

Hour of Power Deutschland
Steinerne Furt 78
86167 Augsburg

Telefon: 08 21 / 420 96 96
Telefax: 08 21 / 420 96 97

E-Mail: info@hourofpower.de
www.hourofpower.de

Baden-Württembergische Bank
BLZ: 600 501 01
Konto: 28 94 829

IBAN:
DE43600501010002894829

BIC:
SOLADEST600

Büro Schweiz:

Hour of Power Schweiz
Seestr. 11
8594 Güttingen
Tel.: 071 690 07 81
info@hourofpower-schweiz.ch
www.hourofpower-schweiz.ch

Spendenkonto:

PostFinance AG, 3030 Bern
Konto: 61-18359-6
IBAN:
CH1609000000610183596

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GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Good morning.

HS: Welcome visitors, welcome church family. Thank you so much for being here and joining us. We love you. You know, the Bible is not here as a record of history. The Bible is here as a record of example. Everything in the Bible is for us today. You are loved.

BS: We're so glad you're with us, too, whether you're here in the house or watching online or on television. We really love how the Holy Spirit can gather us all together, all around the globe, and we really kind of just are grateful you're here, and we believe that God has a good word for you today. So Lord, we come to you in Jesus' name, and many of us come bringing before you our troubles and challenges. We bring before you our victories. Most of all, we just bring before you our praise and we say Lord we thank you; we praise you, we lift up your name. Thanks for all you've done in our lives. We love you. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

HAVEN: Turn to the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

SCRIPTURE – Luke 14,7-11 – Hannah Schuller

In preparation for the message, Luke 14:7-11. When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." Amen.

INTERVIEW – Danielle Strickland (DS) mit Bobby Schuller (BS)

Danielle Strickland is a speaker, author, and worldwide justice advocate. She has spent years launching anti-trafficking initiatives and leading-global movements for spiritual leadership. Danielle has traveled the globe to help fight some of the problems facing our world today. Her new book, *The Other Side of Hope*, was inspired by some of the despair she's seen, not only in the world, but from personal experience, as well, and she shares how to find hope in a dark world.

BS: Danielle, hi. Thank you so much for joining us today.

DS: Oh it's such a joy to be with you.

BS: Well let's begin, for those who maybe haven't heard your story, can you tell us a little bit about your story and your faith journey?

DS: Absolutely. I had an encounter with Jesus when I was in a jail cell addicted to drugs, juvenile delinquent; hope wasn't part of my life at the time. And had an encounter that really awakened me to the fact that one, I wasn't alone, that God loved me and wasn't perpetually disappointed with me, as I expected. And then that kind of didn't change seeds, I just changed directions and I just began to participate really humbly with this invitation that God gave me to help and to serve and to join Him in telling other people that they weren't alone. And so that led me into the Salvation Army for 23 years. I spent years of my life on anti-trafficking stuff, trying to work with women getting out of the sex trade, as well as church planting and discipleship training and all kinds of stuff, till I'm here talking to you.

BS: Yes, great. How did you.. I mean just the origin story there, that I'm sure there's so much to unpack, but just how were you a juvenile.. so you were a teenager.

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I assume, in prison, on drugs. How did that happen? That seems like such a tragic start to your life. BS: Danielle, hi. Thank you so much for joining us today.

DS: Oh it's such a joy to be with you.

BS: Well let's begin, for those who maybe haven't heard your story, can you tell us a little bit about your story and your faith journey?

DS: Absolutely. I had an encounter with Jesus when I was in a jail cell addicted to drugs, juvenile delinquent; hope wasn't part of my life at the time. And had an encounter that really awakened me to the fact that one, I wasn't alone, that God loved me and wasn't perpetually disappointed with me, as I expected. And then that kind of didn't change seeds, I just changed directions and I just began to participate really humbly with this invitation that God gave me to help and to serve and to join Him in telling other people that they weren't alone. And so that led me into the Salvation Army for 23 years. I spent years of my life on anti-trafficking stuff, trying to work with women getting out of the sex trade, as well as church planting and discipleship training and all kinds of stuff, till I'm here talking to you.

