

One of the first signs of the church renewal movement that began in this country after World War II was the founding of The Church of the Savior by Gordon and Mary Cosby in Washington, DC.¹ Dissatisfied with the lukewarm commitment of most Christians and most churches, Gordon and Mary established The Church of the Savior with strong emphasis on integrity of membership, the ministry of the laity, communal intimacy, and mutual accountability.²

As the congregation developed, it formed a number of small mission groups of two-to-fifteen members who gathered around a shared sense of vocation or calling. These groups became the fundamental unit of community and accountability in the church, and the various groups, each following their own sense of call, gave rise to most of the ministries associated with the church.

In the early years, the church met in the Samuel M. Bryan House at 2025 Massachusetts Avenue, and I have worshiped with them there, many years ago. This desire for intimacy and accountability among members of the church is what led the community to break into smaller congregations rather than to try to grow, so over the years, those mission groups became nine free-standing congregations, and the Mother Church lives on through them. The story of The Church of the Savior became widely known through Elizabeth O'Connor's 1963 book, *Call to Commitment*, for which the Foreword was written by Elton Trueblood.

Fast forward now to 1978. Winds of change were blowing through our culture as well as through the Church. The Lay Renewal Movement was reinvigorating pockets of believers all over our land. CBF was five years old.

Quaker Elton Trueblood, one of the "inner lights" (pun intended) of the renewal movement, had written a catalytic book the previous year called *The Company of the Committed*. In 1978, Trueblood published a sequel, *The Incendiary Fellowship*.

I read all of these books nearly as quickly as they were published, because my heart, too, hungered to be a part of a fellowship that followed Jesus with radical commitment. I longed to be a part of "the Company of the Committed" and an "Incendiary Fellowship." I'm a lot older now, but those hungers persist. Some of you know what I'm talking about. Some of you are on this same Quest.



¹ Mary was the person from whom I got the four-fold test for discerning the will of God that I frequently talk about. The four tests (without commentary) are: (1) SIMPLE; (2) IMPOSSIBLE; (3) PERSISTENT; (4) NOT AN EGO-TRIP.

² James and Patricia Rouse were married at The Church of the Savior, so they had some meaningful relationship to this vision, though I don't think they were actually members. For you non-Columbians, James Rouse was the visionary who built the town of Columbia, Maryland, and this vision of a multi-religious, multi-racial town was surely born at The Church of the Savior.



As we make our way forward from Pentecost, 2014, one thousand nine hundred and eighty-one years after the Fire fell from heaven and the Spirit entered our world in an entirely new way, some of us find ourselves yearning for “fresh Wind” and “fresh Fire.”³ As CBF moves into its second forty years, like a runner longing for “a second wind,” many of us are longing for “a second Wind” that will carry us into the future with passion renewed and power rekindled for the times in which we live.

All of this brings me to AN INVITATION.

Our Lord first “set the world on fire” by spending a great deal of time with twelve men. Most of the great revivals in Christian history have begun with just a few people whose hearts were receptive to the Fire.

And so, if you’ve sensed your pulse quickening as you’ve read thus far, if your spirit is “on tiptoe,” if you’re almost holding your breath to see what comes next, then what I’m about to write is for you.

A Commitment to Radical Obedience

Lord, I will do anything that your Kingdom requires of me.
Wherever you want me to be, I’ll go.
Whatever I know to be your will, I will do.
If you want to meet a need through my life, I am your servant.
I will do whatever you ask of me.
Whatever the cost and regardless of the adjustment,
as best I know my heart,
I commit myself to follow your will today, ahead of time,
Because you are my Lord, and I will follow you.

My Signature: _____

Today’s Date: _____

But before I get to The Invitation, I ask you to read the “Commitment to Radical Obedience” that appears here. Read it carefully. Read it several times.

The Invitation is for persons who are willing to make this commitment, or who are at least willing to be willing to make this commitment. No others need apply.

The Invitation is for those who are ready to join The Company of the Committed. The Invitation is for those

who are ready to become an Incendiary Fellowship. The Invitation is for those who are ready to be ready for Fresh Wind and Fresh Fire.

