

## SUMMER DEVOTIONS WEEK #8: July 20-26, 2015

Sharon and I are getting ready to take our youngest off to college. We will be empty nesters. We will be miserably lonely. Emily has been such a gift from the Lord. I dread the day when we say our goodbyes and give our final hugs. I know they are not final in the sense we will never see her again, but they are final as we say goodbye to this stage of our life. For you younger parents out there I have just one thing to say – your day is coming. Prepare. You are going to ball your eyes out. Your soul will ache. It will be hard to breathe. The only things that will bring comfort to you is the knowledge that Lord has their back, that the Lord will watch over them, and that the Lord will make a way for them. The second thing that brings comfort to our heart is that we know we did our best to prepare Emily. We invested in her. We were the Lord's choice to be her parents and we took that seriously. We take great comfort in the fact that Emily has a good head on her shoulders. She loves the Lord and follows His ways and His precepts and His teachings. She's got books smarts to be sure, but she also has street smarts. She's young, but she's not dumb and young, which can be a lethal combination.

This week's devotions will center on some things that the Lord taught Sharon and I over the years and in turn, we taught them to each of our kids. I pray they prove beneficial and helpful in your remaining time with your children. Sharon and I were 35 when Em was born. We are now 53. 18 years went by so quickly. Like a vapor. Lighting speed. Don't waste the time. Love you all. Keep on keeping on. Endure. Persevere. Stay the course.

Pastor Mike



### **Monday, July 20, 2015• Summer Devotions Day #50**

**Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV)** *“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”*

Just as true as the law of gravity and the law of magnetism and the law of electricity – there's another law of the universe - the Law of the Harvest. **Genesis 8:22** says, *“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”*

God is saying here that as long as the earth is in existence there are going to be these laws and He gives four of them: cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night but the one I want to focus on is the first... there will always be seedtime and harvest as long as there is the earth.

What is the Law of the Harvest? **You reap what you sow.** I first heard about this biblical principle when I was 17. There was an older pastor in our congregation set to retire. We were taking a love offering for him so he and

his wife could buy their first home. Our pastor, Pastor Bill Yaeger spoke that night on this topic – the law of the harvest. I'll never forget his words – you will reap what you sow.

Then he said this, I don't know how God will bless you for giving to this offering, but the law of the harvest will be set into motion. Whatever you sow, you're going to reap. You know what Sharon and I did? We gave every penny we had in our wallet and purse and all we had in our checking account. That was 34 years ago, and in all those years, we have been so much more blessed than we could imagine. We have reaped what we have sown. The Lord has taught us to be generous and we have been to the best of our ability. You too will reap what you sow.

If you plant anger in a relationship, you're going to reap it. If you plant criticism, you're going to reap it. Whatever you give out in life, you're going to get back inevitably at some point. If you sow laziness, you're going to reap an undisciplined and unproductive life.

If you sow seeds of hard work and trustworthiness you reap respect. If you sow seeds of encouragement, you will reap the joy of seeing others overcome and achieve. This is the law of the harvest. You reap what you sow. Teach this principle to your kids. Don't let them leave home without it firmly tucked in their mind, heart and soul.



## Tuesday, July 21, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #51

**1 John 4:4 (NIV)** *“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”*

Rocky Balboa said – *“It ain't about how hard you get hit. It's about how hard you get hit and still keep moving forward.”* Solid theology. Let me share with you a life truth - God has planned for you to be an overcomer, not a victim. I hope you know the difference. A victim can have the mentality that when anything goes wrong in life - it is always someone else's fault. Further, it can be an expectation that things will go wrong, because *'bad things always happen to me'*. A victim blames others for their circumstances - when something happens, they don't take responsibility for their actions. The most effective way to overcome the victim mentality is to start taking responsibility for every action and circumstance in your life. Keep moving forward in faith.

For Sharon and I, that meant we taught our kids a key phrase – *“I take full responsibility”*. That's what leaders do – that's what winners do – that's what overcomers do. Although I cannot control my circumstances, I can always control my response. I will not be a victim. By God's grace and through His power, I will overcome.

Victor Frankl survived the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz by discovering the power of becoming an overcomer. Frankl said this *“to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances - this is the way one overcomes all evil and all opposition. And I chose life. I chose to fight. I chose to not give in or give up.”* And when you couple this truth with 1 John 4:4 – *“the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”* – holy smokes, that is powerful stuff.

So when you come up to the inevitable road-blocks that life throws at us, you have two choices. 1) You quit, turn around and go home. OR 2) you go around the road-block, you go over the road-block, you go under the road-block, you blow up the road-block. Overcomers figure it out. You are from God. You are an overcomer. Act like it.



Wednesday, July 22, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #52

Matthew 22:37 – **Love God**. Matthew 9:35-38 – **Love People**. Colossians 3:23 – **Work Hard**.  
John 8:31-32 – **Be Honest**.

