

## FOCUS YOUR ENERGY

In recent weeks, a new book has climbed to the list of national bestsellers. This book, authored by Jim Collins, is entitled Good to Great. Collins begins his book with a clear, concise and cogent statement: "Good is the enemy of great."

### What dissipates my energy? (A-B-Cs)

#### Activity without direction

"The most important role of vision is to give focus to human energy."

"The outer distractions of our interests reflect an inner lack of integration in our own selves. We are trying to be several selves at once without all our selves being organized by one single, mastering life within us." —Thomas Kelly

#### Burden without action

Too many of us are "stewers". We are weary, worn and wanting.

#### Conflict without resolution

### How can I focus the energy of my life?

#### 1. Play to your gifts

"He is a wise man who wastes no energy on pursuits for which he is not fitted; and he is wiser still who among the things he can do well, chooses and resolutely follows the best."

—William Gladstone

"The biggest tragedy in America is not the waste of natural resources, though this is tragic. The greatest tragedy is the waste of human resources. The average person goes to his grave with his music still in him." —Oliver Wendell Holmes

### 2. Pay attention to growth

"The next day Moses solved disagreements among the people, and the people stood around him from morning until night. When Moses' father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he asked, 'What is all this you are doing for the people? Why are you the only one to solve disagreements?'"

Exodus 18:13-14

"Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'You are not doing this right. You and the people who come to you will get too tired. This is too much work for you; you can't do it by yourself. Now listen to me, and I will give you some advice.'" Exodus 18:17-19

"But choose some capable men from among the people—men who respect God, who can be trusted, and who will not change their decisions for money. Make these men officers over the people, to rule over groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. Let these officers solve the disagreements among the people all the time. They can bring the hard cases to you, but they can decide the simple cases themselves. That will make it easier for you, because they will share the work with you." Exodus

### 3. Pursue a great goal

"You know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize. So run to win!"

I Corinthians 9:24

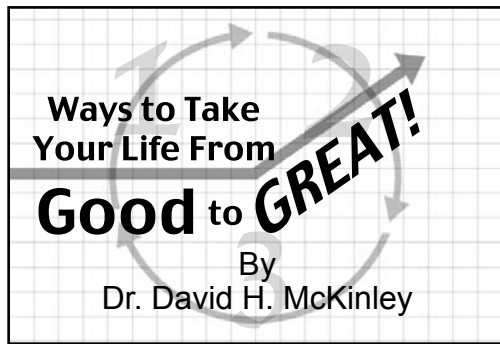
"Losers don't focus on losing, they just focus on getting by."

"Friends, I'm still not all I should be, but I am putting all my energies in this one thing: forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven." Philippians 3:13-14

"Whoever I am or whatever I do, some kind of excellence is within my reach." —John W. Gardner, Former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare

"Ordinary ability when focused excels."

—George Sweeting



## FUEL YOUR TENACITY

“Tenacity is the capacity to keep going when the circumstances in my life cause me to feel like quitting.”

### Tenacity is an Endangered Life Quality in Our Culture

Few people today seem to have the staying power of “stick-to-it-ness”.

“Consider the postage stamp. It’s usefulness consists in sticking to one thing until it gets there.”

**Quitting is Easy.** We live in a “quick fix” culture: not taking responsibility, not paying the price, not forcing discipline, not waiting. Part of growth maturity and success is persistence or tenacity.

**Quitting is Costly.** We live with the outcome and consequences for a long time.

“Today’s mighty oak tree is just yesterday’s nut that held its ground.”

### Tenacity is a Valued Life Quality in Scripture

“So don’t get tired of doing what is good. Don’t get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time.” Galatians 6:9

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us.”

Hebrews 12:1

### Tenacity is a Greater Life Quality Than Talent

The greatest reward does not go to those who are simply talented, but to those who couple their talent with tenacity.

We need strength, discipline and continuance, yet we often faint, fail and fatigue. How can we F-U-E-L tenacity in our lives?