The Invitation is for those who are willing to meet two to four times a month for the next year to read, discuss, and make ourselves vulnerable to the influence of the following ten books (including the expense of buying them). We’ll read them in the order in which they were written:

1. Sheldon, Charles, *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* (1896)
2. Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937)
3. Nee, Watchman, *The Normal Christian Life* (1938)
4. O’Connor, Elizabeth, *Call to Commitment: The Story of the Church of the Savior, Washington, D.C.* (1963)

³ Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God’s Spirit Invades the Hearts of His People* (Zondervan, 1997).

5. Colson, Charles, *Loving God* (1983)
6. Blackaby, Henry, *Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (1990)
7. Cymbala, Jim, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God's Spirit Invades the Hearts of His People* (1997).
8. Chan, Francis, *Crazy Love: Overwhelmed by a Relentless God* (2008)
9. Platt, David, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (2010)
10. Ripken, Nik, *The Insanity of Obedience: Walking with Jesus in Tough Places* (2014)

Where will this journey take us? I have no idea . . . but the Lord knows. That's why we make the Commitment to Radical Obedience before we start. We will hoist our sails into the Wind and let the Wind take us where He will.

If you're willing to so hoist your sails, I invite you to meet with me in the Chapel following worship on Sunday, July 6, "Freedom Sunday," and we'll begin to chart our course.

Dave

Disturb us, Lord, when we are too well pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely because we sailed too close to the shore.
Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst for the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision of the new Heaven to dim.
Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wider seas where storms will show your mastery;
Where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.
We ask You to push back the horizons of our hopes;
And to push us into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love.

Attributed to
Sir Francis Drake, 1577



The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know

O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)

Week twenty-five: THREE VERSES for YOUTH . . . AND THE REST OF US!

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Shortly after I became a follower of Christ at age seventeen, someone told me three very important verses for young believers to know. I distinctively remember immediately writing them in the flyleaf of my Bible. Over those first months of my Christian walk, only God knows how many times I referred to them until they were forever locked in the memory bank of my mind.

Over these almost five decades of Christian living, I have owned dozens of Bibles in all sizes, translations, colors, and languages. However, they all have one thing in common. These same three verses are found, written in my own hand, on the flyleaf of each one of them.

From time to time in our individual life journeys, we all come to temptation’s corner, that place where we are called to make a decision as to which way we should turn. The tempter is always standing there in the intersection seeking to entice us to make a wrong turn. The three verses highlighted in this chapter reveal three very important, even crucial, questions we should ask ourselves as we anticipate which way to turn at one of these inevitable intersections of life. Let’s look at them, learn from them, and write them in the flyleaf of our own Bibles.

CAN I THANK GOD FOR IT?

When we find ourselves at temptation’s corner, we should ask ourselves, “If I go this way, say this thing, or do this deed, then when all is said and done, can I thank God for it?” The Bible says, “*In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you*” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

We are called upon to give thanks “in everything.” If there is some attitude or action on our part for which we could not give God thanks in the aftermath, then we should avoid it at all costs. Interestingly, we are not called upon to thank God *for* everything but *in* everything.

CAN I DO IT IN JESUS’ NAME?

In Paul’s letter to those at Colossae, he admonished the believers—and us—saying, “*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*” (Colossians 3:17). We are not only to give thanks in all things, but we are to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus as well.

Can you imagine what would happen in our life if we gave serious thought to this issue? It would make a huge difference in what came out of our mouths. It would make a huge difference in what we did. It would make a huge difference in what we watched and in what we read. Can I do it in Jesus’ name? If we would ask ourselves that question when we stand at temptation’s corner, a world of things we say and do might be different. There is one other question, and it finds its roots in our verse for this chapter.

CAN I DO IT FOR GOD’S GLORY?

The Bible says, “*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31). The true believer is motivated by a desire to bring God glory in every facet of life. If we asked ourselves this important question more often, we would not do many of the things we do or say many of the things we say.

None of us is immune to temptation’s corner. In fact, all of us arrive there every single day, several times a day, in one way or another. Stop. Don’t just rush through the intersection or make a hasty wrong turn. Ask yourself three important questions:

Can I thank God for it?

Can I do it in Jesus’ name?

Can I do it for God’s glory?