BS: Yes, great. How did you.. I mean just the origin story there, that I'm sure there's so much to unpack, but just how were you a juvenile.. so you were a teenager, I assume, in prison, on drugs. How did that happen? That seems like such a tragic start to your life.

DS: Yes, I mean there's a lot of.. that's a lot of what I write about in the book, actually, for the first time. I've written several books, but this one I talk a lot more about what had happened in those early days: sexual abuse and just some trauma in my own life that made this pain that I had inside of my life, I was trying to escape from through drugs, through rebellion, through like fine, I'm just going to give up on all this stuff cause it's too hard to deal with.

BS: Yes. I remember talking to a young woman once who was working at a rehab clinic, and it was a ministry clinic, and she had been clean and sober for like eight years, but she said you know Bobby, this is going to sound weird, but it's hard to explain but heroin saved my life. I said what do you mean? She's like without that escape, I would have taken my own life. And so people don't understand sometimes for a lot of these young people, and in your case a kid, that there's this horrible thing in the background. That has to be one of the reasons you're so passionate about other people who are going through these types of traumas and challenges, I'm sure.

DS: Oh, absolutely. And hope is one of those things. Like hope is part of the nature of God, right. That's the source of all hope comes from God Himself, which is what makes hope so powerful is because when you see hope, even if it's from a distance, you're seeing something eternal; something that matters forever. So there's a power, there's a potency to hope. But definitely, that idea that like I was hopeless in my life, and in an encounter with God, became hopeful. And this is the same thing that can keep on happening in the world.

BS: You have a new book and I really want to encourage people to get this book. It's called The Other Side of Hope. It's actually a really creative book, too. It kind of reminds me of those adventure books back in the day, but it flips on the backside of the book and I really thought you took a creative approach beyond just what you wrote about, just even in the design of the book. But tell people a little bit about.. I think one of the core messages is sort of how your teaching or your view of hope within our faith kind of changed. Talk about that a little bit.

DS: I think that I, like many other people, confused hope with happiness, and I think we made hope sort of this eternally optimistic outlook on life. And so when things aren't good, when circumstances are difficult or where there's pain or there's brokenness or even underneath the surface of how our life looks, there's actually this deep sorrow. We think that to be sorrowful is to despair. But actually what I discovered is that it's in the truthfulness. That hope is relentlessly honest, because God is honest, and where we find hope, glimpses of God at work in our lives is usually when we get honest with other people and with us, and we lament, we sorrow, but we see God in our sorrow. We find God in those difficult places. And once you find God in the form of hope in your sorrow, that hope is. Like Paul put it like this in the gospels: I'm a prisoner of that hope. Like I can't escape that hope because now, like the psalmist said, there's no where I can go. I can go to the heights, I can go to the far side of the seas, I can make my depths in the pit of hell, and there God will be. I mean that's hope.

BS: And of course we want to be optimistic people, but what you're saying is that sometimes we almost feel, maybe in the church, that we have to deny what's actually happening, or we have to kind of pretend nothing bad is happening in our lives. And really, you're talking about there's probably a danger in sort of just shoving that emotion down, I'm sure.

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DS: Oh absolutely. And one of the chapters in the book talks about this Hercules myth that we are all addicted to this myth of ascension and we're all pretending to be better than we are. And that pretense of trying to be better than we are, again, that's the opposite of authenticity and it's the opposite of hope. And so that's where cynicism is bred in this life that tries to pretend like it's always on this upward ascension, approving, better. And really, we're not.

And so we're cynical of our own selves and then we mirror that cynicism onto other people. There's something relentlessly relieving about coming into connection with Jesus, who is doing the opposite of ascending. Literally, the gospel story is that Jesus descends and He comes down, and He then is authentically human and it gives us permission to also be authentically human.

BS: Who do you think is the person that you really hope reads this book? I know like every author you're picturing a person. What does that person look like when you wrote this book?

DS: Actually one of the people I had in mind was a woman I know who struggles to stay alive, who is contemplating, wrestling with clinical depression and trying to just will herself through every single day. And some of the conversations I've had with her over that journey were really.. I was conscious of as I wrote this book.

