

Scott Wimberly

Embrace Your Destiny

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Decisions to Change Your Life

Introduction

Like most people I never thought I would ever write a book. I love to read, always have, but to write an actual book, you got to be kidding. I could never do that, it takes too much time, what would I say, there is no way I could ever write a book. I had every excuse in the book as to why I could never or would never write a book. My last excuse was if I ever did break down and write a book, who in the world would ever read it? Well, here we are a book written and you are about to read it, so it all did happen. I know it didn't just happen, but it was a process; a very long process, but once the process started rolling it didn't seem to take as long as I had thought it would.

When I was asked how long I had worked on this book, I didn't know whether to say a few months or a few years. The material that you are reading has been in going over and over in my mind for several years. I had never thought that I would come this far though as to write it down for others to read. I had no idea that people would be interested in destiny as much as I was interested. Boy, did I ever find out how wrong I was about that. There are thousands and thousands of people that are very interested in destiny, just like me. The next step then was a daily blog in Facebook; A Walk Through My Mind, then from there a manuscript and then a book. It has been a process, but an exiting, life changing process to say the least. I have learned more about myself and destiny than I ever thought I could learn. I hope that you too, enjoy learning more about destiny as you read.

Destiny has been a subject that has intrigued me for some time now. The question has been asked many times what is my destiny. Or how do I know if I am walking in my

destiny? First, what is destiny? I would say that destiny is the plan for your life. It is what you do with your life. It's the script that we have for what we do, like in a movie. I understand that great men and women have a destiny, but me? I couldn't see how I could possibly have a destiny too. I have read in the Bible as well as other books about everyone having a destiny, a plan for their life, but I still didn't include myself in that number. Now I see how wrong I was, there was no way I couldn't or wouldn't have a destiny too. There is a plan for us all, everyone last one of us. The more I wrote about destiny the more I was convinced that every one of us has an awesome destiny to walk out. There is a specific plan just for you and for me. Destiny is much larger than just a person; it includes other people, places and things. But most of all it includes other people.

I grew up in a small town in south Alabama. Other than 5 years of college at the University of Southern Mississippi '84-'89 I lived in Carlton, AL. Jackson was the largest town around, about 5000 people. That is where we went to church, school, shopped and all that stuff. While growing up I learned quite a lot about destiny and purpose. I have had some great teachers in this area. My parents, grandparents, and family had a large influence in my life regarding destiny. I was always taught that if you are doing what God intended for you to do, then don't worry He will see you through to the end.

As I prepared to leave Jackson in December 1998 to move to Tuscaloosa, my pastor and friend, Bro. E. C. Russell gave me my first John Maxwell book. That really started me on my way to reaching my destiny. Finding my true purpose in life was now in hand.

When I got to Tuscaloosa, I learned from a true man of destiny, Bro. Pat Schatzline. He taught me things about destiny and purpose that I have never dreamed about before.

He is still a remarkable man of destiny today, travels all over the world teaching people about their purpose and their destiny.

I have learned about destiny from my mistakes while I have been here as well. I have been in my strength area and out while I have lived in Tuscaloosa, and in is much better. However, live and experience has taught me some valuable destiny lessons. I know that we all have a specific destiny for our lives and we must do whatever it takes to fulfill that plan. At this point and time in my life I can begin to see what my destiny is more clearly. I know that writing this book is a major step toward my destiny.

I want to encourage you as you read about destiny to begin to see your own destiny unfold in your life. See what plan has been designed for you to complete. You will begin to see your gifts and talents come to the forefront for you to use. I make these six decisions each and everyday. I have had to walk in forgiveness, to love myself and others, to live with integrity, develop self-discipline, do things with excellence, and maintain humility. Just knowing that my destiny would be writing and speaking about destiny is not enough, I have to make the right choices and decisions to make my destiny actually take place. You will begin to see your destiny, your life plan, open up before your eyes when you start making these six decisions in your daily life. It is amazing what you can begin to discover and to know it was there all time; right inside of us. Your destiny is just that, yours. Although, it is not all just about you, your destiny is specific and unique to you. You will see how that the everyday decisions we make will affect our destiny. Your destiny is in fact your destiny, but it is all about others. You will begin to see how important and vital relationships are in your life. Without relationships you will never discover the depth of your destiny.

Don't let insecurities get in your way while walking out your destiny. Like me, we all have to deal with our insecurities, but the truth is we have a destiny and we have to deal with the insecurities to see our destiny through. You can do it, I fully believe in you. It's the case of, if I can do it, then I know you can do it too. Believe in yourself and it will happen. Use your gifts and talents to their fullest. No one can do what you were created to do, just like you can do it. Too many times when someone else does not do what they were created to do, then someone else has to fill in and complete it. Well, it gets done, but it's not the same. There was a person created to complete the task, but someone else had to do it. Let's not let that happen to us, walk your destiny and you will be amazed. There is so much inside you. Let it out! Complete your destiny! Live life to the fullest!

Chapter One

Forgiveness

It has been said; that everything rises and falls on leadership. I believe that concept is true. Also, I believe that everything begins with forgiveness. Without forgiveness in our lives it is not possible to walk in our destiny. Our destiny is about other people and if

you have unforgiveness toward others you will not be able to have the type of relationship necessary. The only way to have the relationship with the people that will take you to your destiny is to forgive everyone all the time. It is an absolute must to forgive quickly and completely; that is if you are going to fulfill your purpose in life.

I had to learn to walk in forgiveness; to make it a lifestyle. To forgive quickly and fully is essential to fulfilling ones destiny. You can't walk in destiny if first you don't walk in forgiveness. You can't carry the baggage of unforgiveness with you on your destiny path. Forgiveness clears the mind and the heart of junk; of excess, unneeded weight. Your destiny is all about others, so we must be able to forgive and move past the hurts of life if we are going to be able to reach our destiny, because our destiny does include others. Everyday we are presented with opportunities to decide whether or not to forgive others, as well as ourselves. Before we can move into our destiny we must forgive others and forgive ourselves completely. There is another saying, to forgive and to forget. This concept I don't so much agree with. I do believe the first part, to forgive; it's the second part that I don't agree with, to forget. It's our remembering our hurts and disappointments that teach us valuable lessons of life. However, it's our forgiving that enables us to benefit from the hurts and disappointments. I believe that when we have truly forgiven then the pain of the hurt or disappointment is no longer present.

Forgiveness is a Gift

Forgiveness is one of those elusive gifts that we have to search for sometimes. For the most part it is hidden in plain sight. It doesn't cost you anything, but it is priceless. However, it only has value when you freely give it away to others. Anyone can give forgiveness but for some reason very few ever seem to give it. It is a gift that when you give it, it will come back around to you.

Before we can ever start moving in our destiny, we must forgive. In order to forgive someone you need to go them, if possible, and let them know in no uncertain terms that what they have done to you has hurt you and you need to forgive them for the incident. Then you deal with it accordingly and release any and all anger that came with the action that has affected you. Never holding that action against them again or bringing it

up in a negative way for the rest of your life. We must forgive ourselves and others. Also, we must ask others to forgive us. Sometimes forgiveness comes easy, especially when someone made a mistake and there was no intention to hurt. However, when someone makes a choice to do something that hurts us; then that is another story. It can be a much longer process at times to forgive in this case. However, the end result must be forgiveness. We must be clean of any unforgiveness toward others if we are going to move into our destiny. Take the time to free yourself from the weight of unforgiveness; as it will hold you down. No matter what has been done to us we must find it in ourselves to forgive. We expect forgiveness; therefore, we must give it.

I talk to people all the time about their destiny and the first thing I ask them is; "Do you have any unforgiveness toward yourself or anyone else?". Rarely does anyone ever tell me that they do not have unforgiveness toward someone. We then turn our attention to forgiving everyone in their life, including them. It is not an easy process for most. It was not easy for me. It may be a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or other relative. It may be a teacher, coach, friend, neighbor, or complete stranger. But regardless to who it is we must first choose to forgive them. Whether or not they ever know it or not, that is not part of the equation.

No where is it written that the person ever has to ask you to forgive them. They might not even care if you do or not. The person you need to forgive may not even be alive. However, it is not for them, it is for you. Once you have made the decision to forgive; then we begin to free ourselves. Once we are free of the unforgiveness then we can see much clearer. Good vision is a must in reaching our destiny. We need to be able to see where we are going and be able to make clear, concise decisions.

Forgiveness is a precious gift. More valuable than any diamonds or gold is the gift of forgiveness. However, its value is only experienced when we give it away. The beauty of forgiveness is only realized when you give it freely away. It is like a drink of cold water on a hot summer day. It refreshes the soul when we truly forgive others. There is a peace that comes from the gift of forgiveness. The kind of peace that allows you to lie down at night and get sweet sleep, only comes from it. When we give it we receive so

much more in return. Peace being one thing we get the benefit from. So live a lifestyle of forgiveness. Forgive quickly and thoroughly. Let there be no unforgiveness in your heart. Never lay your head down at night while there is unforgiveness residing in your heart.

Receiving Forgiveness

We also need to ask others to forgive us for the things we have done to them. They don't have to forgive us, but if we are truly repentant, then it is on them. Then there is the guilt that tries to grip us for what we did to them. Even though I know that God has forgiven me, sometimes the other person will not. But I will not let guilt get me. So it's back to asking for forgiveness. I have had some that wanted to hold their forgiveness from me. For what reason I won't even try to guess. But I can tell you that it doesn't work that way. Mainly because I am truly repentant and sorry about things I have done that were wrong and/or hurt people. My conscience for the first time in many, many years is clean and clear. I don't fear what the past can do to me anymore. If I need to be disciplined then so be it. But holding back forgiveness from me doesn't qualify as discipline. Now that person or people have to deal with the forgiveness issue. I can never be held hostage by my past again. I am free from stuff that has tortured me and tormented me for too long. I am not afraid of the consequences of anything from 25 years ago or today. I know we all have to face our giants, our past, and our fears. I have stopped running and hiding from all that stuff. I have confronted my issues and they weren't as big and bad as I made them out to be.

Now, I know that some of you may have stuff in your past or even in your right now that is so bad that you never think you can escape it. Trust me, forgiveness is the key. You have heard me say that time and time again. Forgive yourself and then others. Whether or not they forgive you is not your business. If they withhold it from you that is there issue to deal with then. But be sincere, be honest, be real. As Mrs. Ida Goff used to tell me all the time, "Come clean dirty." Great advice from a great lady.

Giving Forgiveness

Growing up my dad was very hard on me. Now, he was not cruel and inhumane by any means, but he was hard. My dad was a perfectionist and expected me to be perfect as

well. News Flash!! I was not perfect. So no matter how good I was at something it was not good enough. So for 39 years I lived with unforgiveness toward my dad. Then in Dec '03 he died. I thought that finally I am out from under his rule. A couple of months later; I realized that I was still under his rule. My dad had complicated my life to no end for many years. Now from the grave he was still complicating my life. Most people have wills but not my dad he had made out a trust. So I now had to drive to my hometown, Jackson, AL, to meet with our family accountant to figure out what I had to do. So, very early on a February morning I head out to Jackson. I had plenty of time to think during the 2 ½ hour drive. I was complaining to God the whole way. Telling God how my dad was doing this and that to me. Then I get to a crossroads called Sunny South. There I had to wait for a convoy of log trucks to go by. While I am sitting there, in the middle of no where, I hear God say, "You are digging your dad up and taking him out of the grave. He is not complicating your life. You are!" I then recalled the last night that my dad was alive. During the night he had told me several things. But one that stood out was that he told me life was all about relationships. It is all about people. Well, I knew right then at the Sunny South crossroads I had not forgiven my dad. So while sitting there at that stop sign I forgave my dad. Did nothing for him, he is dead. But I received freedom from bondage like you would not believe.

Andy Andrews in his book, *The Traveler's Gift*, says; the secret to forgiveness; it is a secret that is hidden in plain sight. It costs nothing and is worth millions. It is available to everyone and used by few. If you harness the power of forgiveness, you will be revered, sought after, and wealthy. And not coincidentally, you will also be forgiven by others. (Page 131) The unmistakable truth about forgiveness is that it is not a reward that must be earned; forgiveness is a gift to be given. When I give forgiveness, I free my own spirit to release the anger and hatred harbored in my heart. By granting forgiveness, I free my spirit to pursue my future happily and unencumbered by the anchors of my past. And forgiveness, when granted to others, becomes a gift to myself. (Page 132) I understand that forgiveness has value only when it is given away. By the simple act of granting forgiveness, I release the demons of the past about which I can do nothing, and I create in myself a new heart, a new beginning. (Page 138)

Forgiveness Brings Peace

You want peace in your life? Then be a giver of forgiveness. Freely give forgiveness away, do not hold a grudge against anyone. This includes you. You have to be able to forgive yourself. This can be harder than forgiving others for some people. We must be able to forgive ourselves completely. Do not hold a grudge against yourself. For many years, my greatest enemy has been myself. Every mistake, every miscalculation, every stumble I made has been replayed over and over in my mind. Every broken promise, every day wasted, every goal not reached has compounded the disgust I feel for the lack of achievement in my life. My dismay has developed a paralyzing grip. When I disappoint myself, I respond with inaction and become more disappointed.

I realize today that it is impossible to fight an enemy living in my head. By forgiving myself, I erase the doubts, fears, and frustration that have kept my past in the present. From this day forward, my history will cease to control my destiny. I have forgiven myself. My life has just begun.

As I have started writing this book I have realized that God is taking me down the path of each chapter. I have had to deal with the failure issue, love issues, and right now forgiveness issues. I have held in the back of my heart unforgiveness toward some people in my life. It was subtle so that it would not be easily recognized. It has been lying there for a couple of years. I thought I had dealt with it earlier but I had only identified it. By not dealing with it then, I allowed it to lie dormant all this time.

It was not until other things started going wrong in my life did I see that the unforgiveness was there. It began to show up in my family's finance's. No matter what I did I could not make ends meet. We were tithing, giving offerings, and alms, but still going deeper in debt. It was at this time that God begin to show me the area in my life that was stopping Him from being able to prosper my family. The area was unforgiveness. So I started to work on it immediately.

