



OPEN MY EYES

DAY 1: Sunday, January 9th – AN INTRODUCTION

Verses to Read: Genesis 21:15-19; Numbers 22:28-31; II Kings 6:15-17; Luke 24:30-31

As you know, it's a brand-new year! If you missed the first message of 2022, I preached a message that day called "Help Me See It." The message set up the emphasis for the first month of the year and our 21 Days of Prayer.

In 2022, I'm praying that that God would help you see again. The truth is that this pandemic brought a lot of us to a point where we stopped seeing. Whether it was vision for family, vision for a spiritual walk or vision for the future, I'm praying that all of us would be able to see again.

At one point, in the Scripture, Paul prays, "I pray that your spiritual eyes would be opened." That's what I'm praying for you. I'm asking that he gives you provision, direction, answers, protection and the vision for the future.

There are many times where God opens people's eyes. In my message, I focused on 4 instances in the Bible where God opened people's eyes. Those 4 scriptures are found in the Scripture list above. What's interesting is that in all 4 of these texts, it had nothing to do with physical eyesight. In all 4 cases, God was helping them see something beyond the physical in the supernatural.

In each of the 4 instances, I made a parallel to a specific area where I'm praying that God would open your eyes. The 4 areas are:

- *Provision* for our children
- *Direction* for our future
- *Protection* over our lives
- *Visitation* in our spirits

That's what I'm praying for you during these 21 Days of Prayer. In fact, not only are we focusing on these 4 areas, but this prayer guide will focus on those 4 areas as well. Over the next 20 days, we'll take 5 days to focus on each area. I'll try to share some thoughts in that vein, and then we'll ask you to pray specifically about those areas in yours and the lives of others. Then, on January 30th, we'll hold our annual anointing Sunday where we'll anoint every family and pray God speaks to you about these areas.

I'm really excited about it, and I believe that God is going to help you see in a way you never have before in 2022.

Let's do it!

Pastor Dusty and Kendra Dean

REFLECT:

- Have you ever asked God to help you see or open your eyes before? What was it regarding?
- Do any of the 4 areas of focus stand out to you? Which ones and why?



OPEN MY EYES TO YOUR PROVISION FOR MY CHILDREN

DAY 2: Monday, January 10th – REVIVAL IN MY FAMILY

Verses to Read: Deuteronomy 6:5-7

In this 21-day period, we are asking God to bring revelation in four different areas:

- *Provision* for our children
- *Direction* for our future
- *Protection* over our lives
- *Visitation* in our spirits

Over the next 5 days, we will be focusing our devotional thoughts and prayers on the next generation.

Get around Christians for very long and you'll undoubtedly hear some begin to talk about the importance of revival. We all want it and that's good. But somewhere along the way, we began to think that revivals are about a certain formula. Get the right preacher, create the right atmosphere, cross our fingers, get hungry enough and perhaps revival can break out in our church or country.

But the truth is that real revival begins in our homes. Revival cannot exist without the preaching of the gospel. But how can we preach outside of our home something that we have not preached within our homes? How can we expect a revival without a godly witness? If our marriages don't depict Christ's love for the church. If our marriages lay dead in the gutter, how can we expect a life-giving word to come out of that? If we don't have a private prayer life in our homes, how can we produce a powerful witness outside of it?

If we do not raise up our children through their conversion and discipleship, then our revivals die with us. Children will have many teachers in their lives, but parents are the first and most influential teachers their kids will have. God wants more for our families than we could ever hope for.

In truth, most societies in all of history have placed little importance on children. Even in the days of Christ, children were hardly citizens and were not minded as much. Pharisees would ignore them. Scribes would disregard them. But Jesus... Jesus would chase after them.

You not only have been given an incredible stewardship by God as a parent to raise your child(ren) from birth, but only you can train them up in the way that they should go.

Do not be faint of heart in discipling your children, no matter how late in the race of life it may seem. Your godly impact on their lives may very well be the beginning of a revival.

Let's pray for connection, reconciliation, guidance, and revival in families in our church!

REFLECT:

- Are there spiritual conversations you're having as a family that you weren't having a few weeks, months, or years ago?
- In what ways would you like to see God move in the dynamics and life of your family?



OPEN MY EYES TO YOUR PROVISION FOR MY CHILDREN

DAY 3: Tuesday, January 11th – YOUR FAMILY HAS A STORY

Verses to Read: John 4:39 NLT

I've always been a sucker for a good story. Just the other day, I was with a well-known pastor and I asked him to tell me the story of how he planted his church. The waitress came several times and both of us would simply knowingly nod at her as he shared the details of their early life and how God had led them to the decision. There was a sparkle in his eye as he retold the adventure that God had sent them on and the victories that they had laid claim to along the way.