BS: Well Danielle Strickland, thank you so much. This is a powerful, powerful book. If you know someone that just needs some encouragement, that maybe is going through a tough time. A lot of times we face health challenges, things with our kids. We go through these times when we think God, where are you? This is a book that I think will give you a lot of strength and a lot of hope to get through. It's called *The Other Side of Hope* by Danielle Strickland. Thank you, Danielle, so much for being with us today.

DS: Thank you. God bless you guys.

BS: Appreciate you.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Well whoever you are, would you stand with us? We're going to say this creed together, as we do every week. Hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving from the Lord. Let's say this together: I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. Its who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with my neighbor. Thanks.

MESSAGE – Bobby Schuller – Invest in God and People. It Pays Dividends

The title of my message today is Invest in God, invest in People. It pays out dividends. Now I love sermon titles that annoy religious people. It's no lie. I'm a religious person, in a way, but I hope this brings up question marks. Invest in God, invest in people, it pays out dividends. There's something in life that Jesus teaches us that is good advice whether you're a person of faith or not. He tells us that those who are humble will be exalted, and those who exalt themselves will be humbled. There is a principle in the world that you can study simply by observing the way people and everyone else, that people who humble themselves are exalted, both in this life and in the next. Today I want to talk about the importance of becoming as much as you can an unoffendable person; about getting freedom from comparing yourself to other people, from getting stuck in these sewing circles where everybody talks about all the great things they're doing, from crippling yourself financially by owning things to impress other people, rather than just wanting it for yourself. And the many, many, many traps that come when we are always exalting ourselves before people because of something that's going on much deeper. And how even when we do impress those people, that need that is inside of us, it's not really met. That very often a truly successful life, whether you're talking about things as worldly as business or academia, or you're talking about the spiritual life, real success comes when we humble ourselves, when we come to life with an empty cup, not a full cup. When we come with open hands, not closed fists; when we come to find a need and fill it, rather than come to everyone to make them meet our needs or to recognize our things. And most importantly, in life, the old saying, what goes around comes around is true. It is true. If you are feeling blue, and you need some encouragement; encourage other people and you'll start to feel it. I literally feel it. When I look at someone and I say thank you for what you do, and I mean it, or encourage someone because they're doing something great for me, I feel like a tingle up my spine. Do you get that, too? You get weirdly lifted up when you lift others up. And as you do that, you begin to store up for yourself a gigantic bank of goodwill in the kingdom of the heavens that will pay out in dividends in your life. This is what Jesus teaches us, by the way.

