowed. The farther you get from the wine

cellar, the bolder God’s interaction with you will be; and the greater your interaction with Him, the stronger your faith will become.

God has already decreed victory for those who agree to carry out His assignments, even if like Gideon they shake in their boots. As long as they obey and move forward, God will deliver the promised victory because He has already told your enemies that you will overcome them. Jesus stated unequivocally that the Gates of Hades would not prevail against us. This is a given. But for us to see it happen we must leave the pseudo protection of the wine cellar and fight for our destiny, for the transformation of our nation.

MEMORY VS. FAITH

The crowning point that we must not miss in Gideon’s story is this: the enemy of faith is not unbelief, it is memory; because memory is the record of what has already taken place, whereas faith is the revelation of what is yet to happen. Even good memories can be bad if they keep us from believing God for something better by enticing us to settle for the good we know instead of for the best we have not tasted yet.

How can we get out of those canyons of despair? It is very simple: hear God say to you,





“Saddle up and go get ‘em!” Believe that He has a better opinion of you than the one you have of yourself, because He knows what you are capable of and He knows the victories that are in store for you!

Let His faith in you energize what little faith you have in Him

Let His faith in you energize what little faith you have in Him and you will pivot from the wine cellar towards your destiny. God sees the nations in the grip of the evil one, doing what they are not supposed to do and being led by an evil crafty “bull,” and He says to you, “Go get ‘em!”

Ed Silvos from Transformation Ch.19

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