First I had to forgive my pastor. I texted him saying I wanted to talk to him. But still did not feel a release. So I called him and left a message, still nothing. So the next thing

I know I am driving to his house. He and I were texting each other the whole time I was driving. He was very understanding to my whole situation. When I told him I was sitting in his driveway and would like to apologize to him and forgive him and ask for his forgiveness he came out the front door to welcome me. We talked a couple of hours that day and everything seemed fine. However, a few days later I felt I still had to go a step farther. So I am now meeting with the staff members at my church and several others to ask for forgiveness and to give forgiveness. I do not know where all this will end but I am willing to do whatever it takes to live a forgiveness free life. I will freely give forgiveness and ask for forgiveness with no hesitation.

Forgive Yourself

What about forgiveness when it comes to ourselves? Many of us are walking around with unforgiveness toward ourselves. We look at our past and what we have done and we hold it against ourselves. Long after God has forgiven us, we still have not. Before you can forgive others you have to forgive yourself. No matter what you have done you have to forgive. For the most part we are too hard on ourselves in this area. To walk in forgiveness completely forgive yourself. Understand that God has already forgiven you. Don't you think it is time you forgave yourself? You may think it is impossible but God has given us the ability to do it.

When you feel you have been wronged; forgive and do it quickly!! You may have to go to the person or you may not. You may not be able to go to them. So practice forgiving in all situations. You will be so glad you did. Do not let unforgiveness to build a foothold in your life. Do no give it a place inside you.

As you can see forgiveness is of the utmost importance. I sincerely believe that you must live a lifestyle of forgiveness if you are to walk in your destiny. Don't be too quick to judge other people by their actions. Be sure you check their intentions. We judge ourselves by our intentions, but we judge others by their actions. When you live a lifestyle of forgiveness, you don't have to carry the load of unforgiveness inside you.

Having unforgiveness build up inside of you is like taking poison while waiting for the other person to die. It will eat you alive from the inside out. Unforgiveness will torment you like nothing else can. It will keep you awake at night; while in your mind you plan your revenge. At the same time, the other person is sound asleep, totally unaware of the restlessness going on in your mind. Let go of the bitterness, let go of the poison, let go of the unforgiveness that is inside of you.

There is a direct correlation how forgiveness works with your destiny. Forgiveness cleans our vision. We can see so much more when we don't have unforgiveness in our way. Unforgiveness clouds how we see people and circumstances. When we are more preoccupied with getting revenge, getting even, we are not concentrating on what is important in life. You have your attention on the wrong things; your focus is off center. There is no way we can fulfill our destiny when we are so tied up with the bitterness of unforgiveness.

Unforgiveness will lead to bitterness in turn leads to hate. Our destiny is not centered on bitterness or hate or unforgiveness. Our destiny is centered on love. The only way we will even begin to forgive is to operate in love. Love of ourselves and love for others. It is impossible to forgive and seriously mean it if we don't have love in our heart. People all the time are going to anger management class and taking anger management courses. My question is, "Why would you want to manage your anger?" Would it not be better to release all the anger you have rather than keeping it bottled up inside you? The only way that I know to release your anger is to forgive. Forgiveness is the only anger management program that works 100% of the time.

Forgiveness is the first step on our destiny journey. Don't let the selfishness of unforgiveness stop you from reaching the most important destination ever. Destination destiny is our goal. Unforgiveness will only serve as a detour away from your destiny. Avoid the detour of unforgiveness at all cost.

Baggage Claim

I was thinking this morning about airports and flying. I am not sure why, but I was. Anyways, I thought about having to go down to the baggage claim to claim your baggage. I got to thinking, isn't that just like us folk? We go through all the motions of getting rid of all of the excess baggage we have, namely unforgiveness, only to go claim it back. And get upset when it's gone!! We seem to like our baggage, our unforgiveness, bitterness, and hatred. We think we want to get rid of it, but as soon as we realize it's gone, we rush over to baggage claim to reclaim our stuff.

It's like I see people walking around with all this baggage with them, just lugging it everywhere they go. If you ask to help take it from them, they will fight to the death to keep it. Why are we like that? Have we become so comfortable with our baggage that we feel naked without it? I have been covered with baggage and I have been exposed without it. Being exposed without it was painful at first, but I like the freedom of no baggage much better. Lay down your baggage of unforgiveness and see how it feels. There is freedom to be experienced.

Let's take a moment and look at unloading our baggage. If you have already been to the baggage claim area, let's look in our baggage and get rid of the stuff that we don't need. Unforgiveness being the topic of discussion is the first item that we need to throw out of our baggage. Note that your suitcase is like your mind, it holds all the stuff that we go through. Just like your suitcase, it won't get rid of the stuff if you don't make a conscious effort to do so. So let's look in our mind and find that unforgiveness. Sift through all the items and find every last piece of unforgiveness. Once you have found all of it, now it's time to get rid of it. No matter how well you think it fits it's time to throw it out. You may think it looks good on you, but trust me, it does not. Unforgiveness will not make you look like you have control over the situation or the other person involved. Unforgiveness will make you look sour and bitter, because of the way it is poisoning you on the inside. So take an inventory of your baggage today. Find and throw out the unforgiveness that has been stashed away for days, weeks, months, even years. Your suitcase will be much lighter once you get rid of the unforgiveness!! Lighten your load!

Hostage Situation

Unforgiveness is a powerful weapon that is used against us, often times by ourselves. We hold ourselves hostage, thinking that we have control over someone else. While all the time the other person has no idea that there is even a hostage situation going on. It is all in our mind and heart. We act as if we have control of the other person by withholding our forgiveness. While in reality the only person that is being controlled is us. We are the only one being hurt by the hostage situation. When we forgive we then release the prisoner that we had been holding hostage; only to find out that the prisoner was us all the time. We give others control over our mind and emotions when we hold unforgiveness towards them. They don't realize they have control over us; it's all in our mind. So by forgiving we have control over our mind and emotions; not someone else.

Then think of this as a hostage negotiation. It is time to let the hostage go, yourself! Throw down your weapon, your unforgiveness, and let the hostage go free. No one has to get hurt or killed in this situation. Everyone can walk away free and clear of everything that has been going on. The record can be wiped clean, sealed up and thrown away, never to be brought back up again. It is gone, even though it does not have to be forgotten. It is remembered in a way that helps us, not hurts us. When we have truly forgiven someone, the memory may still be vivid, but the pain associated with that memory is gone. It has been released to never harm us again. The pain of unforgiveness will not hold us hostage ever again.

Unforgiveness is a serious barrier to us reaching our destiny. Only when we clear our minds and our hearts of any and all unforgiveness will we be able to move into our destiny. There are many stories of people that have harbored unforgiveness towards others; these people never found the peace they searched for in life. The unforgiveness prevented them from ever completing their life's purpose. Take the road less traveled and be the one to forgive, release the unforgiveness you have toward anyone or any group of people. Begin to see your destiny more clearly. Begin to feel the peace that comes with forgiving others. There is nothing we can do about the past. What has happened and been said can not be undone, but we can do something about the present and future. We can choose to release the past and let them go. Let go of the resentment,

unforgiveness, bitterness, hatred, even rage that we feel toward those that we feel have wronged us in some way.

Make up your mind today that you will not hold any unforgiveness in your heart toward anyone. No matter what they have done or said to you; refuse to hold unforgiveness from them. Be determined to live a lifestyle of forgiveness. Forgive immediately and don't bring the incident back up in an unforgiving way ever again. Maintain a forgiving heart and you will have peace that you have never had before. You will wonder why you waited so long to start forgiving people.

Perspective

When you live in forgiveness you will begin to see people from a totally different perspective. You will begin to see things from their point of view; which will lead to more understanding about how other people think and feel about issues. When you see things from other people's perspective it can change your life. However, only when you have complete forgiveness toward others will you be able to see things from their point of view. It is when we start seeing situations and circumstances from other people's perspective can we really start to move toward our destiny. It is a sure sign of growth when we start taking the time to look at the world, the circumstances, situations, and issues from someone else's perspective. This is a good way of knowing if we are truly forgiving people, we take the time to share their vision.

Without forgiveness we will not reach our destiny. If we don't forgive others we will never be able to love them the way we have to in order to fulfill our destiny. Forgiveness freely given will empower you to reach new levels. It is a remarkable gift that you possess, but only is activated when you give it away. The more you give forgiveness away the more powerful it becomes. When you choose to walk in forgiveness the freer you become to walk in your destiny. As you are walking in your destiny, the weight of unforgiveness will hold you back. Your mind will be too involved with the unforgiveness to be able to focus and concentrate on the issues at hand. Only when you free your mind and heart of all unforgiveness will you be able to walk the destiny walk. It's like mountain climbing, at the start of the climb; at the base of the mountain; we have all

sorts of equipment. This equipment can weigh hundreds of pounds, but we are fresh at the start and the climb is reasonably easy. However, as we climb higher and the air gets thinner, the weight of the equipment begins to hold us back. We are unable to climb effectively because of the stuff we are carrying. So as we go higher we have to discard the unnecessary equipment; unforgiveness, bitterness, and hatred, are the first to go. Lighten your load and carry only those things that are necessary to make the climb all the way to the top.

Forgiveness, as you can see, is a very important destiny decision. Without forgiveness in your heart you will not see your destiny fulfilled. You will not accomplish the things that you were created to accomplish. You will not make it to the destination that you were intended to go to. You will come up short of the plan for your life, because you chose not to forgive those that had wronged you. Do not let unforgiveness rob you of your destiny. Do not let pride stand in the way of you forgiving someone for a wrong. Choose to forgive today and everyday. Forgive quickly and never bring it back to mind. You and those around you will be the better because of this decision. Be an instantaneous forgiver!!

Forgiveness Exercise

Make a list of the people you need to forgive.

Make a list of the people that you need to ask forgiveness from.

Forgiveness Workshop

1. Are there people in your past that you are holding unforgiveness toward?

2. Are there people in the present that you are holding unforgiveness toward?

3. Are you willing to let go of the unforgiveness that you are holding toward others?

4. In what ways are you going about forgiving these people?

5. Once the forgiveness took place describe how you felt.

Chapter Two

Love

Love is not about how you feel toward others but how you behave toward others.
--James Hunter

Love is a verb not a noun. It is an action not an emotion.
--Bishop Pat Schatzline

When you use the word "love" there are so many different interpretations. Without a doubt, love is the greatest power known in the universe today. Love is without boundaries. It can not be contained by any definition, by any group, by any government, or by any religion. We only have the one word to use for so many different feelings. From I love my car, to I love pizza, and then I love my mom, my spouse, and so on. We are so limited in having one word to describe so many different feelings. But in reality, love is not a feeling it is an action. My grandmother used to all tell me, "Scott, you like food, but you love people." I know, sometimes it is easier to love a large pepperoni, beef, and extra cheese with no sauce pizza from Petromalie's than it is to love our neighbor. But God has told us to love our neighbor as we do ourselves. But the trouble is we are rarely taught what love really is all about. So many people tell me that

they can not love because they have been hurt. Then I wonder was love really ever involved. If we go by the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13, the love chapter, as it is usually referred to as, the answer would have to be no.

Know Love, Know Destiny

Without unconditional love flowing through us there is no way that we will be able to reach our destiny. For the simple fact that your destiny is not about you; it is about others. As we had said with forgiveness, it is not all about you when it comes to destiny. Without love you can't forgive others and if you don't forgive others, you don't love them. So as with forgiveness, love is essential too. Therefore, if you don't first love yourself and then love others, you will not endure the obstacles necessary to fulfill your destiny. Love will do a lot of things to a person, make you do all sorts of things, but the one of the key objectives of love is to get you to your destiny. So the next time you don't want to forgive or give your love to someone, think twice. Love is one of the key things that keeps us going when we don't want to go any more. When we feel like we have nothing left to give; love will give you something that they need. It will tell you what to say and show you where to go many times. It will give you the directions to carry out to accomplish your destiny. It is a must when we are talking about destiny.

I ask others and myself quite regularly, "What do you hear when someone tells you; 'I love you'"? I get all sorts of different answers. But I really find that too many people really do not know what love really is. Am I the one to try and tell you what love truly is? "NO!" But I know what the Bible says about love and I know that, for me, it all begins with Jesus. You may have another source you draw from, but I only know what I know, so I can only tell you what I know.

Jesus' Love

When I graduated from Seminary, I was asked what one thing I had learned that stood out from all the rest. What one special thing that stood out? I had learned some incredible concepts and ideas during Bible College. I had been introduced to awesome teachings, but I drew a blank. So I just stopped and said, "What is the one thing that I

have learned that stands out from all the rest". Then it was like I was taken back in time, not to Bible classes, but to a Sunday School classroom. It was as clear as glass; I could see my 3-4 year old class, all of us there, the white concrete block walls, the small gas heater in the corner, the window looking out at the Coca-Cola warehouse, and our teacher Ms. Bumpers teaching us a song, " Jesus love me this I know, for the Bible tells me so, little ones to Him belong, we are weak but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me. I have never learned anything that is any greater than the fact that Jesus loves me." So that was my answer that day. I think for the first time in my life I realized that Jesus really does love me. Jesus' love for me has meant more to me than just words to a song since that day. I was only starting to realize what love was all about. Since that day I have seen love in many different forms, expressions, and people.

I know we all have been hurt by people that said they loved us. But that does not mean that we are not supposed to love again. It has been said that, "hurting people, hurt people." There is a lot of truth in that statement. When we are hurt we hurt those around us. Another quote is, "We hurt the ones we love." How can we hurt them if we love them? We do it all the time though.

We can not truly love others until we love ourselves. We can not truly love ourselves until we realize what true unconditional love is all about. Allow me to tell you another story about experiencing this type of love. It was in 2004, I was in the sanctuary at Daystar International Fellowship (now Daystar Family Church). I was in the old sanctuary praying. It was real early in the morning, like 5:00 AM. I had reached a point in my life where nothing was right in my eyes. My dad had just died in Dec '03, I had moved my family back to Tuscaloosa, and I was completely empty. So I asked God if this was it for me. Had I reached my destiny and now there was nothing left for me? Because everything I had stood on before and believed was constant and never changing, was gone. So I asked God, "What is the one thing, just one thing that I can count on no matter what?" I had my paper and pen to write what He said. I started writing words; praise, worship, tithing, peace, love, forgiveness, and so on. But every time I wrote something down He would tell me to cross it out. I must have written 25 different words and nothing. So finally I said to God, "Ok God, I can take it if there is

nothing constant, I can't trust in and depend on anything to be true in all circumstances. I can take it, just tell me so, and I will let it go. Pack up and go home." I meant it too, I was that empty. So I sat there a little while longer and nothing. As I got up to leave, satisfied that there was nothing I could stand on no matter what. I heard as clear as day, not thundering loud, but quiet and clear, "My Love."