#### Focus on the outcome, not the obstacles

Perception is the most important factor in persistence.

“What I believe about life determines how I perceive life, which determines what I receive from life.”

“We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward.”

Hebrews 12:2

#### Unhitch your load of limitations

“The will to persevere is often the difference between failure and success.” —David Sarnoff

#### Exercise persistence in the face of resistance

“Never give in! Never give in! Never, never, never. Never—in anything great or small, large or petty—never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense.” —Winston Churchill

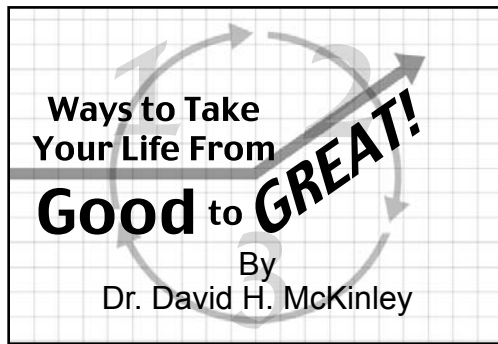
“Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance.” —Samuel Jackson

#### Let God strengthen your stamina

“Have you never heard or understood? Don’t you know that the LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. But those who wait on the LORD will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:28-31

“But we are not quitters who lose out. Oh, no! We’ll stay with it and survive, trusting all the way.”

Hebrews 10:39



## FEED YOUR HUMILITY

In Jim Collins' book, *Good to Great*, he defines the unique quality of all leaders in good to great companies as being rallied by common passion for the well being of organizational development, not just personal perks.

Jeremiah, a prophet in the Old Testament, made the same discovery: "Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it!" Jeremiah 45:5

### There are two kinds of pride:

- 1) Good Pride: Dignity, Respect, Honor
- 2) Bad Pride: Conceit, Arrogance, Independence

When you look at the word *pride*, notice the middle letter is "I". When you are full of pride on the inside, it makes you stiff, stubborn, and creates strife with others.

"One is too small of a number to achieve greatness."

## How Can I Feed My Humility?

### • I Must Reduce My Intake of Self-Absorbed Atti-

Pride is easy to see in others and difficult to see in me.

—*Pride enlarges my perception of my own importance*

—*Pride stunts my growth*

"Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."

Proverbs 26:12 NKJV

"The most important thing in life is not to capitalize on our gains. Any fool can do that. The really important thing is to profit from our losses. That requires intelligence; and makes the difference between a man of sense and a fool." —William Bolitho

"People who accept correction are on the pathway to life, but those who ignore it will lead others away."

Proverbs 10:17 NLT

—*Pride makes others sick*

"Pride leads to arguments, those who take advice are wise." Proverbs 13:10

"Do you know where fights and arguments come from? They come from your selfish desires that war within you. You want things, but you don't have them. So you are ready to kill and are jealous of other people, but you cannot get what you want. So you argue and fight. You do not get what you want because you do not ask God." James 4:1-2 NCV

—*Pride increases my stress and anxiety*

"Blessed are the flexible for they rarely get bent out of shape."

### • I Must Increase My Exercise of Humility-Producing Activities

"True greatness is always clothed in humility."

What is humility? It is grateful acceptance of my own distinctiveness without comparing myself to the distinctiveness of others and living to affirm God's purpose for my life.

### Step-by-step process for feeding humility:

#### 1. Retire your old T-shirt.

Move from an attitude of "I rule" to "I serve"

#### 2. Stretch your service beyond what is expected or requested.

Go the extra mile!

#### 3. Find a way to say "thank you" every day.

Gratitude is one of the most effective humility-building exercises in the world.

#### 4. Determine that being right does not equal being uptight.

Just because everyone doesn't see it your way, it does not mean you have to defeat or destroy them.

#### 5. Admit your mistakes.

"God is against the proud, but gives grace to the humble. . . Don't be proud in the Lord's presence and He will make you great."

James 4:6, 10 NCV