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It's an important part of Jesus ministry is teaching us the economics of heaven. In the world we have economics, we have dollars and cents in businesses and things, but the kingdom of the heavens has its own economic system, a system in which we can invest, a system from which we can withdraw, a system that many of us have racked up huge debts that we feel like we cannot pay. Anybody feel indebted sometimes spiritually? So Jesus teaches us, He says store up for yourselves treasures that are in the heavens where moth and rust can't destroy, and thieves cannot steal. Look, many of us who grew up in church or in Sunday school, when we think about treasure in heaven, we don't think about it as treasures in the heavens, and this is a translation mistake in the Bible in English. In other translations, they don't typically do this, but in English it usually says heaven, but in Greek it actually says "the heavens." That's because in Jesus' day, the word "heaven" didn't just mean the place you go to when you die, if you trust in Christ, right? It didn't just mean heaven, the pearly gates. Heaven could also mean outer space – the stars and the planets and all this stuff. And heaven can literally mean the air around you. So in those days, in Aramaic, you could say yes, a bird flew from that tree through heaven to that tree, because heaven was like the air around you. So to store treasure in the heavens, didn't necessarily mean just heaven when I die, it meant that it's like treasure in the air. Does that make.. like spiritual treasures. A treasure that's somehow around you. Well what kind of treasure can that be? That doesn't make any sense. I'll explain it to you here in a moment, but I want to convince you today it's the best kind of treasure you can have in this world. It's the best treasure. Many of us who grew up in Sunday school, we saw treasure in heaven, we pictured Scrooge McDuck jumping from a diving board into a pool full of gold coins. Anybody watch Duck Tails? Probably not. So we think like okay, someone who barely gets into heaven, let's say your brother-in-law, you're like he'll probably get to heaven, I'm think. He kind of drinks a little too much and spends his weekends watching football, but I guess he's a decent man, but not a good man, but not a bad guy. This'll probably be his treasure. It'll be like here's your treasure. It's a little.. some pennies. Here's some pennies, and that's his treasure, but he got into heaven, so he's good. And then you think of like a living saint. If I think of a living saint in my life, Hannah's mom Martine is one of the most awesome believers, just gives everything away and prays for people all the time. There's a lot of people in this church that are that way. Maybe you think of like Mr. Rogers who was also a Presbyterian minister. Or I know a lot of you are thinking Tim McCalmont. When Pastor Tim McCalmont gets to heaven, this is what his treasure's going to look like - heck yes! That's it. So we have this.. they agree, Tim! That's good. You must have left a good impression. So that someone like Tim gets this, and someone like your brother-in-law gets the pennies, but everybody kind of that trusts in God goes to heaven. I don't think, I don't think that's what this means. Although, if it is, you're going to get it, my friend. You're going to get the pearls; you're going to get everything. No, I think treasures in the heavens, what Jesus is teaching us, is Jewish wisdom that there is this intangible thing in the air that we can draw from in life if earlier we invested our treasure there. It's not gold when I get to heaven. There was an old joke about.. I'm going to get this wrong, but it was something like a wealthy man goes to the pearly gates, and there's St. Peter, and he's standing before St. Peter with a bag of gold, and he's arguing with him. He says let me in, I want to bring in my bag of gold. And Peter says you can't bring a bag of gold into heaven. You got to leave it. And he said I want to bring it with me. And finally he just lets the man through. And St. Andrew leans over to St. Peter and he says why did he want to bring in a bag of pavement? Because the streets are paved with gold? Any joke you got to explain is a bad joke. I tried it in the first service and I thought they were just tired. I learned it's a bad joke. No, it's not that. If you hear anything I say, hear this: store up treasure in heaven, it's not gold when you die, its stuff like favor. God's favor in your life. Opening doors no one can shut. Shutting doors no one can open. Its favor with your neighbor. Favor with your city. Its people saying she is, he is a trustworthy person. Work with him, don't work with him. Work with her, don't work with her. It is wisdom. Wisdom is a heavenly treasure that once you have it, no one can steal it from you. No one can take it from you. And by the way, if you share it, it only grows. Or joy. Joy, from the Holy Spirit is a heavenly treasure that no one can take from you. Good will from doing what is right, always from doing the next right thing. Good will in your business with your boss or your employees or your neighbors or your family. That is a heavenly treasure that no one can take from you. And it pays out, my friends, in dividends. You can lose all the money in the world, but if you have that stuff, you've got something better. Something much, much better. And by the way, can we just say that in the same way that some people have treasure in heaven, many, many people have racked up, can we call it heavenly debts? Heavenly debts.