This is the Pedlowe Family Creed. The picture above hangs in my office, right behind my desk. Sharon and I both sensed that our kids needed to have an identity associated with our family name. Not a preacher's kid, not a good kid, and certainly not a hell-raising kid. So just months before Kelsey was born, we started praying about the Pedlowe family identity. That morphed into the Pedlowe family creed and from there we felt the Lord leading us to these four characteristics – four character qualities.

The Creed was one of the first things we taught our kids. We had them memorize it. This is what a Pedlowe is. This is what a Pedlowe does. This will be our reputation. In one of our homes, we had a giant walnut tree in the back yard. I built benches on each of the four sides of the tree. And below each of the benches we hung a sign with one of our creed sayings. We had the **Love God** bench, the **Love People** bench, the **Work Hard** bench, and the **Be Honest** bench.

When one of our kids was struggling in one of these four areas, we gave them some bench time. I encourage you – develop a family creed. Own it. Give your kids a family identity. And then build them so they will find their identity in Jesus Christ.

Now, a \$5 Starbucks card for the first to tell me what the Latin phrases mean from the picture above.



#### **Thursday, July 23, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #53**

**Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NIV)** <sup>10</sup> *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.*

One of the key values and principles we taught our kids was to value time. None of us knows how many days we have. None of us know when our time will be up. So, you have to squeeze the life out of each day. Love hard, forgive easy. Go after every opportunity the Lord gives you. No regrets. Make hay while the sun is shining. This is how the people of the light are to live.

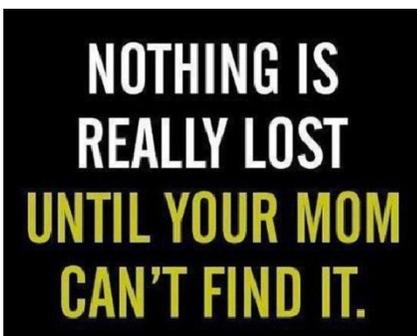
**Isaiah 1:17 (NCV)** says, *“Learn to do good. Seek justice. Punish those who hurt others. Help the orphans. Stand up for the rights of widows.”*

**Proverbs 3:27-28 (NLT)** says, *“Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it’s in your power to help them. If you can help your neighbor now, don’t say, “Come back tomorrow, and then I’ll help you.”*

**Deuteronomy 23:21 (MSG)** says, *“When you make a vow to God, your God, don’t put off keeping it; God, your God, expects you to keep it and fulfill it immediately...”*

What’s my point? Live now. Follow through now. Go for it now. In the grave, there is no more opportunity to work or plan. There is no more opportunity to obtain knowledge or wisdom. Turn off the TV. Turn off the cell phone. Turn off the computer and gadgets and gizmos. Wake up and live right now.

Take a midnight car ride. Take a hike. Take someone out to dinner. Pay for someone’s groceries or gas. You teach your kids how to live by modeling how to live. And you know what the result has been? All four of our kids live. No regrets. No woulda, shoulda or coulda. Do it. Go for it. Everyday. Now. Right now. What have you been putting off?



#### **Friday, July 24, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #54**

**Luke 15:8-10 (LB)** *“Or take another illustration: A woman has ten valuable silver coins and loses one. Won’t she light a lamp and look in every corner of the house and sweep every nook and cranny until she finds it? And then won’t she call in her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her? In the same way there is joy in the presence of the angels of God when one sinner repents.”*

In Luke 15, there are three parables that Jesus teaches us about lost things. Lost sheep. Lost coin. And lost son. Each parable teaches us that God cares deeply about the lost. Parents, we must teach our kids this truth. We must teach our kids that lost people matter to God. And here is the truth: If lost people are going to matter to your kids, they must matter to you. Your kids must see you pray for the lost, reach out to the lost, witness and share your faith with the lost.

**2 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV)** says, *“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

There’s the Lord’s heart again – He doesn’t want anyone to perish. He doesn’t want anyone to spend eternity apart from Him. We taught this to our kids. We modeled this for our kids. One of the great joys of my life has been to see how each of our kids has been burdened for the souls of their friends and how each of them has gotten bold to share Christ with their friends and how so many of their friends have received Christ and started following the Lord.

Don’t let your kids leave your home without a heart for the lost. **Acts 1:8 (NIV)** *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

## “Be fearful of mediocrity”

**Saturday, July 25, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #55**

**Colossians 3:23 (NIV)** *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”*

I had a coach in high school that would scream at us – *“Quit going through the motions”*. You know what that is – right? It’s when you don’t give your full effort. In football, it’s when you didn’t run sprints at top speed. Or when you were hitting the blocking sled, you just kind of leaned up against the sled instead of firing into it and driving your legs.