Permission to Love

No matter what the case. No matter how bad it seems, we can depend on love. You have permission to love, to love again and again and again. Never stop loving. Especially when it seems like it is the wrong thing to do. Especially when it hurts the most, we have to love. When we are hurting because of life's junk, we have to love. The best way to get out of a bad situation is to love your way out of it. Find someone that needs to be loved and love on them. When people hurt us, do us wrong, cheat on us, talk bad about us, lie on us, cut us, betray us, dump us, use us, and so on, love them! Did not say you had to talk to them. Did not say you had to hug them. Did not say you had to hang out with them. I said you had to love them. See it is not about us, it is about others. It is not about making us feel better, but about making others feel better. This will in turn not only make you feel better, but it will make you a better person. Not that you are better than anyone else, but you become a better person than you were.

We have to learn to accept and love ourselves. Then we are truly able to love others. Think about it, if you do not love yourself how can you ever love anyone else? There is no way. Look at the way people treat the people that they say they love. If it is good, you can tell they love themselves too. If it is not good, you know they really do not love themselves. Too many times we are told that we are no good and there is no way anyone could ever love us. And then we go out into world with this mentality. But at the same time we are supposed to love everybody, but we do not know how.

Love Hook

Your destiny and love are hooked together. They are linked together with a bond that cannot be broken. I can not imagine why you would want to fulfill your destiny if you are not a person that loves. Only if you are in it for yourself would you not care about

others; and then it's not your purpose or destiny you are fulfilling but your own selfish desires. Allow love to dictate your destiny to you. It will carry you to places and introduce you to people you never thought you would go or meet. It will keep you safe when you are in danger. It will give you the answers to questions that you never thought you would get answered. When you are in the love vein, the place where you don't have a personal agenda, but you are about your destiny, you will find life is worth living. It is not about what happens to you, but what happens inside you that really counts. When you try to figure things out without love leading the way, nothing ever makes sense. What your purpose is all about will never make any sense to you if you don't have love in your heart.

Don't let the world tell you that if you use love as your guide that you are weak or soft. It takes a real, true, determined, person of destiny to walk in this kind of love. Yet it is soft but hard at the same time. Destiny love is kind to all but it is tough too. It is easy going but will drive you too. It will protect you, but allow you to feel pain. It will nurse those wounds however, and get you back on your path to your destiny. The kind of love that I am talking about will take care of you, even when you can't feel it. Remember, what we said earlier, destiny kind of love is an action not a feeling. You can feel it, don't mistake me, but it is not just a feeling, it is much more than that. We can never reduce destiny producing love down to an emotion or feeling. It is so much more than that, much more. Feelings and emotions come and go, they change like the wind, but destiny producing love is steady. It will not leave you confused day to day about how you feel. It will give you clear and concise direction on what you are to do, where you are to go, who you are to see, and what you are to say.

More Than a Feeling

We let love confuse us because we have reduced it to just a feeling. Love is very clear when it speaks, very distinct. When you have gotten unforgiveness out of the way, it is much easier to understand the language that love speaks. Once you have gotten your agenda out of the way, you will be able to understand exactly what love is saying to you. When it is destiny love speaking to you, giving you direction you will have no trouble

whatsoever understanding what is being said. The messages will be crystal clear, as long as we keep the crystal clear.

We have to make sure that we are using love when making destiny decisions. Love, when pure and honest, will never lead you wrong. Love is the one constant that will not fail you when dealing with your destiny. Like we mentioned, it is not always easy to maintain a lifestyle of love, but it is very possible and very necessary. We desire others to see us through their eyes of love; and we must do the same for others. We should always look at other people through love colored glasses. Give other people the benefit of the doubt in situations. We need to use the mercy gift that comes when we truly love others. We all need a lot of mercy from others if we are going to accomplish our destiny. So at the same time we must be willing to show mercy. Allow people to make a mistake on you. This will go a long way in enabling you to reach your destiny. When you show mercy and love; you will surely receive mercy and love.

Destiny Love

There is nothing like experiencing your destiny. There is nothing like experiencing your life when you have love as your guide. When you allow your destiny love to lead you and guide you; you will experience life like you never thought possible. Your destiny will be at the forefront of your mind at all times. You will wake up in the morning with your destiny fresh on your mind and go to sleep at night with your destiny still fresh in your mind. Your life will never be the same when you see things through the eyes of destiny love. You will see how your destiny is all about others. You will learn how your purpose in life is to serve others. That is what our destiny is all about; serving others; each in his or her own way. It has a way of changing our outlook about others and about ourselves like nothing else possibly can do.

Allow your destiny love take you a new level. You will never regret allowing your destiny love to grow inside you. There will be times where you will not feel like it is not working, but never allow that to stop you. Small changes today will lead to enormous changes tomorrow. We all know that change can be difficult, but when you are making the changes that involve your destiny it will go much smoother. Maybe not so easy, but

smooth nevertheless. You will find that walking the path of our destiny is not going to be easy. Like we have always been told, nothing in life worth having comes easy. It is no different when it comes to our destiny either. Walking out our destiny is a tough walk and it is hard work. But anything you do in life, which will amount to anything, is going to be tough and hard work. But it is worth every step that you take. It is when the way is difficult that the love you have developed will take over. This is when your destiny love will act as your guide. It will take you to places that you never thought you would or could go. It will bring you into the company of people that you never thought you would meet.

Your destiny walk will be the greatest walk you ever take in your life. Not only will that love take you on the walk. It will maintain you while you are on the walk. It will protect you while you are on the walk. It will nourish you while you are on the walk. It will keep you from giving up while you are on the walk. Your destiny will grow and keep growing each day of your destiny walk. It won't keep you from experiencing the pain that comes from being disappointed or hurt, but your destiny love will not let you down. It will comfort you and give you the life that you will find necessary to make your destiny walk a successful one. There will be times of disappointment, that is a given, but just know and be comforted by the fact that love will always be there to sustain you. This same love will encourage you when you don't feel like you can take another step or another day.

There is nothing that can take the place of destiny love. It is a necessity if you are going to reach your destiny. Because of the fact that your destiny means dealing with people you have to have love for them. You will have to love yourself as well, because you will make mistakes along the way and rather than beat yourself up over them, you have to love yourself to overcome them. It is a very powerful tool. That is why people are so hurt when they think someone loves them, but is only out to manipulate them. Be very careful how you use the gift of love, meaning that, you have to be sure that you are using the gift of destiny love. People have been beat up and misused so badly that they are skeptical of love. Some people are to the point that they don't believe that anyone can possibly love them. However, if you are operating in destiny love then you can help them to see just how loveable they truly are. Always be sincere and real when you reach

out with destiny love. Don't be callous or cold when you are dealing with people because you don't know what they have been through. And even if you know what they have been through there is no way to know how they have dealt with it. You don't know what is going through their mind.

Never take for granted that someone has shown you love. It's time we take what we have been learning and show that love to someone. Be a mentor to someone. Take the time to develop a relationship with somebody. Take the time to invest the destiny love that is inside you today. There are so many people today that desire to be mentored but don't know where to go or who to ask. Make yourself available and approachable to those around you and before you know it, there will be a mentoring relationship established.

Volitional Love

When you have destiny love; you have volitional love. This is love of the will, emotions, and mind. This type of love is totally by choice. When you have volitional love it means you are willing to give consideration to others needs, destiny, and their welfare. When you have it you look out for the best of others. All the wealth in the world without it is worthless. Love adds the value to the goods that you possess.

Your influence toward others is in direct relation to your love for that person. When you are leading people to their destiny; love is a requirement. Your love is shown in how you treat people not in how you feel about them. We have to learn to love others with destiny love and also how to receive love from others. It is destiny love that breaths life into our destiny. Without it inside us, we have no life.

Responsible Love

With destiny comes enormous responsibility, so don't take your destiny lightly. There is an awesome, powerful and magnificent gift. So make sure you are using destiny love in all the decisions that you make. There can be no agendas but to serve and love others. When we start putting ourselves in the front then we start to lose the path of our destiny. We have to keep in the forefront of our minds that our destiny is about others, not about us. Only when we have and let it flow through us can we keep our focus where

it needs to be. When you focus on people and love on other people we will keep our destiny in focus. Your destiny will be clear and get even clearer when you continue to live a life that revolves around destiny love.

Being able to maintain an attitude of destiny love can be trying at times. It is just like with anything else, it takes work. Any relationship takes work to keep it growing. Having an attitude of love everyday can be difficult, but after you develop the lifestyle it becomes who you are. The love that you display will be your calling card in a sense. It will be the way that people know you, because it is who you have become. You will, in some ways, become the love that determines your destiny.

When we have developed a loving lifestyle, it will help us keep our vision clear. Just like having a lifestyle of forgiveness makes things clearer, so does a lifestyle established around love. It goes without saying that that without a loving attitude you will not be able to have a forgiving attitude. Love and forgiveness, without a doubt, work together. They go hand in hand in our daily lives and activities. Without love it is impossible to forgive; at the same time, the love will cause you to desire to forgive. So as you can see they do work together. You need one to enable the other to work properly in your life. It is amazing the feeling you get when you realize that you are not bitter from unforgiveness, that you don't have any hatred in your life that has developed from the bitterness. Then you see that love is the catalyst that caused it all to take place. If you are going to reach your destiny, it is a must to give others love and at the same time learn how to receive love from others. People will remember you for the love that you showed to others long after you have gone away. Those that didn't demonstrate and show any kind of destiny love while they were here will not be remembered, or at the very least they will not be remembered very fondly.

Love Walk

Love seems to bring things into balance. However, balance is not being perfectly still and not moving at all. Think about balancing a broom handle in the palm of your hand. You have to move your hand in order to balance the broom handle. Balance is all about making the necessary adjustments. When we have love for others we will make the

necessary adjustments that will enable us to walk in our destiny walk. You will have to make all sorts of adjustments during your destiny walk. Those that don't make adjustments, change, grow, or learn never make it on their walk. It takes love to walk this type of walk. Because dealing with people can be a very difficult thing to do at times. Everyone is not interested in walking in their destiny. Some people have their own personal agenda and being a person of destiny is not part of that agenda. However, we have to maintain our love walk if we are going to be people of destiny. Not always the easiest or smoothest walk, but it is an adventure well worth taking.

A walk in any form, destiny and any other, without love is not going to be a walk worth taking. There can be no substantial joy or happiness in your life if there is no destiny love. As we said, it starts with your being able to love yourself and then you will be able to love others with this same type of unselfish love. It will enable you to love yourself and others without having a personal agenda. You realize that it is not about you, but it is actually all about others. When we have reached that level of love in our destiny walk, there is no way that anything can stop you from reaching our destiny. This type of love is rare in most people today. The mindset of the world today is predominantly a self first type mindset. To be destiny love minded goes against a self first mind set. So to have a destiny love mindset will go against the norm today. You will stand out from the crowd.

People of destiny are very often misunderstood. They are people on a mission, but the mission is not about themselves. The mission of destiny is based on the love that is inside them. This love will be the source of their strength and endurance; which will be needed in your walk to fulfill your destiny. It isn't always easy, but then if it were easy everybody would fulfill their destiny. However, everyone isn't willing to put their self aside and love others. Some people aren't going to do what it takes to love other people with destiny love. However, for those that are willing to put their self interest aside and walk in their destiny, they will never regret it. It will be the greatest adventure of your life. The experiences that are awaiting you on your walk will change your life forever. There is nothing to compare it to; you just have to experience it for yourself. But be sure to take someone with you. Share your destiny love with those around you every day of

your life. There are people searching for someone just like you to show the love of a person of destiny. You can make a difference just by walking in love. Remember to love is a choice; it is your choice. No one can force you to love anyone, not even to love yourself. Just as walking in your destiny is your choice; so is to walk in the destiny love that is required of you to accomplish your mission in life; your destiny. Make your decision soon; the sooner the better, to walk in destiny love for the rest of your life. When you live in destiny love you will soon see everyone, including yourself, in a whole, new, and different perspective. You will begin to show mercy and grace like you have never been able to before. You will become a giver of love and all that comes with it. You will not be the judgmental person that you once were, you will be a forgiving person that see's the best in people.

Love Exercise

List the people that have shown you love in your life.

List the people that you can show destiny love to in your life.

Love Workshop

1. What experiences in your past have caused you to have problems with loving people?

2. What experiences in your past have encouraged you to love people?

3. What have you done to demonstrate the destiny love that you are walking in?

4. How has someone demonstrated to you destiny love?

5. How has walking in destiny love changed your life?

Chapter Three

Integrity

To be able to reach your destiny you will have to live a life of integrity. Without integrity you will have a hard enough time with life as it is, not to mention walking out your destiny. If you have integrity people are more apt to trust you. This being true, they will be more willing to share their lives with you, which is a part of destiny.

Integrity is a word that we hear quite often but unfortunately most do not know what it really means. I have heard people talk about integrity from a military standpoint, school standpoint, athletic standpoint, and a church standpoint, to name a few. However, it seems like people have their own definition of integrity, including myself. So in order to get a working definition of integrity for destiny I did some research on the origin of the word integrity. In my research I found that integrity comes from a math term "integer" which means whole number. So from that we can deduct that integrity means wholeness of a person. Therefore, integrity is the whole person. It is not perfection because none of us are perfect, nor can we can be perfect. So what does it mean to have integrity? We need to look at it from the point of view that you do what is right no matter what; especially when you don't want to. Being honest then is part of integrity, having character is part of integrity, showing mercy is part of it, being loyal is part of it. It seems that there are many characteristics that form integrity and you must have all these characteristics, because integrity means wholeness. To reach your destiny then; you have to have these characteristics in your daily life.

Integrity Question

I have second guessed my own integrity over some issues that I have dealt with over the years. Really nothing major I suppose but major in my mind. I found that on several occasions I was not demonstrating integrity. So does making things right in a situation where you weren't showing integrity mean you now have integrity? I think so. When you expose areas in your own life that are not right; in an attempt to make things right I believe that would be integrity. When we are walking in our destiny we are going to make mistakes and we need to make things right as soon as we can; that demonstrates integrity.

