

or to compensate for our lack of giving our self to those we love.

When this happens, our gifts lose their value and effectiveness. So remember, give gifts according to reality...the reality that you love and care for someone and want to express it in a way that reflects your heart.

**SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 19:6**

*"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."*

\_R. T. Kendall, Controlling the Tongue

**FRIDAY, April 9, 2010:**

Esther 3:4 *"Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew."*

This verse gives the reason the book of Esther was written. The central issue in the book of Esther was that Mordecai would not bow to the high government official Haman. However, it is important to understand the reason; it was because Mordecai was a Jew. In other words, **who** he was determined **what** he did. He was a man who was true to his values, he was character-driven.

Nothing has changed. No matter our talk, our walk reveals who we really are. Therefore the great mission in life is to allow God to change us and mold us into someone He is proud of. Seek Him! Seek Him daily and desperately; He is the only source of true and lasting change and improvement.

**SCRIPTURE: Psalm 51:10**

*"Child, character counts continually."*

**SATURDAY, April 10, 2010:**

Esther 4:2 *"He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth."*

Sackcloth represented great mourning and sadness. The king would not allow that in his presence...he lived in a fantasy world in which he tried to isolate himself from the realities of everyday life and of his people.

However, as much as we'd all like to be able to do that, sorrow and sadness finds a way to sneak into our lives. Perhaps today you are having a "sackcloth day." Let me remind you that our KING – Jesus Christ does allow sackcloth in his presence. Matter of fact, He encourages you to bring your cares and worries to Him.

There is no magic bullet to help you stop worrying or to cause sadness to evaporate away. Sometimes you must endure that lonely road for a while; but be assured of this...Jesus has already walked there and when you choose to walk with Him, he will always lead you through your "sackcloth times."

**SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 12:2-3**

*"A sure sign that pride has taken root in leaders' lives is that they lose compassion for those they are leading."* \_Henry & Richard Blackaby, Spiritual Leadership, p. 236



## Pastor Kemp's Weekly Devotional

*For the week of April 4, 2010*

### Daily Reflection Questions:

- Reflection: Of what eternal benefit was my day?
- Reflection: What eternal truth(s) did I observe today?
- Reflection: Did my behavior match my values?
- Reflection: What am I thankful for today?

### *What I am thankful for this week:*

MONDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

TUESDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

WEDNESDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

THURSDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

FRIDAY: \_\_\_\_\_

SATURDAY: \_\_\_\_\_



**MONDAY, April 5, 2010:**

Nehemiah 12:27 *“Now at the dedication of the wall...”*

The book of Nehemiah is about a man that leveraged his life to achieve something that mattered to God. He leveraged his position as cupbearer to the king, he leveraged his influence among his peers and followers, and he leveraged his life for a great cause.

And of course, the cause was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem which brought back dignity and hope to a defeated people.

What I want you to notice today is that the wall was indeed completed. Nehemiah’s dream and passion came to pass. All the people’s hard work and risk-taking was not in vain – the job did get done!

My point in bringing this up to you today is to remind you that you’ve got some “dedication” days out there. Life is not going to always be as it is right now. The job will get done; the tunnel does have an end; day will dawn, light will come and one day you will have the satisfaction of reaping the benefits of your faith, faithfulness and hard work.

So my dear friend, don’t lose hope. Finish the job; be faithful...there is a celebration in your future!

**SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 30:19**

*“The worst that can happen to a man is to succeed before he is ready.” \_D Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

**TUESDAY, April 6, 2010:**

Nehemiah 13:6 *“But during all this I was not in Jerusalem...”*

You’ve probably heard the expression, *“When the cat’s away the mice will play.”* That could be the theme of chapter 13 of the book of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah had to go back to the capitol city to give an account to the king. While he was away, “the mice began to play.” When he arrived back to Jerusalem, he found a lot of things that had unraveled. He had to jump back in and get things back in order.

The lesson we learn is:

- ❑ *To maintain an effective and productive life, there will be some areas that will require constant vigilance and maintenance.*

For example, you can’t “load up” on your prayer and devotional life; it requires constant vigilance and maintenance.

You can’t live a healthy lifestyle by exercising four hours and eating vegetables once a week. It is a daily issue.

You can’t have a healthy marriage and family life by taking two great vacations a year; it’s a daily issue.

You get the picture. Some things are just too important to only focus on occasionally.

**SCRIPTURE: Psalm 61:8**

*“A two-year-old is kind of like having a blender, but you don’t have a top for it.” \_Jerry Seinfeld*

**WEDNESDAY, April 7, 2010:**

Esther 1:12 *“But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king’s command...”*

Currently, the internet search engine, Google, is in a battle with China. It seems that they have forgotten at whose pleasure they are allowed to operate in China – the Communist government. Google does not like the fact that the government reserves the right to censor the content of the information that is made available to the people in China. As a result, they are paying a high price both in profit and in the value of their company. The right or wrong of their decision is not the issue for this devotional.

However, it is an example of what happened to Queen Vashti, she forgot why she had the exalted and privileged position of queen. She forgot that she had that position at the pleasure of the king.

If we are not careful, we can also forget at whose pleasure we live, breathe, and have our being. We are alive today at the pleasure of the Creator of the Universe. God Almighty holds the cords of our life in his hands. When we forget this, we can become cocky, complaining, and unappreciative. We can develop an “entitlement mentality” thinking that we have a right to God’s blessings and favor.

But remember, we live at the pleasure of God and what God wants above all is obedience; He makes the rules, He sets the terms...we serve at His pleasure.

The good news is that our God is not a despot like Queen Vashti’s king. Our God is LOVE. He cares for us more than we can imagine and He has our best interest at heart. But whatever you do, don’t forget at whose pleasure you live.

**SCRIPTURE: Exodus 15:11**

*“In the end, we prefer the illusion of control to the cost of being effective.” \_Robert E. Quinn, Building the Bridge as You Walk On It*

**THURSDAY, April 8, 2010:**

Esther 2:18 *“King Ahasuerus...gave gifts according to the generosity of a king.”*

I like to give gifts, it is one of the ways that I express my love and appreciation. I know many of you are the same way. But let me remind you of an important principle in gift giving – give gifts *according to you*. What I mean by this is, give gifts that reflect reality. The reason Ahasuerus gave gifts according to the generosity of a king was that he was a king.

Any time we give gifts that we can’t really afford we are not being truthful. The gift has become something it was not intended to be. Instead of giving to express our love and appreciation to someone, our gift-giving can be about making a statement about us. It can be about looking good or worst yet, looking better than someone else. Our gifts can be about trying to cover our insecurities **cont.→**