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That you have borrowed from good will and you are behind on your promises. When people see you, they know you cannot work with him, you cannot trust him. Heavenly debts are folly – making the same foolish mistake over and over and over, and treating people poorly, and putting people down, and not putting first things first like your kids and your family and your values. When you've put those things to the side and you fall into the worldly way of life, the fruits of heavenly debt are things like boredom! Are things like having all the money in the world, but being completely empty. Like having means but no meaning. It's not a life of fullness and richness like one that has stored up treasure in heaven, but rather it's a life of lack, even when you have everything in the world. It's a life in which people think of you with indifference, at best, and distrust at worst. We all know people who have racked up debts in the kingdom of the heavens, and we all know people that have treasure in heaven. It's a kind of treasure you can withdraw from today. I wish people would just do what I say. This is good advice, my friend. If you do this, I promise you, your life will be better. So in life, it is so important that we stop trying to impress the world with worldly treasure, but we try to impress the Lord with heavenly treasure. And that we store up for ourself a kind of thing that does not rust and destroy. And this is what Jesus teaches us. It begins with the value of a heart that's like an empty cup, one that's ready to learn, to receive, to hear from others. It's not from a heart that is arrogant, prideful, embittered and easily offendable. It's from a heart that is humble. That is humble. That says Lord, forgive me of my sins because I've forgiven everybody else of their sins, too. That's the Lord's Prayer. Jesus teaches the disciples to be humble because it's the best way to live life. Now this was less common in His day. Rome was all about glory. Little Julius Caesar, who grew up in an aristocratic family in Rome when he was a little boy, was held firmly on the shoulders by his father, who was brought into what's called I think a death room, and pointed out all of the wax faces that were placed on the great heroes of his family when they died. They were death masks. And the father would look at the son and say he did this, he did that, he did this, what will you do in your life? Rome was all about glory at any cost. Way more about glory than it was about wealth. And in fact there was an old saying that a Roman dies twice. The first time he dies is when he breathes his last, the second time is the last time someone says his name. So may you live a life which nobody ever says your name for the last time. And here we are talking about Julius Caesar. It's always bothered me, in a way, that Christians have been sympathetic to the Roman Empire, especially cats like Julius Caesar who was not much better than Genghis Khan and Hitler. I mean Julius Caesar, among other travesties, went to Gaul, which is modern day France, and murdered, I think it was almost two million Gaul's, including women and children by hand, with swords. Stabbed kids. And then came back to Rome with thousands of slaves in a hall behind him, many of them kids, and everybody celebrated him and he famously said 'veni, vidi vici. I came, I saw, I conquered.' Everybody goes wow, wow! That's cool! That is cool! No! Julius Caesar is under God's wrath. Julius Caesar raked up for himself a lot of debt in heaven. And I don't know of.. I'm not here to judge a character in history, as much to say that it was into that world that Jesus said in this world, everybody exercises authority and everybody is all about glory. No! But if you want to live in the kingdom of God, you have to serve. You have to become humble. Those who are the least of these will be the greatest in God's kingdom. And that's why Jesus famously dressed up like a slave. The lowest position in Rome. Embarrassing, humiliating, dressed up like a slave and washed the feet of His students. Wouldn't that be weird if your famous professor dressed up like a slave and started washing all of the students feet? Was even weirder in Jesus' day. He was a weird a guy. He is a weird guy, Jesus. He does stuff we're not used to. Challenges the way we see things. But all that He teaches us is good advice for a good life. There's a story that says that Jesus is sitting at a table of a prominent pharisee. So a pharisee is a good thing in those days. It's like a famous pastor. It'd be like Jesus is invited to our version of Billy Graham, and Billy Graham is there, and there's all these famous religious leaders and thinkers and people who own charities and things, and it's probably to honor Jesus Himself, this now famous prophet and rabbi. And as He's sitting there quietly watching these men gather around the table, they're all sort of gently but efficiently jockeying for positions of honor at the table. Everybody wants to sit a little closer to Billy Graham. And the closer they are to him; people go oh what does he do? Oh what's he from over there? We all know this, don't we, and Jesus looks at them and He says in this scripture, Luke 14, "when he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable. When someone invites you to a wedding feast, don't take the position of honor. For a person more distinguished than you might be invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, give this person your seat."