So many of us have asked ourselves; would a person of integrity do that, say that, think that, etc. Then when we get our answers we realize that we have to change so much, but mainly just little things. Not many of us would go and rob a bank, but would do some "minor" thing that no one even notices. But to have integrity I we have to work on those "minor" things, because they are no longer minor. How we talk, how we think, and act all come into play. I heard the other day that folk average 1 1/2 lies every day. How can we have integrity across the board if that is true? It's the small things that trip us up. The big stuff we can see and know we should avoid. Integrity remember means "whole."

A good statement to make everyday then is as follows: I want to have integrity because I will be a better husband, wife, dad, mother, son, daughter, friend, and person. I want to be known as a man/woman who has integrity! I have still got to make some changes, but on my way. Nothing or no one can stop me from having living a life of integrity and

reaching my destiny. From this day forward I choose to walk with integrity; no matter the consequences. Even if it costs me everything; my life, my resources, my family; I will have integrity. I will not take my destiny lightly nor the integrity that it requires to reach my destiny.

Qualities of Integrity

To have integrity we have to be transparent. We have to be open and honest with ourselves and with others. We can't be one way with one group and totally different with another group. We have to be open. To have integrity we have to be trustworthy in every situation. We have to be dependable. People that have integrity are predictable; you know they will do the right thing no matter what the cost. We have to be fair to everyone. This does not mean you treat everyone the same, but you treat people right. We have to be committed. It takes a dedicated person to reach their destiny. Not everyone will reach it, but those that have integrity are more apt to make it there. Integrity is something that we have to live everyday. It applies to every situation in our day to day life. We have to be the first one in and the last one out. It is doing the right thing especially when you don't want to. It is doing the right thing when it hurts the most.

Integrity Lifestyle

To live with integrity is not going to be an easy lifestyle, but we still have to desire it more than anything. We have to be as real and honest as we possibly can be with ourselves and with everyone else. It seems like most of the time that when we operate in integrity it can be painful to our flesh. But we have to know in our heart that doing the right thing, no matter how painful, is the only way to live.

Since we have been looking at and studying integrity in relation to our destiny; I know that many of us have had to make some major changes in our thoughts and actions. We can no longer do what we want to do all time. It can be a struggle in some areas, mainly in our minds. Doing right no matter what takes strength and courage. Walking in our destiny requires strength and courage. Make sure that you have surrounded yourself with people of integrity; people of destiny.

One question that you will ask yourself at some time will be, "Why am I doing this"? What is my motivation; my reasoning? If I am doing the right thing for the wrong reason, then I am still wrong. We have to check our motives, because if we don't have the right motives then when we are truly tested we will fail. So it is only normal to have asked yourself, why. It is a question that we all have to answer from time to time while walking in our destiny.

I have found that it is easier to do the right thing on the front end rather than having to go back and correct it on the back end. We will pay the price of discipline or pay the price of regret. Even though that is true, I am still finding things that need correcting in my life because I did not have integrity. In the case of people, I know that some will never forgive me for whatever it was that I did or said. Honestly, I can understand that, however, it will not hold me hostage any longer. I don't take anything I have done wrong lightly, but I am now truly repentant not just sorry.

Living a life of integrity will stretch you in areas that you have never been stretched in before. There are times when you will really, really not like it. However, it will be the best decision you have ever made. Your destiny depends on you having integrity.

Integrity Test

Walking in your destiny is one test after another, dealing with our integrity. We will pass some and failed some. But the ones we fail we get to retake. God is good like that. You don't fail; you get to try again, as long as you keep trying. Some of the test we pass, we had failed many times, but in time we pass them. What a great feeling!! However, some that we failed, we have failed over and over again, but we know we are gaining ground.

That is what having integrity is all about. It is not about being perfect, for none of us are perfect. It is doing right things in life, but I also believe that a person maintains their integrity when they do wrong—which we all do—by quickly admitting it and correcting it. It is a demonstration of transparent integrity when we are willing to humble ourselves and admit that we were wrong and attempt to make the issue right. A person without integrity will attempt to hide their mistakes and wrong doings trying to cover them up rather than making it right.

I still have a long way to go in this integrity/destiny journey. But I have no doubt it is attainable. It may even be closer than we think it may be. If you are striving for integrity in your life as well, you too, are probably closer than you think you are. I commend you in your efforts. Walking in integrity is not for the average minded person. Only those that have an above average mindset can even begin to walk in integrity, in order to reach their destiny.

My Loyalty

A few years ago, my loyalty to a person and organization was questioned. It was determined that I had not been loyal. I don't think I have truly understood what that all meant until now. Loyalty is subcategory of integrity. So in an essence my integrity was brought into question. I am not questioning the decision, if I was wrong so be it, if I was

right so be it. The important thing is what I learned from it. I have learned what loyalty really is in its truest sense. I am seeing how it ties into integrity. I am loyal now and I am faithful, which is loyal to a higher degree. So I am definitely learning from my past mistakes. Having integrity means you are loyal and more importantly; you are faithful. This is necessary for destiny minded people. For a person to reach their destiny they must remain loyal to the same. You have to have the integrity that will enable you to be loyal to yourself and those around you.

We are to be whole. There are no perfect people I understand that. But does our integrity affect the degree that we accomplish what God has put us here to do. We each have a specific plan for our life. If we are not honest, trustworthy, transparent, open, real, to name a few; how are we able to fulfill the plan for our life?

Never Give Up

Sometimes we have to start over and re-start, but the key is we keep trying. I don't accept in the just take life as it comes and don't try to make a difference attitude. That seems like no life at all. Just going our ever the wind blows you. I also know that everybody does not have to have my philosophy or mindset. Each person is free to choose. But as for me, I want to make a difference. I want to complete the plan for my life. I want to live every second of my life. I will never give up and give in to the pressure of the mundane and average. It's not an attitude of being "better than", but it's an attitude of always doing my best. I desire for my integrity to enable me to accomplish my destiny, not prevent me from accomplishing my destiny. If I don't reach my destiny it could affect your destiny and the opposite is true too. If you don't reach your destiny it could affect my destiny as well. To the degree we affect each other's destiny is an individual situation. The degree of the interaction between the people will have a lot to

do with it. We have to see that our destiny involves other people; your destiny is not all about you; it's about others and how you interact with them. For people to be able to trust you; you must act with integrity. To accomplish your destiny you have to live your life with integrity.

If I am to walk in my destiny, I know I have to walk in integrity. I can't be acting foolish and expect to be taken care of either. I have made some huge, tremendous, awful, terrible, insane mistakes in this area before. When you are walking in integrity and destiny, it may look like you are not going to make a living, but I have always been told that if you are righteous you will not be begging for bread. The key there is you have to be righteous. Righteous is a word that we have made religious. In its simplest terms it means, being at the right place, doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right reasons. In other words, it means following your destiny with integrity. I never let salary be a determining factor when deciding a job because my job is simply a vehicle that enables me to fulfill my destiny. I have not always liked my job but I knew it was what I was supposed to be doing. Your job and your destiny should be hand –in-hand. I love where I am now, even if the economy is against me I know God is for me. What better source can I ask for? So the economy will not detour my destiny if I am walking in integrity.

Spiritual Beliefs

Let's not forget that integrity does not mean a person is perfect. But people who live with integrity and moving toward their destiny do what is right no matter what. But when they do make a mistake they admit it quickly and make things right. As a Christian I first admit my mistake and make things right with God first, then people. My question is can you be a Christian and not have integrity? It seems to me that

integrity is a vital part of a Christian's life. But I see Christians all the time that do not seem to have integrity. Makes me wonder? It seems like the church is the last place you find people with integrity. However, I know how hard it is have integrity.

On the other hand there are people that profess not being Christian that seem to have integrity. I guess it depends on what integrity truly means. It does mean being whole, so there again, is a person whole if they are not saved. People that have integrity have a deep spiritual belief in something. It may be a different religion than Christianity, but something is leading them and guiding them in there decisions. So I will say that to have integrity you must have deep spiritual roots and belief. Mine are Christian. I know that without Jesus I would not be able to have integrity. If you are struggling with integrity take a look at your spiritual beliefs. I recommend Jesus, without a doubt He has integrity. However, it is up to you what you believe. I am not here to judge, condemn, or tell you what you have to believe to have integrity or walk in your destiny.

Gift/Talent

We have talked quite a bit about discovering your gifts/talents and then operating in that area in order to fulfill your destiny. With that in mind, if you don't operate with integrity it doesn't matter if you are operating in your gift/talent. Without integrity you will not fulfill your destiny; even if you are in your gift/talent area. We see people everyday in the news that are on top and the next day have hit the bottom because they did not have integrity.

I see more and more people that have integrity are chosen, go higher, and last far longer than those with talent and no integrity. We work so hard on our talent/gift but neglect our integrity. I have attended workshops directed toward a person's gift/talent, but I

don't recall seeing Integrity workshops, Character workshops, etc... The world demands people to act with integrity but why don't we teach it as much as we the things we don't demand as much of?

I am seeing that it is more important to work on yourself than it is your talent/gift.

Become a person of integrity and you will be the one in demand. Become a person of destiny. I desire to be around people and be mentored by people that have integrity.

Those are the people that will enable you to reach your destiny. That is the type person that I want to be. A person that operates with integrity no matter the consequences will fulfill their destiny no matter the consequences. Those are the people you want to be around, so that in turn, you will become a person of integrity and destiny.

In all of this study of integrity and writing of integrity and destiny; I have found that it can be very allusive. Just about the time I think I have harnessed it, there it goes!! For it is in the secret places that our integrity is truly tested. Not so much in the public places. As we have said, it is when no one sees or will ever know. I think it was Jay McKee that said, you will never know if you have integrity, but your friends will know. I didn't quite understand that at first, but now I do.

Transparency

Another key ingredient of integrity is transparency. That doesn't mean you tell everybody, everything about you, but you aren't hiding things. Your life is an open book so to speak. When someone shares something with you, you are able to share with them your own experiences, and not act as if you have never done that before. You have to defeat the pride and fear in your life to be transparent. I am finding that aspect of integrity is very difficult at times. It only has gotten easier by actually doing it. Only when those barriers or walls have been destroyed can we have integrity of character.

When it doesn't matter if other people know we aren't perfect. Trust me; they already knew we weren't perfect.

I have found it hard to understand how we can think less of someone when what they have done has been exposed. For we too, have areas that we try to protect, because of the fear and pride of what others will think of us. This is a short fall of integrity in our lives. It's not that we don't care what other people think, but that we are secure enough in our integrity to be willing to be transparent to others. Transparency is a must if we are going to have integrity.

Reality

I am seeing that people that have integrity live in the "real" world. They see things as they really are not as if it were a perfect world. To have integrity a person can't look down on others because of the stuff in their lives. There can be no pride in a person with integrity. I believe that you can see someone as they really are, but at the same time see them as they can and will be. I am seeing where integrity helps you to see through the mess in others as well as in our own lives. Having integrity means the filters in our lives are clean; helping us to see and hear clearly. There is no more reality and integrity than being clean. Again, not perfect but clean. Quick to admit and quick to make right the things we have done wrong. That is the first in last out way of doing things.

I hear people say they are "keeping it real," but upon further review I see that they really aren't real. But too maybe it's just all about perspective. Integrity requires a clean, reality based perspective on life. You're not trying to protect yourself and since there are no walls in your life you don't have trouble seeing and hearing clearly. Having integrity I see makes a person mentally and emotionally healthy, not to mention spiritually,

which in turn affects you positively physically. Having integrity is a must in your integrity walk. Without integrity you will never be able to make the journey.

Walls and Boundaries

The people that I see that have integrity don't have walls up in their life. They have very distinct boundaries that they have to protect their integrity. There is more freedom for those who don't have walls in their life, but they do have boundaries. To live this way a person must have integrity. These people have healthy emotional lives which in turn I believe makes them physically healthier. There is less stress because of the fact that they have integrity. They don't spend time building and maintaining their walls. They see the boundaries and stay clear of them. As some of my students used to say, "I ain't going cross the gun line boss."

People who have integrity actually don't need walls because of the transparency they have as well. They do need their boundaries though. The boundaries in their lives keep them safe. They know where not to go mentally and physically. If we have already build walls then we need to bring them down. They not only keep others out but they keep us in prison too. To have integrity means to be real, honest, open, and transparent. None of these go with integrity.

As President Reagan said, "Tear down that wall!" In order to live in integrity we have to tear down the walls. Take responsibility for our actions. Live the way that we were designed to live. We were born with a destiny, however, all the other decisions that factor in our destiny are up to us to make.

Cost

We should always go with integrity whether we are talking about destiny or not. Even when it cost you everything; go with integrity. Even when you lose friends; go with integrity. Even when you get talked about unjustly; go with integrity. Even when it causes you pain; go with integrity. Even when you have to go without something; go with integrity. Even when you lose your place; go with integrity. Even when you are blamed wrongly; go with integrity. Even when your secrets are exposed; go with integrity. Even when you really don't want to; go with integrity. Even when it means confrontation; go with integrity. Even when you lose good sleep; go with integrity. Even when you know others won't understand; go with integrity. Even when others laugh at you; go with integrity. Even when you don't know if you should; go with integrity. Even when you know you will be all alone; go with integrity.

In other words always go with integrity. Integrity will never fail you. People in time will fail you. I have failed so many people, including some of you, but it will never fail. Most people don't understand the power of integrity. It truly does encompass our entire lives. Every decision we make deals with integrity, small and large. Nothing can be as hard sometimes as living with integrity. It will carry through some awful, tough times though. It can see you through to the end, if you will stick with it. Integrity is everything, it is wholeness.

Being a person of destiny and being a person of integrity is saying the same thing. You won't have one without the other. People of destiny maintain a life of integrity. Also, a person who is living a life of integrity is a person that is walking in his or her destiny. People of integrity seem to be a rarity these days, but they are out there. Integrity is a character trait of all lasting and successful people. Without it you can't maintain the life

necessary to reach your destiny. A person of integrity can endure the obstacles that life throws at them in order to achieve their destiny. It involves all the little things as well as the major things in life. Normally it is the little things that trip us up. Be careful when walking in your destiny for the little things are what can stop us from reaching our destiny.