The Bible's oldest stories were first transmitted orally. They were family stories, the sort passed around the holiday table, one generation to the next, about how great-great-grandfather had once seen God do this and do that.

Of course, most of us as moderns have played enough games of "telephone" to develop reasonable concerns about the reliability of messages passed by word of mouth. But preliterate cultures had a knack for memorization that those of us who take for granted perennial access to all the knowledge in the universe as recalled by Google can hardly even conceive. Stories were told with rhythms and repetitions and other memory patterns built in, enabling them to be transmitted over time with an incredible level of accuracy. As centuries passed and literacy increased, editors eventually wove these ancient memories into written collections, some of which are included in the Old Testament.

These stories are therefore not the product of the hand of a single author but of generations of people who recounted again and again particular tales about God's activity that continued to impact their real lives. The stories they retold were the ones that made a difference, the ones so big, so defining and sometimes so dramatic that they could not be forgotten.

I love that. I love how each family built upon the impact and the power of how God had moved in the generations previous to them. I think God wants to do the same in each of our families today. God is writing a beautiful story through your family. His power and might in both the small and big wins lay as testimony to his goodness, a goodness that must be shared.

The Samaritan woman reminds us that one person's story matters. It impacted her own family and many others as a result. That's our prayer for you—that your story impacts your family, other families and generations to come. So what story is God writing through you?

REFLECT:

- Where and how did you first learn about Jesus? Where have you seen his mighty hand move in your life?
- What kind of a story is God writing in your family? How can it be developed and grow and touch others?



OPEN MY EYES TO YOUR PROVISION FOR MY CHILDREN

DAY 4: Wednesday, January 12th – TEACHING AND TRAINING OUR CHILDREN

Verses to Read: Deuteronomy 11:18-19

Throughout the Old Testament, God made it very clear: As parents, we are called to train the next generation to serve and love God. This was made evident in the fact that the Israelites were commanded to share the stories of all God had done for them in the past. Consider this verse:

“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. – Deuteronomy 11:18-19 (NIV)

They were told to re-read the Law so that the new generation would know exactly what was in it and why it was important to honor it. Parents were instructed to teach their children all they could about God and His love for them. The same is true today. It is up to us to make sure the next generation knows how much God loves them and desires to be in relationship with them.

We live in an interesting American culture. As a parent, I am constantly being told how to train up my children. From the moment we announced that we were pregnant, it seemed as if everyone around us wanted to tell us what to do and how to do it. There is, of course, nothing wrong with sound advice and wisdom from others. But I’ll be honest... some of the parenting debates we have going on today are downright ridiculous!

Our culture is training a generation of parents who are afraid to discipline their children. We are even nervous about teaching our children to follow God. Let kids be who they want to be. Let them choose their own path in life. Give them lots of choices when it comes to their spirituality so that they are free to be “themselves.” While I am all for allowing my daughters to be themselves, I am not okay with teaching them that there is no such thing as the absolute truth of the word of God. There are many areas of life where they are free to make their own choices. But when it comes to God and His Word, what kind of parent would I be to not teach them what I know to be true?

Now you may be thinking to yourself, “I’m not a parent” or “My kids are full grown and long gone.” But the truth is that God’s desire is for the older men and women to train up and build up the next generation in the Body of Christ. (Titus 2:1-8) The mature in Him all have a role to play in raising others up. In other words, you get to parent the next generation even if the “children” are not your biological descendants. This was God’s design from the beginning.

When we strive to train the next generation for Christ, we are fulfilling a God-given mandate to teach others about who they are in Him. Ask God for wisdom and strategy in how to train them up.

REFLECT:

- When you look back, do you feel like your parents/guardians taught you how to love God?
- What is one thing that you can put into your daily life as a tool to train up the next generation?



OPEN MY EYES TO YOUR PROVISION FOR MY CHILDREN

DAY 5: Thursday, January 13th – A ZEAL FOR GOD’S HOUSE

Verses to Read: Ephesians 6:19 NLT; Romans 12:11

Go to a college football game and you’ll be able to spot the rowdiest and craziest fans in the entire stadium. It’s always the same group of people—the student section. Someone once said, “The wave starts in the student section.” Their energy is tangible in a room. It sets the tone for the rest of the crowd.

Consider Paul’s words:

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. — Romans 12:11

Have you ever noticed that you can’t stop ants from doing their work? No matter how many times you sweep away the sand they’ve muscled through the cracks in your driveway, they won’t stop. You can do it again tomorrow, and the next day, and the next but they are consumed with a singular task each day.