At work, going through the motions is showing up and giving less than your best effort. In our Christian faith, it is the same. Show up to church, but you’re half asleep. Groggy. Passionless. Purposeless. THIS SHOULD NOT BE.

Colossians 3:23 spells out that whatever I do – I must do it with all my heart. WHY? I’m doing it for the Lord – not anybody else. Sharon and I taught this to our kids at a very young age. Clean your rooms, taking out the garbage, dishes, clothes, - whatever you do, no half-heartedness – never ever never. Half-heartedness, luke-warmness, and mediocrity are diseases – poisons to our will and destiny. And when you see it in yourself or your kids, you have to nip it in the bud.

The world is full of no character kids – kids who have not learned this lesson. Don’t let this be your kids. Listen to what Jesus said about luke-warm faith: **Revelation 3:15-16 (NIV)** *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold--I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”* Jesus is saying, I’d rather you be hot for me or cold against me – but in between? Mediocre? Luke-warm? It makes me want to puke.

Don’t let this be you or your kids. Teach them and model for them a heart on fire for the Lord.

# 7 THINGS EVERY KID NEEDS TO HEAR

1. I Love You
2. I'm Proud of You
3. I'm Sorry
4. I Forgive You
5. I'm Listening
6. This Is Your Responsibility
7. You've Got What It Takes

## Sunday, July 26, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #56

**Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)** *“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.”*

Never let a day go by where you are not encouraging your kids to be all that God has for them to be. Life is full of storms. It's like being in a hurricane sometimes. The things that come in to it just batter us, bruise us and beat us up, you get dumped on and things don't go the way you planned. Life is very tough and we all need a place of safety, security, peace, and protection. God has planned that our homes be that place.

Proverbs 14:26 *“Reverence for the Lord gives a man deep strength; his children have a place of refuge and security.”* The home is supposed to be a place of refuge and security.

We play a lot of board games in the Pedlowe family. We like board games. On a board game, the goal of the game is to get home, back to that safe place, because when you're home, you're safe. God has planned that for our family.

There are many kinds of storms that come into our life -- emotional, physical, and relational. I want to mention three of them to you this morning.

1. Change. This world changes so quickly. From day to day, relationships change, jobs change, we change where we live, and health changes. That storm of change comes into everybody's life. Whether a change is positive or negative, studies tell us that too much of any kind is stressful. So we need a place where that stress can be taken care of. Alvin Tozier says we need "islands of security" places that are stable, predictable, where you know it's going to be the same.

2. Failure. Nobody wins all the time. Sometimes you get passed up for the promotion, you don't make the team, you bomb the test, you fail. Failure comes to everybody. And it hurts. But failure is more bearable if you're coming home to hugs, if you know that when you get home, you're going to be soothed, you're going to be encouraged from that failure.

Kelsey and her first boyfriend: When they broke up, it was awesome to see how our family rallied around her. That's what a family is to be, that place of shelter in a storm.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 *“Two are better than one. If one of them falls down the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him.”* Family is to be there in times of failure.

3. Rejection. This is probably one of the toughest storms to handle. Everybody knows what it's like to feel criticized, ostracized, pushed away, not allowed to be part of the "in crowd". We all know what that's like, most of that starts to happen to us when we are kids on the playground. Can't you still remember something that happened to you on the playground as a little kid? Kids are ruthless and the things they say to each other at that age are so mean. They pick on everything about you that's not perfect and point it out to you as if you're not aware of it.

And the thing about it is, kids don't know what's true. They hear things from other kids; they think if somebody else says something, it must be true. We need to be in our families, a refuge from that. We need to provide positive input to counterbalance all the negative input we receive in this world. The real tragedy about this is that in many homes, rather than being a place of refuge and safety and stability in a storm, many homes are the center of the storm themselves. Many homes are like being in the eye of the storm and that's not right. That's not what God has planned for our families. He warns against it in Mark 3:25. He says, "*A home filled with strife and division destroys itself.*" So the place that was supposed to be the ultimate source of acceptance sometimes becomes the ultimate source of rejection. This is not right.

So how do you build a family that can be a shelter in a storm? Four things and they all start with "H".

1. Hear. Listen to the people in your family. Don't be so quick to come up with a solution for them before the words of their feelings come out of their mouths. Hear them.

2. Hug them. Express affection. Hug, pat, cuddle, tickle. All of those things that say, "I love you."

3. Hope. Build up the people in your family with affirmation. Make sure you're giving that good input to counterbalance all the negativity that they hear outside your home.

4. Help. Make sure that you do whatever it takes to get help when your family is in a tough time. Unhealthy families ignore their problems or they say, "We can make it without help. We don't need anybody else's input. We're not talking to anybody about this. We can handle it." Or worse, they say, "What problem?" Healthy families are willing to look at themselves realistically and say, "We're having a tough time right now and we need some help."

So whatever is going on in your life, be sure you do what it takes to build into your family a shelter in the time of storm.