There are so many times that one's integrity is put to the test. It may be through your family, friends, classmates, colleagues, total strangers, or even own self, that put your integrity to the test. Those that put their destiny ahead of their own selfish desires are the ones that are champions. Those who stay will be champions. Those who give in time and time again and never develop their integrity are the ones who make excuses about never reaching their destiny. Excuses will stop you from growing, changing, and maturing in your integrity. Your integrity tests come when you are all alone and no one will ever know what you decided to do. Also, a true test of integrity is when the decision of integrity goes against the popular consent. In either case your integrity will be tested and what is inside of you will determine your response. Whether you are destiny minded or self minded will determine your answer. In other words, your answer was determined before hand, it's when the test comes that you give your answer. What you read tomorrow was written today.

Integrity Exercise

Make a list of characteristics that make up integrity.

Make a list of characteristics you have need of that would enable you to have integrity.

Integrity Workshop

1. What situations have you faced that tested your integrity?

2. How did you respond to the integrity test?

3. How has having your integrity tested changed you as a person of destiny?

4. How has your destiny been brought to life due to your integrity decision?

5. What is your personal definition of integrity?

Chapter Four

Excellence

For a person to reach their destiny they must live a life of excellence. People that have this life quality do not leave behind them wreckage. There is no confusion when they have been around. People know exactly what was said and done. Excellence is not just being neat and/or clean but it is much more. Destiny has a lot to do with excellence, just as excellence has a lot to do with destiny. Excellence keeps things clear and concise; it makes and keeps things simpler. Those people that have excellence can take the complex and make it simple, so that their destiny is not cloudy or hard to flow. Excellence and destiny do have a lot in common as we will see.

Excellence verses Perfection

People of destiny are people who live their life with excellence. They never take the easy way out or try to find shortcuts. They do the right thing and do it right. So how do we know when someone is a person of excellence? How we can tell if a person has excellence or is average? We need to take a closer look at excellence and how excellence relates to your life and to your destiny. As we said with integrity; integrity does not mean perfection and neither does excellence. What then is the difference between a perfectionist and a person of excellence? A perfectionist is someone who looks at the negative of the situation and dwells on that. A person of excellence is someone who looks at the positive of the situation and dwells on that instead. A person of excellence will have a better attitude toward life because they deal with the positive aspect of life not the negative. A perfectionist, a person always dealing with the negative, will have a bad attitude toward life, because they never find the perfection that they are looking for so diligently. So there is a big difference between a person of excellence and a perfectionist. Both have a destiny, but the perfectionist has a much more difficult time reaching their destiny. Let's concentrate our efforts on being a person of excellence not a perfectionist.

Being a person of excellence takes discipline, character, integrity, and devotion to your destiny. When excellence becomes a way of life for you, your destiny will come clearer to you. Without it you will find it near impossible to find your destiny, not completely impossible, but close to it. With that in mind, you can see why by just changing your perspective from the negative to the positive, from perfection to excellence can be a life-changing perspective change on your part. It is a big part of reaching your destiny. Be a person of excellence.

Excellence with Integrity

There are many examples of living with excellence. You will see that excellence is a branch off of the integrity tree. If you have integrity, then there is a good chance that you will be a person of excellence. The true test of excellence, just as with integrity, is when no one is around to see what you do. A person of excellence will do their absolute best no matter the situation. This is the way of life for a person of destiny; a person of excellence. You don't have way do whatever it is that you are doing.

Excellence Test

One of the first places that I remember being tested in excellence was in the grocery store parking lot. When I have gotten done unloading the stuff I have in my cart, it was time for me to take it back to the cart area. There were carts all over the parking lot, most not in the return area. I thought about leaving mine in an area where there were three or four carts, but I felt the excellence test was mine to pass or fail. I then took mine back to the cart area, but then felt like I was should take it back into the store. Not something that I wanted to do, but did nevertheless. I knew then that I had passed the excellence test. I think if I had failed that test that day, the next time the test would have been not only taking my own cart back to the store or cart area, but going around the parking lot and getting the other carts that were scattered all around.

Another time was in the restroom at Wal-Mart. I had washed my hands and threw the paper towel at the garbage can. I missed, believe it or not, but I did. However, so had a lot of other people that had been in the restroom. I walked on out and back into the store. I had failed the excellence test. The next time that I was in a public restroom and got done washing my hands, I noticed the sink counter was wet. I knew what I had to do, it was my test to pass or fail. I cleaned the countertop and then made sure that there

were no paper towels on the floor. I had been allowed to re-take the excellence test and this time I passed. Excellence is practiced in the little details of life.

Don't get me wrong in this, I am not perfect, and I have failed many excellence tests in my life. However, we get to keep taking them everyday until we pass or give up. For a person of excellence; giving up is not an option. We will keep taking the tests until we have past them all. A person of excellence will not tolerate being average or mediocre. Those that accept mediocrity in their life will become comfortable in that situation of being average. If being average is not a bother to you, then that is a sure indication that you have allowed mediocrity to infiltrate your life. Under no circumstances do we need to let average become a way of life. A person of destiny is not average, but rather is a person of excellence. Excellence should be a goal in every aspect of your life. Make it the goal of the day each and every day, to be excellent in everything you do that day.

Excellence versus Mediocrity

It was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all of the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great sweeper who did his job well.'" A great quote from an awesome man who knew what it was like to be a person of excellence. We might not have the same destiny as a Martin Luther King, Jr., but we have the same call on our life to be a person of excellence, no matter what our destiny. There is greatness in us all; however, to the degree of excellence that you operate in your life will the degree of greatness be exposed in your life. There is also, the opposite; there

is mediocrity in our lives and to the degree of excellence we demonstrate will be the degree of mediocrity exposed in our lives. How you live your life, whether in excellence or in mediocrity will determine how far in your destiny you travel. Mediocrity is a skilled opponent that we face each day. It is an opponent that determines our position in life; as well as our performance in life. The opponent of mediocrity will challenge you to do just enough to get by and no more. Only to do just barely what is asked or demanded of you and not a single thing extra. Those with an excellent lifestyle, though, will always do the extra. The people of excellence have what I call the "and then some spirit" in their lives. These are the people that go the extra mile when faced with a test. They don't do just enough to barely get by or leave things undone; expecting someone else to do it for them. People of excellence do not have the attitude that everything is someone else's responsibility. They take responsibility to get things done and to get things done right.

People of destiny of excellence don't take shortcuts. They do things the right way the first time. The only shortcut is to do it right the first time. When we take shortcuts we end up having to do it again; who has time to go back and do something again and again. So you see, the only shortcut is to doing it right the first time. Then we don't have to go back and re-do what we should have done right the first time. People of destiny operate in excellence. Again, we aren't saying people of excellence are perfect but people of excellence make things right. There is a big difference as we discussed earlier between perfection and excellence. Be sure you don't cross over from excellence to perfectionism.

Those that have excellence will always be in demand. People who are operating in their destiny will search out those people of excellence and walk with them. Excellence

pushes away average people just as mediocrity pushes away people of excellence. People who operate in mediocrity, who are average, will not be in demand by those of excellence. People of excellence won't stay around mediocre people for very long. At the same time, a person who is average will not want to be around a person of excellence because the person of excellence makes the average; just get by person, look bad. For the most part people are drawn to people of excellence. Therefore, when you live a life of excellence, people will look at you differently than if you didn't. The reason that people are attracted to excellence is because they desire to live a life of excellence too. The people who try to be average usually have good intentions, they start out wanting to do what is right and want to do it right. However, want to and intentions aren't enough. You have to have backbone not wishbone. The world is full of good intentions, but it is those people that follow through that get things done, that have excellence, that are reaching and fulfilling their destiny.

Your Passion

If you are a person of destiny, a person of excellence, then you lead others by your example. Your behavior, the way you act, will be the best example that you can show. It is the first in last out behavior. You lead with your excellence. Not with intentions or talk alone, but with follow thorough. Your destiny will be completed with excellence not just talking about it, but doing it day in and day out. Excellence is about developing good habits.

A person of destiny and excellence has a passion for what they are doing. They have a passion for their destiny and all that is included in their destiny. They believe in the impossible and that the impossible can be done. They can communicate their destiny to others. They can explain what they are doing and where they are going in their life. A

person of excellence will invest their life into others. They take others along with them on their destiny journey. They never get too contented or complacent with where they are in life. They are always looking for a way to improve their situation. A person of excellence lives it everyday in whatever they do, whether they are seen or not.

Excellence is a way of life not an occasional happening.

They will demand excellence, nothing else is acceptable. You have to accept only the best from yourself and those around you. If those around you are not living with excellence in their lives; then reconsider who are spending your time around.

A person of excellence, who is walking in their destiny, will perform to their potential.

They represent themselves with excellence at all times. Nothing else is acceptable.

Excellence only comes from doing the right thing, the right way over and over again. It takes practice to be a person of excellence and of destiny. It is not a one time occurrence, but it is an everyday; day-to-day occurrence. Destiny comes one day at a time; one step at a time. Excellence is a routine; Booker T. Washington said,

“Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way.” It is in everything we do.

When we do something, it becomes our signature. Chuck Noll, one time coach of the Super Bowl Champion Pittsburgh Steelers said, “Champions don’t beat themselves. If you want to win, do the ordinary things better than anyone else does—day in and day out.” That is excellence in action. When you are committed to a life of destiny and of excellence you are dedicated to doing your best in every situation. Aristotle said,

“Excellence is not a singular act but a habit. You are what you repeatedly do.” A person of excellence, of destiny, will never be content or satisfied with status quo; they are always working to do a better job; to improve, to grow, and to change. Just because it isn’t broken doesn’t mean you can tweak it; make it better, improve on it. This is no truer

than when we are talking about making yourself better. Be careful that you aren't too hard on yourself, but you have to have balance. I know that I sometimes tend to be a little out of balance in this area. I can be too hard on myself at times and not see the excellence and the destiny in what I am doing at the current time. However, I have found that balance can be achieved and must be achieved to really see the destiny path that lies ahead of you and the lifestyle of excellence we must live to walk it out. At the same time, a person of excellence should never settle for average or second best. Deep down people of excellence, of destiny want to be pushed to be the best that they can possibly be at all times. For excellence is a very important value to develop. If you have an inner conscious it is really important, because you can't lie to yourself and get away with it.

Excellence Lifestyle

To be a person of excellence it takes quite a bit of self-discipline, a burning desire to do what it is you are doing, and always looking for ways to improve yourself. These qualities are also found in a person of destiny. Don't be discouraged if you don't see all of these qualities in your life at this time. You can get there in time. Excellence, like destiny, does not suddenly appear. It comes over time, after practicing these habits day after day. The good news is that anyone can do it. There is not a select group of pre-selected people that will reach their destiny. Everyone has an awesome destiny ahead of them; however, not everyone will do what it takes to reach their destiny. Hard work is a must for a person to have excellence in their life. It is also a requirement for someone to reach their destiny. Hard work has many benefits these just being two of them.

The University of Alabama was playing Texas in the 1965 Orange Bowl; the score was 21-7 at halftime, in favor of the Longhorns. However, Joe Namath led Alabama in a second half comeback to close to within four points. Then, with only a few seconds remaining in the football game, Alabama faced a fourth and inches at the Texas goal line. Joe Namath, the Alabama quarterback, called for a quarterback sneak. Namath dove over the pile and while lying on the ground in the end zone, the Alabama players started celebrating wildly. However, another official signaled for a touchdown, another official said signaled Texas' had held the Tide quarterback out of the end zone. After conferring about the call; the officials agreed Texas had held and therefore won the game. Namath said then and still says today, "I'll go to my grave knowing I scored." On the Alabama sidelines, a player walked by the Tide coach, Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, and said "We scored." Coach Bryant, disappointed in the outcome of the game, shook his head and told the player, "If he had walked into the end zone with the football, then there would be no question about it." The lesson is, when you want to accomplish a goal in life, don't do just enough to try to get by, but go to extra yard, because someone may make the call against you.

When you have developed a lifestyle of excellence, you do things with excellence without thinking at a moments notice, no question about it. If you can't do something with excellence without thinking about it and trying to determine whether or not you want or not, then you will probably fail in the outcome of the task. Excellence has to be second nature; it is who you are at all times. Excellence is not something you have to stop and think about. For the most part only you will know whether or not you have performed a task with excellence or not. You have to be your own judge and jury in the matter.

Make sure you are fair in your judgment of whether or not you are a person of excellence.

Growing in Excellence

Excellence comes with time; it is a gradual process that comes from wanting to do better. We have to give people the right environment to excel. Words alone won't give someone the environment to excel, it takes action. When in the right environment a person will succeed. Excellence will be the product of the right environment.

It doesn't matter what you are doing you must have the end in mind; that being excellence, nothing less with do. We can only achieve our goal of excellence if we pay attention to the smallest details. When you operate in excellence in your work then more work will come your way. People will not ignore excellence; they will give it special attention. So whatever you do, do it with excellence. Doing everything with will give you more opportunities. Your destiny is dependent on your excellence. Many people want excellence in their life, but aren't doing the work necessary to have excellence in their life. When you operate in excellence you will not go unnoticed. You will be remembered for your excellence in your life. When you treat people with excellence we will receive the reward of it. It is the excellence in our relationships that will provide us with the people that will be in our destiny to come. When you have excellence people will be proud to say that they know you. That is the true test of your destiny.

Mental Aspect of Excellence

Excellence has to become mental for it to be apart of us. It has to become a way of thinking and how we consistently act each day. Excellence has to be a mindset you develop. A mindset that you have, in that, no matter how hard stuff becomes, you are

the only one responsible for your thoughts, your feelings, and your actions. When you have developed excellence you keep your cool in heated situations, you keep a positive attitude. A person of excellence is an optimistic person no matter what is happening around them. They stay committed to their goals and dreams. There is no quit or give up in a person of excellence, a person of destiny. No matter the situation, a person of excellence will persist. When things start going wrong and seems that stuff is falling apart, a person of excellence gets tougher and persists without complaining, making excuses, or stopping.

They do not back down from a challenge. They see a challenge as an opportunity to grow and mature. The fear of failure does not stop a person who is destiny minded and has excellence. Not to say that the fear of failure is not present, but a person with a destiny mindset, a mindset of excellence, will not let this fear of failure prevent them from trying new things, or attempting to reach new goals in route to their destiny.

When you develop a mind set of excellence it improves your image of yourself; your self-esteem will become higher and higher. These people do not see failure as an ending point, there is no such place as failure; just keep on trying until they succeed. They never lose, but rather they keep on trying until they win the race by reaching their destiny. Another thing about having excellence is that because it takes hard work, it makes it that much more difficult to throw in the towel. The more difficult the challenge; the harder they work; the harder they work; the harder it is to quit.