Ants are vocationally fulfilled; like the birds of the air, they do not have a care in the world. God cares for them; all they care about is doing what God made them to do.

But God cares for us even more than the ants and the birds. And he equips us, like them, to give our all to do diligently what he has created us to do—to love him above all and our neighbor as ourselves. But where an ant is instinctively built to fulfill a task, humanity must be taught and trained to live with a zeal that consumes him. We must teach the generation coming up after us to love the house of God with all their hearts. We must model it and show that that same zeal is in us.

When a zeal occurs in the next generation, it will spill over into everything else around it. Parents, teachers, churches will be impacted and changed because of a student’s love for God and his house. There is something innate in all of us that loves to see students raising their hands, praising God and showing satiable hunger for His presence.

Let’s pray for an all-consuming zeal to rise up in our students as we train them up to love the Lord. When students hear the Gospel and take it to heart, there’s no stopping them. Let’s borrow the apostle Paul’s prayer from Ephesians and ask God to equip leaders in Heartland Kids and Heartland Students to not only love God, but to experience a passion to share the good news about Jesus.

REFLECT:

- What have you taught your children to be consumed by? Do you model a zeal for the Lord in your daily living?
- What kind of a story is God writing in your family? How can it be developed and grow and touch others?



OPEN MY EYES TO YOUR PROVISION FOR MY CHILDREN

DAY 6: Friday, January 14th – GOD QUALIFIES THE CALLED

Verses to Read: Psalm 78:4; Galatians 3:29

The Bible doesn't try to paint its heroes as anything but real people with real flaws. Consequently, Abraham becomes real, not despite his frailties, but because of them. Like all real people, he had weaknesses. Some of them are disappointing to look at, but they help us see the whole man. And those weaknesses help us learn how to regard our own.

One of Abraham's flaws was that he turned to deceit when his life was on the line. While he was in Egypt during the famine, he ended up lying to Pharaoh, saying that Sarah was his sister to save his own skin. Then, even after the scheme blew up in his face, he did the same thing again several years later!

Whether this ugly trait was inherited genetically or learned by example, Isaac picked it up from his father. Many years later, after Abraham had died, Isaac moved near the Philistine city of Gerar. "When the men who lived there asked Isaac about his wife, Rebekah, he said, 'She is my sister.' He was afraid to say, 'She is my wife.' He thought, 'They will kill me to get her, because she is so beautiful'" (Genesis 26:7).

Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Remember: If you refuse to share your past mistakes with your kids in a place of vulnerability, then they will be doomed to repeat them. Share with your kids and help them learn from your failures. They won't think less of you; they'll admire your authenticity. They will feel closer to you. Your humility will endear them to you, and it will give them the courage to confess their struggles to you.

And just as He did with Abraham, God can use us for His purposes in spite of our flaws. And like this great patriarch, we, too, can pass on a legacy of faith to the next generation.

REFLECT:

- What legacy would you like to leave for the next generation? How can you make your life an example of faith?



OPEN MY EYES TO YOUR DIRECTION FOR MY FUTURE

Day 7: Saturday, January 15th – STOP

Verses to Read: Acts 3:19-20; Proverbs 28:13; John 8:3-11

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Over the next 5 days, we will be focusing our devotional thoughts and prayers on direction for the future.

When you're in need of divine direction, one of the best decisions you can make is the decision to stop. Take a time-out. Pray for guidance. Sleep on it. Get some godly wisdom from people you trust and picture the possible outcomes. Then, ask yourself, "Is this something I should stop completely?"

Most of us have good intentions or at least some kind of justification for the things we do. And yet so many of us seem surprised when we find ourselves a long way from the direction we want to go. The big changes in our lives—both negative and positive—rarely happen without a series of decisions piling on top of each other like never-ending dominoes.

Do you see how stopping can be one of the most productive things we do? When you stop to take stock of where you are and where you want to go, then you can decide how to move toward your destination.

What can you stop in order to move you closer to God's divine direction? Are you doing anything that's taking you in a direction you don't want to go (or that God doesn't want you to go)? What do you need to stop completely? An addiction to social media, alcohol, porn, approval, or work? An unhealthy relationship? A judgmental attitude?

When a behavior or relationship takes us in a direction we know is moving farther away from the story we want to tell, we need to pause not only to consider the consequences but also to choose to stop traveling in the wrong direction. You've probably heard the word "repent." One of its literal meanings is to turn around. When you repent, you stop heading in one direction and return to God and His path for you.

In this sense, stopping actually means stepping in a new direction. You might need to step toward accountability, forgiveness, the right friends, or a new place to live.

REFLECT:

- If you make the choice you're considering, where could it take you?
- What can you stop in order to move closer to God's direction?