Being Responsible

As we have said too, people of excellence do not go around making excuses or blaming others when things go wrong. Destiny minded people of excellence will always take responsibility for their actions. They understand this is the only way that they can

achieve their objective; their destiny. People of destiny will give the credit and accept the blame in situations. There is never a lack of blame going around, so it's easy to take blame. Also, people are always willing to take the credit, so you will never have any problem giving other people the credit. These are two qualities of destiny and excellence minded people; giving credit while taking the blame.

Remember that every thing you do is like a portrait of yourself, it is your signature.

What will people say that follow behind you after a job? Will they say it was done with excellence or a job poorly done? I remember once when I had started my first job at Jackson High School; I had a project to do and really didn't want to do it. So I really didn't much effort into doing a good job with it. However, when I had finished I could tell it was not a very good job, but no one really would ever know that it was my project or that I had done the work. Then, I could hear my college advisor, Jim Gallaspy, talking to me. He was telling that same thing that he always told me, "Son, anything worth doing is worth doing right." I knew that if Jim could see the work that I had done, he would be very disappointed in me. I went back re-done the project the right way this time. No one ever knew it was my project or that I did the work, but I knew in my mind that I had done the work with excellence. A lesson that Jim Gallaspy had taught me; always do your best, it does not matter who sees it or if anyone ever does see it. Always do your best! A person of excellence has no issue in doing their best, even if no one sees it or if the whole world takes notice of their work.

What is done with excellence will be remembered by many, but those things that are done sloppy will soon be forgotten. Do you want to leave a legacy of excellence or a legacy of being mediocre? It is strictly up to you how you will be remembered, whether or not you reach your destiny, is a decision that is strictly up to you. People of destiny

and of excellence demand more out of themselves than they do others. They push themselves harder than others will ever do. People of excellence are self-motivated; they don't require someone to get them pumped up to reach their destiny. People that are satisfied to live a life of mediocrity do not demand anything of themselves. They are happy to sit on the sidelines of life and never get into the game. They may talk about the game and the people involved, but they never put forth the effort to get them off the sidelines and into the action. They had rather criticize those that are working, sweating, and doing those things it takes to reach their destiny. When someone who is searching for their destiny and fulfilling their destiny stumbles, these are the people that point their finger and say, 'Uh huh, I told you they wouldn't make it. Who do they think they are? Can you believe they are trying to make something out of themselves? I knew that they wouldn't make it.'" They don't encourage, they simply mock and put down those that are trying. These people do not have excellence in their lives. Not to say that at one time that they didn't attempt to have excellence and reach their destiny, but somewhere along the way they failed at something or someone told them they couldn't do it and they stop trying.

People of destiny, of excellence are often misunderstood. People that don't demonstrate excellence or are not fulfilling their destiny do not understand why people of excellence act the way they act. They can't understand why would someone go out of their way to do something right or go the extra mile, especially when no one else is looking. They can't wrap their brain around why someone would work so hard and not get an immediate reward for their efforts or no visible reward at all. People of excellence don't do what they do for reward or praise. This goes against the mind set of mediocre folk.

Quality of Life

You can tell a person of excellence by their quality of life. The quality of the life of a person of excellence is directly related to their excellence no matter what it is they are doing. From the bottom to the top you can see a major difference in a person of excellence life than that of a person that accepts mediocrity in their live. Even in attitude, a person of destiny, of excellence has a positive attitude toward life. A perfectionist and/or a person that is average will not have a good attitude toward life. They seem to always have the negative aspects of life down to a tee. It is much easier to have a sour attitude toward life than to maintain a positive attitude. It is easier though to maintain a positive attitude than it is to regain a positive attitude. People of excellence work at maintaining that positive attitude, keeping a good, clear, and clean perspective about life in general.

Personal Excellence

Let's look at a couple more area of excellence. This is one area that still gives me problems from time to time. That is in our everyday personal appearance and habits. You can't be sloppy in how you look and consider yourself a person of excellence. Making sure your shirt is tucked and your clothes look nice is a must. Make sure you brush your teeth and for those who have hair, make sure it is groomed and combed accordingly. You can look casual and laid-back without looking sloppy. Make sure that you take the time to look as good as you possibly can look. Take the time to be a person of excellence in your dress. Also there is the issue of being on time, which to my grandfather, means being at the very least five minutes early. Make it a habit of excellence to never, ever be late. When you are a person that is continually late, you are

saying that your time is more important than the other person's time. A person of excellence will never be habitually late for anything. If you know that you are going to be late for a meeting or appointment, no matter how big or small, do your best to get work to that person that you will be late, but never make excuses for being late, be honest and up front. The best thing to practice here is; never be late, but rather be a person of excellence in regarding your and other people's time.

Identifying People of Excellence

People of excellence are rare these days, but they are out there. They are easy to spot in today's society. They are successful in whatever they attempt. They might not be the first, second, or even third time, but in the end they will be successful. Find these destiny minded people and hang out with them. Learn from them so that you too can learn the qualities of a person of excellence. This will be an enormous help to you as you are making your way toward your destiny.

Excellence Exercise

Tell of an excellence test that you both passed and you failed.

Excellence Workshop

1. What are the qualities of excellence that you demonstrate in your life?

2. What qualities of excellence are lacking in your life that you desire to have?

3. In what ways have you noticed that excellence has helped you in your destiny walk?

4. In what projects have you seen excellence make the difference for you in?

5. Name the people in your life that live a life of excellence.

Chapter Five

Self-Discipline

Discipline, especially self-discipline is one subject most people had rather leave alone. It conjures up thoughts they had rather not have to think about. However, we all have self-discipline; it's just that some have more than others do. In order for you to reach your destiny it is going to require you to have quite a bit of self-discipline. The bottom line to reaching your destiny is you really have to know who you are. You have to determine what your strong areas are and what your weak areas are. You have to know what you are capable of and what your limitations are. You need to know what you are passionate about and what you really don't like to do. Once you have done these things then you are able to set your goals regarding your destiny. Your strengths and passion will help you stay the course and accomplish your destiny. However, without it you will have a very difficult time determining the information you need to know. Self-discipline will enable you to do things that you never thought possible with your life.

Life Control

To reach your destiny you have to be in control of your life. Not to take away from what God is doing in your life, but at the same time He does want you to be in control of your life. The only way that you are going to be in control of your life is to have self-discipline. You have to understand that it is your choice to have self-discipline or not. It is the easy choice to not work on self-discipline, but people of destiny are not looking for the easy way out. Take the path less traveled and choose the path of self-discipline. Once you have made the choice to walk in self-discipline; you then must develop a plan to learn and gain it. People who have it have made a conscious effort to do things necessary. They have a self-discipline plan and they work their plan. A person of destiny, a self-disciplined person, has a plan for each day and each day they move to completing that plan.

Self-Discipline Supports Other Qualities

There is no way you can reach your destiny in life without having self-discipline which does include integrity. Nothing you do will have any lasting value if you don't have the self-discipline to support it with. Self-discipline instills the backbone that you will need to walk in your destiny. It is what everything else builds on. Without it the other qualities of destiny will not last long enough to do you any good. When you have the self-discipline you will make the correct choices in the journey to your destiny. You will make the little choices that will lead and build up to you making the larger choices correct in your life. You can see how self-discipline and integrity go hand in hand in your life. Also, how they work with each other in you to reach your destiny. Self-discipline, once you have mastered it, will give you more confidence in yourself, because you will really begin to see who you really are for a change.

Strength and Weakness

Self-discipline will enable you to make the necessary changes in your lifestyle to walk in your destiny. You will find out that you have the inner strength to make the decisions, where at one time you were not strong enough. What is on the inside of you makes all the difference. You will be able to determine your strong areas and your weak areas. Once you have done this you can concentrate in your strength zone. If you weaknesses are character or integrity weaknesses you will now be able to identify them and correct them. However, you don't want to spend too much time working on weaknesses that are not character or integrity issues. Don't spend your time trying to improve something that you were not created to do.

For example, through self-discipline I have realized that I can not sing very well.

However, it is not a character issue or an issue of integrity. So I don't need to spend

time trying to work on the weakness of my singing ability, or the lack thereof. Because no matter how much time, effort, or money I spend to work on my singing ability, I will never sing at Carnegie Hall or win American Idol. So my point is, there are going to be areas that you are weak in, don't sweat it. There are other people that are strong in that area and that is their destiny area. Your self-discipline will enable you to discover your strength and weaknesses. You then can determine whether or not you should work on the weak area or not. Use your self-discipline then to capitalize on your strength zone. Your strength zone is your key to your destiny. You have to have the self-discipline to work on your strengths and allow them to lead you on the path of your destiny. When you change your life by enacting the self-discipline that is inside you; it will not only change your life but the lives of those around you as well. Self-discipline is contagious when you are around those who desire to achieve their destiny. Those that have it have the ability to what is best and not what is easy. When you take the path less traveled then you will begin to develop self-discipline. When you begin to self-discipline yourself, you will be on the right track to finish out your destiny. Those that take the easy way out will never walk out their destiny, because the easy way out leads to no where.

Mental Self-Discipline

To develop destiny self-discipline you have to change the mind set that you have now. You need to cleanse your mind of all the negative clutter that has been filling it up. Then replace the negative clutter with positive concepts. By using self-discipline you can replace the negative with positive. When you start believing the positive things about yourself you will see yourself and others in a new and better perspective. That is a destiny minded perspective of life.

Effort

When you have developed self-discipline you will find that you work harder at the things you do. The half hearted effort that you once gave will not be good enough any more. You will begin to do your absolute best in all that you do; small task and large task. It will not matter if anyone notices your work or not; for you will notice it. You will find that the people who are successful, no matter what they are doing, have this one quality in common; self-discipline. They use their self-discipline each and every day to accomplish their goals and ultimately reach their destiny. Also, you will notice that self-discipline goals are different than destiny goals; in that self-discipline goals are all about you and destiny goals are about others.

It is one thing to have someone telling and making you do the things necessary to accomplish your goals. But when you have the self-discipline to do those same things that makes all the difference in the world. Always remember, destiny minded people are self-disciplined people. For some people, self-discipline comes easier than it does to others. For some people it is an everyday battle to develop and maintain it. However, once destiny minded people realize that only by having self-discipline as a part of their live, it is a done deal. Self-discipline is simple in definition; it is being able to control our words, thoughts, actions, and emotions no matter what the situation is that we are facing at the time.

One thing is for sure, it does take willpower in order to have self-discipline. To have self-discipline one really needs to have their daily live organized. Having self-discipline means a lot of things about a person. From being organized, to having willpower, to having self-control, self-discipline affects every aspect of a person's life. For a lot of self-disciplined people it means getting up early in the morning and starting their day in a

certain way. However they begin their day is in direct relation to their destiny. These people have a daily agenda that is enabling them to reach their goals and fulfill their destiny. They have an organized plan for their day that helps them to stay focused on what needs to be done. Being able to stay on task and focused throughout each day is a positive aspect of a person with self-discipline. It would be nearly impossible to reach your destiny if you can't stay focused on what has to be done. So being organized is a powerful tool to a person that is destiny minded. By not getting distracted throughout the day, they are able to get more done in less time, leaving them more time and energy to focus on accomplishing their destiny and helping others accomplish their destiny too.

Potential

Now that we have discussed the attributes of being self-disciplined with being organized we can see how these qualities make the possible to fulfill your potential. So many times potential is a hard word. When we say someone has a lot of potential it seems to put tremendous pressure on them to measure up to a standard that they are not able to measure up to. This "potential" pressure has caused many people to not reach their destiny. They did have greatness inside them but were unable to get the job done because of the outside pressure to be something they could not be was too great. Destiny minded people put more than enough pressure on themselves as it is. For the most part they do not need any additional pressure on them to do one thing or another. However, we all do have potential in us. We have to develop and use self-discipline in order to bring this potential into reality. The reality of our potential is our destiny.

Character

Your level of character will show your self-discipline. Your character is the measuring stick used to measure your level of self-discipline. Your character, then, is how we show

our self-discipline. People that work on and master self-discipline will show and demonstrate good character traits. This is not to say that everyone who has self-discipline will have great character, but the chances are much greater that they will. It takes self-discipline to have character there is no doubt in my mind about that. There are so many distractions today to lead you away from having good character that it takes self-discipline in a person to have a reputation of being a person with good character. So when you find a person that exemplifies good self-discipline chances are they have the good character to match.

I had a student when I taught at Open Door Christian School that demonstrated his character through self-discipline to me. I was having a student leadership meeting during school. One of my students was coming into the room where we were having the meeting. At the same time some of his buddies wanted him to go with them to do something else; probably shoot basketball or something like that. However, he showed self-discipline and stayed for the meeting, even though, I knew he wanted to go with his buddies, and I didn't blame him for wanting to go. But I was extremely proud of him for having the self-discipline to stay. He is well on his way to reaching his destiny one day and having the self-discipline to accomplish it. Self-discipline will enable us to do what is right, to have character, which will make it possible to do the things necessary to reach our destiny.

Having self-discipline makes it possible for us to do the things that we just don't want to do. It enables us to get up and do things that others don't do or put off doing that move us closer and closer to our destiny. People that have self-discipline are definitely uncommon today.

Emotional Self-Discipline

As a person of self-discipline and of destiny you will develop the ability to know your emotions and this is a must in your pursuit of your destiny. The world today is changing so much from day to day and getting more and more complex. Therefore, knowing one's strengths and weaknesses is an absolute must in accomplishing your destiny. Self-discipline will enable you to recognize your emotions and your attitude toward those emotions. This will in turn make it possible for you to control and use your emotions and attitudes to your benefit and for other's benefit as well. Getting to know you inside and out is a major part of self-discipline. You will eventually get to the root of your attitudes and emotions; which is a major accomplishment. Once you have identified the root of what makes you feel the way you do about issues and people, then you will have a firmer grip on how to respond and you will not be reacting any longer

Everyone faces feelings of anxiety, bitterness, and depression during their lifetime.

However, it is the ability to combat these feelings and overcoming them when they attack us is the beginning of self-discipline. It is all in our attitude toward our life.

During our lives our emotions ebb and flow each day, all day; think of all the different emotions that you have experienced today. How did your emotions affect your ability to get stuff done? Did your emotions and attitudes help you or hurt you in your daily agenda? Take the time to check and see how you react mentally and physically to each of the emotions that you experience during the day. You can learn to control how your different emotions affect your body and your mind; that is self-discipline. It is all in how you look at the circumstances that cause the emotion; your perspective is the key to how you handle yourself. For you to have self-discipline you have to learn how to control your emotions each time. You aren't up one minute and down the next, you learn to be

in control of your life. People of destiny are people that master their emotions. This is not to say that they don't have emotions, because we all have them. Some people are controlled by their emotions and some people are not. People of destiny and that have self-discipline don't let their emotions control them. These people learn to use their emotions to propel them toward their destiny. People of destiny do enjoy life, but it is because of the perspective they have adopted. They see things differently than people that are not destiny minded.

Learning to Say "NO"

Those people that have learned self-discipline and have a mindset of destiny have learned to say, "No," to the things that are not good for us. Things that are not helpful but are harmful to us are no longer in control of our lives. Self-discipline means that you are now able to recognize the things in their lives that are harmful; whether mentally, physically, or spiritually. Sometimes you have to say, "No," to things that are fun but are not good for you. This takes self-discipline to be able to turn down things are fun now so that we can get things done that are necessary. You will either pay the price of discipline today or pay the price of regret tomorrow. You have to realize that you will either pay on the front end and play on the back end or play on the front end and pay on the back end. What you read and see tomorrow is being written today. So you can see that people that have self-discipline and have a destiny mind set learn that it is better to pay now and be able to play later.

Good or Bad

Many times we run across people who have disciplined themselves to always see the negative in things that happen; not only to them, but things that happen to others as well. They have developed a habit of always seeing the bad side of things. They take

things that happen to them and turn it so that it is negative. There is no self-discipline this way of evaluating things. Often times they don't see what they have allowed to happen to their mindset. Things in their childhood more than likely were not good and it was branded in their mind at an early age. It is difficult but very possible to change your mindset if you have this type. You have to change your way of thinking and that takes self-discipline and a destiny mindset to do so. You have to make the conscious effort to make the right decisions.

Improve Yourself

People that have self-discipline and are destiny minded are constantly trying to better themselves. They are always looking for ways to strengthen their character and their integrity. People of self-discipline will operate in their strength zone, thereby, minimizing their weaker areas. Their strong good character will overcome their weak areas. The way we look at someone's character is that it is all of your habits, your strengths and then the way that you demonstrate those habits and strengths through your deeds, the way you look, and how hard you work. This in turn will determine your strength or weakness of character in your life. A person of destiny must have a strong character, good habits, and a strong work ethic.

Bring Responsible

As a person of destiny you are responsible for your self-discipline. If you don't have self-discipline there is no way you can reach your destiny or even help someone else reach their destiny. Without self-discipline you will never be able to take anyone else any farther than you have been yourself. However, when you have developed self-discipline then you will not only be able to accomplish your destiny but you will be able

then to help guide others towards their destiny too. Once they see that you have paid the price on the front end; then and only then, will they be willing to follow you on the path of destiny. When you are willing to do the hard work of discovering your talent and gift, through self-discipline, then you will be able to do the even harder work of actually using your gift and talent.

One thing that will stop you from achieving self-discipline is fear. Fear is one thing that will stop most anything you do. Never allow fear to stop you from achieving your goal of self-discipline or your destiny. Fear is a stopper if you let it. When you overcome fear you can overcome anything.

Mastering Self-Discipline

There are few things in life that are any more important than having self-discipline in your life. We have mastered space exploration, deep sea exploration, among other things, but it seems strange that we can't master self-discipline. We will never see the depth and height of our destiny until we are able to master self-discipline in our lives. Having self-discipline is one of the most important qualities that a person can have; especially a person that is destiny minded. You have to be able to look at yourself from a realistic perspective. Until you can see yourself from a realistic perspective you will not be able to determine your strengths. Until you are able to determine your strengths you won't be able to pursue your destiny.

Right Decisions

There comes a time in your life when you have to make up your mind to do what is right with your life. Make the decision to have self-discipline. You have to make a stand in the sand to take control of your life. Know what you believe in and stick with it.

Determine in your mind what you will stand for in your life and what you won't allow to

enter your life. That is a fundamental of self-discipline. In order to reach your destiny you will have to make some large and some small decisions that will be based on what you believe. Your self-discipline will be called into check on more than one occasion on the way to your destiny.

You are the only person that can be responsible for your decisions and self-discipline; then ultimately your destiny. For you to make the right decisions on a consistent basis and reach your destiny; you will have to have self-discipline, no way around it. To make the right decisions requires character and integrity; which both require self-discipline. Those people that don't have self-discipline are not able to make the consistent right decisions. When you don't have self-discipline you will say things that you don't mean to; things that you will regret and then have to try to make right. However, once we say something, good or bad, we can't take it back. Once it is out there, it is out there.

Self-discipline is not just punishing yourself; it is far more than that. It is our internal support system that gives us the support that we need to achieve our destiny. When we have self-discipline we have are able to maintain order in our lives; therefore we don't have to be punished. Having self-discipline does add to your self-confidence. The only way to have self-confidence is have self-discipline.

At least 90% of having self-discipline is simply having the courage to do what is right. It is simply working as hard you as can when no one else is around to witness you doing it. As you can see all the qualities and decisions that affect your destiny are intertwined together. It takes integrity to have self-discipline and at the same time it takes integrity to maintain a lifestyle of self-discipline. It can be hard work to have self-discipline, but it is a must if you are going to reach your destiny. People that reach their destiny are going to be the people that have self-discipline in their lives. Those that do not

demonstrate a life of self-discipline will never reach their destiny. The road to destiny is too rough and steep to climb if you don't have the self-discipline operating in your life day in and day out, when you feel like it and especially when you don't feel like it.

Keep Going Toward the Goal

Self-discipline is what keeps you going when you are tired and don't feel like going on any farther. When you are tired mentally and physically you will have to depend on your self-discipline to keep you on track to your destiny. When we are fatigued we lose the drive that we need to continue to climb, however, that is when the self-discipline kicks in and gives us the motivation we need to continue on our way. When the going is easy everybody is happy, laughing and moving along, but when it gets tough and hard to go, that is when those that don't have self-discipline drop out. The thing is when those that don't have self-discipline give up, they try to get others to do the same. The reason for this is; they don't others that have self-discipline to keep going. This makes them look bad in their eyes, so to save face they try to get the self-disciplined folk to stop and give up too. A word to the wise; those with self-discipline, don't listen to those who complain and make excuses about giving up and quitting, don't listen to those that can't hack it and don't have the fortitude to continue on. It is easy to quit, complain, and give up; at least to those that don't have self-discipline. It is nearly impossible to get a person that has paid the price of self-discipline to complain, make excuses, give up and quit. When you have worked hard it is hard to quit.

If you have set a goal for your life and you fully intend on reaching it, then you must have the self-discipline in your life to reach it. No goal worth attaining, your destiny included, will be attained without self-discipline in your life. We have repeated this several times in this chapter because there is a lot of truth in that concept. If you can

reach a goal without having self-discipline, then you need to examine your goals to make sure you are setting them high enough. You are not doing yourself justice if your goals are too low. To determine whether or not a goal is high enough, check to see if it took self-discipline to reach that goal.

More than a Gift/Talent

We have said that in order for one to reach their destiny, you must first develop self-discipline. You will never lead others to their destiny if you don't have self-discipline. For you to be effective in a destiny minded life, self-discipline is a very basic but highly valuable requirement. That is a widely known concept, no secret in that. If you plan to reach your destiny and in turn help others to realize and accomplish their destiny, you then must have their respect, you will not earn their respect without having self-discipline. Many great men and women of vision and destiny have said, "I cannot place someone in control of other people, if first they cannot control themselves." This is a very true statement. You can't take others where you have not been yourself.

Developing self-discipline is definitely not an easy task. It can be a lifelong struggle for most of us, because there is no easy way to develop self-discipline. Sometimes having self-discipline really has nothing at all to do with your talent or your gift. You can be the most talented and gifted person around and not have self-discipline. This has been the case in many people. In this case, not having self-discipline has rendered the gift and talent useless for the most part. You have to decide that you will develop self-discipline to go along with your gift and talent. Those that seem to be super gifted and talented but are lacking in self-discipline will not last. They are unable to pass the test that the world hands them. This is a sad case, but too often true. We see it all the time in sports and in the entertainment world. However, more and more we are seeing it in happen in

the church world too. Great, talented, and gifted men and women of God, regardless of their denomination or church, are failing the test that the world has given them. These people, whether in sports, entertainment, or church, have awesome gifts and talent, but their lack of self-discipline cost them. Because it cost them, it also, has cost us, because now we don't have them in our lives as destiny minded people. Not to say these people can't develop self-discipline and continue to use their gift and talent, but it is very difficult to regain the trust that they once had, because once the trust has been broken, it is nearly impossible to gain it back.

Wrapping it all up

To wrap up self-discipline, we can say that it is absolutely necessary to have and develop self-discipline in order to reach your destiny. Self-discipline is a choice. Self-discipline is tough, but once developed it does get easier to maintain. If you are going to be successful and operate at consistently at a high level then you must develop and use self-discipline. Your gift or your talent will only take you so far, but your self-discipline will keep you there for the long-term. People that are self-disciplined are accountable to others that have self-discipline. Self-disciplined people recognize the importance of being help accountable to someone who else who is destiny minded too. Being accountable helps keep them sharp and focused on the task at hand. Also, being accountable to someone else that is also destiny minded helps to keep them on track in their destiny.

To have self-discipline puts you in a small category of people. Many people desire to have self-discipline but never do what is necessary to develop it. They lack the discipline to have discipline. Having self-discipline is a reward in itself. It is the only discipline

that will last when the pressure is on you. Once you get motivated to accomplish your destiny, your self-discipline is what will keep you going toward it.

Self Discipline Exercise

Try getting up an hour earlier each day and journal, exercise, pray, meditate, or whatever you choose that will teach you more self-discipline.

Self-Discipline Workshop

1. What are you doing to develop self-discipline in your life?

2. In what ways has developing self-discipline made a difference in your life?

3. What area of self-discipline has been the toughest for you to develop?

4. Who are you accountable to that has self-discipline?

5. How can help others to develop self-discipline in their lives?

Chapter Six

Humility

When the word humility comes up all sorts of thoughts go through people's minds.

Thoughts such as, being humble means letting people run over you, being humble means that a person is weak, and other thoughts along those lines. However, nothing could be farther from the truth. It takes unbelievable self-discipline and commitment to be humble. The higher you go in your destiny the lower you must go to remain humble.

When people recognize you, you must remain humble. People of destiny must be people of humility if they are going to reach their destiny.

You must be humble in your mindset and your philosophy, but not in your actions that lead toward your destiny. Don't try to act humble just so people will say you are humble, but act humble so that you set the bar for others to follow. When people see you accomplishing your destiny and yet remaining humble, they will desire to follow your humble example.

Humility is without a doubt, a major characteristic of destiny minded people. They learn from their mistakes and from others. They know that they are not good at everything, but understand that they have their strong areas too. Being humble helps them when they are successful. Humility keeps them on a level plain so that they don't

get prideful because of their success. Humble leaders have no issue with giving the credit to the people around them. When they have success, the credit goes to those that worked along side them. Humility will allow you to share the glory; give others the spotlight, and not think twice about it. At the same time, people that have humility will take all the blame when things go wrong. There is no finger pointing or accusing others of not doing their job. They will take the blame for the whole team. Those people that have humility will admit their mistakes quickly, just as those with integrity. You can see how humility and integrity are related. One of the characteristics of a person with integrity is humility. The integrity that a person of humility has keeps them from feeling like that they are more important or better than others around them. They look at everyone as having value, which is true. Everyone has value, a place, strength, a purpose, a destiny. A person of destiny then must have humility, as they see everyone has importance in some way. People that have humility always make people feel at peace around them. There is no back biting or jockeying for position by people that are driven by humility. It is a way of life for them. For you to be effective in your destiny you must develop a humble lifestyle.

A person of humility realizes that they are not the whole puzzle, but that they, along with others, make up the puzzle. People that have developed a lifestyle of humility don't have an attitude of arrogance, pride, or high egos. At the same time don't confuse the attitude of humility with the attitude of weakness or timidity. True humility takes courage and inner strength that many have not yet developed. People of humility quickly realize that they are a part of a team, not the centerpiece of the organization. People that are humble are givers not takers as well. They give of their time and resources to the betterment of others that are moving toward their destiny.

People that are humble have come to know who they truly are. You will be hard pressed to find insecure people that are humble. At the same time don't confuse insecurity with humility. Also, do not confuse quietness with humility. Humility is basically this; not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. You think about the needs of others before your own and you factor the needs of others into every equation or situation that you are involved in.

People that have developed humility in their life, as we said, have realized who they are. They have come to the knowledge that they are not better than anyone else; they are just like everyone else in most aspects. They know that if they become prideful then they will be on the outs. They see that they came into the world with nothing and they will go out with nothing. All that matters is what they can contribute to others while they are here in the world. A person that has developed humility is more mature than others. While some people grow old, some people grow up. There is no room for immaturity in the life of a person of destiny. You can see that people that are too full of themselves have a hard time with humility; they also have a difficult time fulfilling their destiny. If you are always thinking about yourself and what you can get from someone, you will have a hard time developing humility and reaching your destiny. People who are humble are thinking about others not just of themselves. This is also the mindset of people that are looking to accomplish their destiny. They think of others and how they can add to other people's lives. It is the opposite of a selfish mindset or even a prideful mindset.

People that are humble, as we have said, are not weak. It takes a great deal of strength to be humble. It also takes the ability to submit. You will need to have the quality of submission if you are going to have the quality of humility. Both go right along with

your destiny as well. You will have to be able to sub; or go under or beneath, someone else's mission. In other words, you will be under someone else, you will listen to someone else. You will learn from someone else. You put your plan under their inspection. It is like this in a mentoring relationship. If you have humility you are going to want someone to mentor you. Conversely, it takes humility to be able to sit under someone and learn from them. It takes humility to allow them to speak into your life and correct you, also to discipline you in every area of your life. Finding a mentor is a big step toward your destiny. So you can see why it would require someone to be humble if they are going to be mentored effectively.

Today we see people all the time that are loud and talk all about themselves. They never admit to their mistakes and never acknowledge the fact they are ever wrong. This is not an example of humility. A lot of the time being humble does mean keeping quiet and listening most of the time. Listening is a key ingredient to being humble. You will never learn if you are doing all the talking. People that are humble have a desire to learn. A desire to learn will aid you greatly in your desire for destiny. In many cases the person that is loud is loud because of insecurity. They are only loud when in front of a crowd, when they are one on one they are quiet and listen. That is a prime case of people that want to be humble but have difficulty being humble because of the insecurities that are in their lives. If you are going to reach your destiny you will need to not be humble, but overcome your insecurities. It is rare, if even possible at all, to reach your destiny if you are anchored down by insecurities.

The one thing that will stop you from reaching your destiny is pride. It may camouflage itself in many different disguises, but pride is still pride. Most everything that stops us

in trying to do what is right is pride. As we have said, the exact opposite of humility is pride. Pride can come in the form of unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, and hate to name a few. All of these will stop you dead in your tracks to your destiny and cause you to miss out on your destiny. However, when bring yourself to walk in humility you will continue to walk in your destiny until you reach it. So we need to keep ourselves away from pride at all costs so that we can walk in humility and walk in our destiny.

Nobody likes to be around someone that is always talking about themselves and how great they are at one thing or another. That is a tell tale sign of someone that does not humility, but has pride. It is always better to let someone tell about what we have done, not ourselves. When you are an outstanding person, others will take notice and they will let others know all about it. This way the truth is known, but at the same time we are able to remain humble and in pursuit of our destiny. When we spend all our time telling everyone else how great we are, we are unable to focus on our destiny. It is when we are focused all on ourselves and not on others; which is what our destiny is all about, we lose our way. The best way to stay destiny focused is to stay focused on others and telling about what they have done, in a good way, giving all away credit.

One great way to develop humility is to show respect to others. When we show respect we will show our humility. It takes humility to show respect. You are placing the crown on someone else besides yourself. Too often we are demanding respect, but not showing any respect. It does not work that way. By showing respect to others, we are acknowledging that they too have an awesome destiny and we will do whatever we can to see that they accomplish it. To do this takes humility on our part. To acknowledge that someone else's dream is as big and important or more so than ours is a sign of living in humility. We all need a good healthy dose of humility. To make your life a life

of helping others reach their destiny is humility. To be a tour guide, one who takes people to their destination, and not a travel agent, one who tells people about their destination, takes humility. It's not as if though you are putting aside your agenda and helping someone for awhile and then going back and picking up your agenda again. It is making your agenda an agenda of helping others reach their destiny. You are here for other people; to help them in their destiny walk. To see that they are able to reach their destiny is your destiny. Now that is humility. It is some that say, "That takes humility." However those people that are walking in destiny would be more apt to say, "That is humility." It is like you become humility, that is being humble. You lay down your life and pick up another's life. That is the basis of destiny. At the same time there is someone, maybe even more than just one person, seeing to it that you reach your destiny. We are all in this together. However, there are too many that don't see it that way. They feel as if they have to take care of number one and will do whatever it takes to make sure that all their needs are met. There is no humility needed to live that kind of lifestyle. However, it is a lonely life to live, because we were not intended to live that way. We are here for purpose, for destiny, and everyone's destiny includes other people. If you are not sure if you are doing what you are supposed to do, you can check. Does this require a relationship with God first, and then with another person or group of people. Everything that involves destiny will include relationships. If there is no relationship involved, then there is no destiny involved either. So you can always check your destiny by checking the relationships in your life. In doing so, it will make you become humility. When you start being a giver of your time and resources to help others reach their destiny, you will then be humility in the flesh.

Without humility in your life you will not experience destiny in your life. Destiny requires humility, because it is not all about you. That so goes against our human nature that is why it takes so much strength to become humble. We are not born humble by any means. We have to become humble. We have to take control and discipline ourselves to be humility. It is a battle of wills and of the flesh to the end. I think this is the one key reason that so few people feel like that have a grip on their destiny and know their purpose in life. They are too interested in holding on their life to let it go and grasp a hold of their destiny. It goes against conventional thinking, but then there is nothing conventional about destiny or humility or discipline or any of the other qualities we have mentioned in this book. That is another reason that so few people today seem to be on track for their destiny. There has been a change in the thinking, in the mindset of most people today, and that change is preventing those people from reaching and accomplishing their destiny.

As you can see a large part of destiny and humility is a mental thing. Once you get your heart right with your destiny, you then have to keep your mind right. A friend of mine, who is a football coach, is always telling the players, "Got to get your mind right!" He is so right, while they are stretching and getting ready to practice he is focusing on the player's mind. As with the game of football, the game of life is so much more mental than we want to believe. We have to learn how to think at sometime or another. While others can help us in our destiny walk, we still have to learn to think. Being humble will allow you to think about others, while thinking for yourself. Being humble, you know that it is not enough to just think about you all the time.

Humility is a powerful gift in the hands of a destiny minded person. You do have to be careful at times though. People who have not developed humility will often times be

confused by your actions. People that have their own personal agenda, the majority of the time, assume that everyone else does as well. However, a person operating in humility and moving in destiny does not have this self-first agenda mentality. So, therefore, a person with humility will often times be misunderstood. Humble people are not complicated but they seem to be by those that don't see things from their point of view. However, walking in humility is still the absolute best way to get to your destiny. Don't let the mindsets of others get you side-tracked simply because they don't understand why you don't think the same way they think. After awhile, when you have consistently walked in humility around those that haven't developed the humble lifestyle, they will come to know and understand more as to how you see things. Often times they too will desire to develop the gift of humility in their lives as well. So as you can see, humility is a powerful gift. Humility has the power to change people's lives. Humility can set you on the course for your destiny like nothing else. It can also keep you focused on the goal, on what is important in life. Humility is powerful enough to change your mindset from yourself to others; that is powerful!

When you have developed a lifestyle of humility, titles and position will not mean as much to you any longer. As you become more secure in who you are and in your destiny, humility will soon take the desire for titles, position, popularity, recognition, glory, etc, out of your life. I know for a fact, in my own life, that there was a time when titles and position meant everything to me. This is because I was not secure and because I was not secure I was not allowing humility to develop in me. I was not concerned about others and destiny as much as I was myself and what I could get from others. I was more interested in how others could help me get what I wanted out of life. I thought that if I had titles and position, people would respect me and follow me.

However, I see now just how wrong I was in thinking that way. When I discovered that life is not about titles and position, but about destiny, adding value to others, encouraging others, helping others reach their destiny, and not all about me; then the desire for titles and position vanished. It was when humility started being my guide and not pride was I able to see correctly. As long as self and pride are your guide you will not see the way God intended for us to see. You will not have the destiny perspective if you are all about yourself. Humility has changed my life in so many different aspects. Humility has allowed me to see destiny more clearly now. And humility will keep your vision of your destiny clear as you go along your way. When your vision begins to be blurry, you may need to check your humility and be sure that you have not been thinking more about yourself than you have others. Check your humility daily, because you can bet that your humility is being checked by others on a daily basis.

I was at a ballgame once, an Alabama Softball Super Regional game, and there was a person there that was talking to different ones. During the game each time someone else would say something to this person, their comment nearly every time was, "I know." Then this person would go on and tell how much they knew about the subject. It wasn't long before the people sitting around this person stopped talking; and it wasn't the great game that was making them stop. It was the pride in the way this person would always take the credit that they already knew all there was to know about that subject. I know that every time someone says, "I know" it isn't prideful, but be careful. Would it not be just as easy to tell the other person, "That's right!"? Make them feel as if they had just enlightened you on the subject. Put the spotlight on them; make them feel like they are the most important person in the conversation. Be interested in what they have to say; while at the same time be interesting yourself. However, it is just as important to make

them feel special. This takes humility. There are times when we feel like we need to share all we know about a particular subject; if you have to share what you know, do it in such a way as not to seem prideful. No one wants to be around a know-it-all; however, I do like to be around intelligent people. I want to learn from others, but it is hard to learn positive stuff from a prideful person no matter how intelligent they seem to be. Just as with the person at the game, they were very smart and knowledgeable, but they did not show wisdom. They were pushing people away rather than drawing people to them.

Humility is the key that unlocks many, many doors. A person that uses the key of humility will always be in demand. People will be drawn to a person that demonstrates humility at all times; especially when they are in the spotlight. Now I don't mean the false humility that we see so much these days. When a person has reached a certain level and they try to act humble, but can't because they haven't exercised the gift of humility in their life. It is easy to spot someone that is showing false humility, it is not a natural place for them, and they seem out of place, because they are out of place. Pride will show itself in a person when they are showing false humility. They only serve when they can be seen serving. They only serve the people in the spotlight. People that operate in false humility will tell everyone of how they serve. They have to bring the attention back to them no matter the situation. This false humility will expose itself in a person in due time. A person that has true servant humility will never brag or put the focus and attention back on them. A person of true humility will always be giving the credit and putting the focus on others and their accomplishments. The only time a person who walks in destiny humility will bring attention to themselves is when they take responsibility or blame for what went wrong. When a person of destiny and

humility has failed at something they will take the blame for it and make things right; they will make the necessary corrections so that it doesn't happen again.

There was a time in my life, and really still is today, when God lead me to serve, but I was to serve the servants. I was to serve those that were on the bottom of the ladder. So that meant that I would be under the bottom of the bottom. In my mind I would be looking up to see down. I was not prepared to be in this position. That is the very reason that I was to be in that position. I was never seen or heard from; I was just supposed to serve those who served others. I realize now that this was to enable me to identify and remove the pride that was ruling, controlling and running my life. It didn't take long for the pride to come to the top. I was very defensive and angry that I was to serve the servants. Not that I didn't care for the people, but please, serve the servants, come on. However, I soon realized that it the best thing that could have happened to me. I was able to get rid of the pride, anger, and insecurities that came along with it. I have realized that titles and positions are okay, as long as they don't become your focus. When you think more about the nameplate on the door than you do the people that come through the door then something is wrong. You have to put aside the titles and position, nothing wrong with them, but put that aside and concentrate, focus on the people, on their destiny. When you are helping others reach their destiny, which is your destiny, then they will talk you up. Now, that's fine, it's okay when other people talk about you in a good way, or a bad way as far as that goes. Always let someone brag on you, don't take upon yourself to brag about what you have done or are doing. Trust me; no one wants to listen to someone go on and on about themselves. If you are doing great things others will notice and they will let people know. At the same time, you may be

doing awesome stuff and no one even seems to notice, no one ever mentions it, no one ever gives you credit, it may seem like they are taking you for granted; well it's okay too. If you are doing what you are supposed to be doing, and heading toward your destiny and at the same time taking others with you, then it does not matter. You just keep on keeping on!!

I think we now have a good grasp of how humility affects our destiny. Without humility in your life chances are you will never see your destiny fulfilled. Humility is definitely a characteristic you must have if you are going to walk out your destiny. Pride will only lead you off a cliff on your walk, but humility will be your guide each step of the way. When you are not sure how to act in a certain situation, let humility be your guide. If you don't know what to say in a situation, then always let humility be the guide.

Humility will never stir you the wrong way. Humility is a truthful guide to your destiny. You can always trust humility to be honest and to have integrity. You may not always like the decisions that humility will make, but you can be rest assured that the decision made in humility will be the right and best decision you could possibly make under any circumstances. When you are walking in humility; and moving toward your destiny, there will be a peace in your life that will let you know that you are doing the right thing. Humility is a priceless gift in an expensive world. If you have humility you will be valued by others. Humility is a very precious gift, more precious than diamonds or gold, it will take you farther than either one of those can ever take you. Guard your humility with your life, because it will be vital in determining the quality of your life. Your destiny awaits you. So use the gift of humility to take you there. You will not be disappointed by living a lifestyle of humility, but rather you will be fulfilled in ways you never would have thought. You will put others first and because of the rule of life; what

goes around comes around or you reap what you sow and more of it, you too, will be taken care of and thought of by others. So don't think for a second that you will always be left out or that no one will ever think about you; when you help others get to their destiny they will make sure that you are rewarded in ways beyond your wildest dreams. Humility will allow you to enjoy what you have and not be concerned with what you don't have too. Allow humility in your life and you will wonder how you every lived without it. It is so awesome how you will feel and how you will make those around you feel when you live in humility. It is so amazing!

Humility Workshop

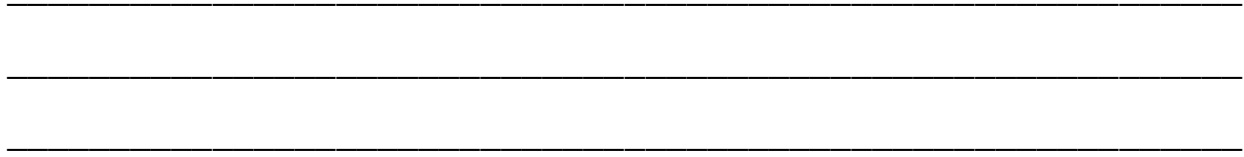
1. How has walking in humility changed your outlook toward other people?

2. What has been the biggest difference in your life that humility has brought about?

3. How can you see your destiny more clearly since you see it with humility?

4. What changes in your life were brought about by humility?

5. How can you share being humble with others and still remain humble?



Conclusion

Well, we have looked at six decisions that we make each day that affect our destiny. There are other decisions and qualities that were not mentioned in this project that we may cover later. So I don't think that these six are the only decisions about destiny that we make daily. These are the six that I simply chose this time around. Be on the lookout for another book about more decisions coming later.

I hope and pray that this book project has been as much of a blessing to you as it has been to me to write it. I have learned so much from the research to the writing to the publishing to marketing and selling of this book. I have been blessed by so many people during the months of this project. I don't think for a second that I could have done this alone. I am so thankful for the most awesome wife and daughter in the world that have helped me in so many ways. Without them this would not have been possible.

By reading this book and answering the workshop questions at the end of each chapter I believe that you will get a better idea about your destiny. I know that just by writing and answering the questions myself; that I have a clearer vision about my destiny. Destiny is something that we all have in common, even though we are all unique. Just remember that destiny depends on relationship; first with God, then with others. Your destiny will never be about you and only you, it is always about others. We are all here for each other. So go ahead and embrace your destiny. It will be the greatest journey of your life. Full of excitement, thrills and the occasional spill, but more than worth the effort.