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“Then, humiliated, you’ll have to take the last important place.” Has this ever happened to you before? Something like this? Maybe not. It’s happened to me like at least six times in my life, something like this. And it’s a terrible experience. “But when you’re invited, take the lowest place so that when your host comes, he will say to you friend, move up to a better place. Then you’ll be honored in the presence of all the other guests for all of those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. We all do this, don’t we. When we’re in a group of our peers. There’s this weird way that some of us we experience, maybe you’re in the academic world and all the professors are around, and they’re talking about the papers they all published, or maybe you’re with other moms or parents, and they’re talking about all the amazing things their kids are doing, or the new house they got, or maybe you’re with your colleagues, other business owners, or other attorneys, or other doctors, or whatever it is, and they’re talking about the accolades, and you feel yourself drawn into it wanting to say what you’ve done, and brag about the things that you have. And it feels gross, doesn’t it. There’s a weird gross something to it all that is not good. That we don’t even want in our life. See when we’re humble, we just let go of that stuff. Can we decide today let’s just let go of all of that. Let’s let go of ego, of trying to prove things to my peers. You don’t have to prove anything to your peers or your parents. Just let it go. Be free. Oh man, wouldn’t it be free if instead of always being proud and easily offendable and living with this sort of brittle state of mind where you can be easily tilted, we were much stronger and just relaxed in life. That instead of being like Marty McFly and someone calls you a chicken, and all you have to do whatever they say, were just able to just let it go. Man, if you can do that, you will get such a power and blessing from God and from your neighbor. Being humble is honestly, it’s a super power that’s being lost today. There’s false humility all over the place, but to be really humble, to be someone that really has trained yourself to stop caring about all of that stuff, and just become the kind of person that encourages other people, that can rejoice with people when they rejoice. That when you’re not invited to something and everybody else is, you’re able to just let it go, that hurts, doesn’t it, when something like that happens. To be just smarter and more relaxed and unoffendable, can I make you a promise today: your life will be better and you’ll be more successful in general, if you’re not trapped by the opinions of other people. If instead we just learn to sort of let it go. Look, there’s a part of all of our lives where all of us have done things that we regret and we’ve had sin in our lives, and things that we should be ashamed of, and God forgave us of all of that. There’s no reason now that we should become egotistical. We just can love people today. Amen? So let’s love people! This is the life hack, that what goes around actually comes around. If you invest in people, it’s going to come around to you. If you lift people up, you will immediately feel lifted up and be putting out into the world around you, good will. If you are feeling blue and unmotivated, try to motivate someone and you’ll feel like kind of revved up and motivated and ready to go. If you’re feeling guilty about life, guilty about something, start forgiving other people who have hurt you, and you’re going to start to feel mercy from heaven and from God. Encouragement is a real spiritual gift that we’re instructed to practice in the book of Romans. The word encouragement means to give someone heart – en coeur. Coeur is a French word for the heart, and when you encourage someone, you give somebody who’s out of steam, who’s not ready to go another day, you give them a lift. You give them a little push. In Greek, the word for this spiritual gift is paraklesis. It means to call to one side. It means that when someone is feeling beaten up or down or discouraged, you come alongside them, you put your arm around them and you say you’ve got a friend in me. I’m going to be by your side. You can do this. We can do this together. Friend, let me tell you, you do that, you put your arm around someone, and you convince them that it’s not over yet, you convince yourself it’s not over yet. You convince them they’re forgiven; you convince yourself you’re forgiven. You convince them that God loves them, that the best days are ahead for them, you’ll convince yourself! Even now as I’m saying this, I’m feeling encouraged! It’s like a principle in life you encourage people, it makes all the difference in the world. Words are so.. they’re so important, and one of the biggest mistakes we make in life is thinking my words aren’t that big of a deal. It takes one random guy or gal at Starbucks that you’ve never met in your life, and you will never see again, that will say something incredibly offensive to you, and you will think about them (many of you, me too) the rest of the day. You’ll driving down and you’re listening to a book on tape, you didn’t hear anything that was said. You’re talking to someone on the phone, you didn’t hear anything they said on the phone. You’re thinking about this random person you’ll never see again from Starbucks. You crawl into bed, you’re ready to go to bed, all of a sudden you think about the thing again. Maybe you talk to your husband or wife about it. Got you all riled up. You’re thinking about all the great comebacks. I could have said this. I could have said that.

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I would pay \$100 literally to go back in time and say this great line I just thought of. I need to remember this so if it happens again, I'm locked and loaded. So think about that, just for a moment, truly, or somebody on the road that gives you the bird, think about this for a moment. Think about how much power one stupid sentence from one stupid person said to you. Think about how that affected your whole day. How you acted at work. How you treated your kids. How you drove your car. How you performed at your job. And that was a stranger you didn't even care about. What happens with the words you say to people that actually love you. What about the good things you haven't said that some people desperately want to hear from you, or hear from you again. I cannot tell you how many grown men and women in their 40's, 50's and 60's who are parents and grandparents of their own have said to me, pastor Bobby, my dad never told me once that he loved me. My dad never said ever that I was beautiful. My dad never said, ever, not once that he was proud of me. And you know what they always say after that? But I know he was. I know he was. I know he was. It's not in his personality, but I know he does. They always say that, and I always say this back to them – what if he did tell you you were beautiful? What if he did tell you he was proud of you? What if he did tell you I love you? They almost tear up right then and there. They can't imagine such a thing. It would mean the world to them. Can I say to you, those of you who are parents? If you haven't told your kids you love them, will you tell them? If you haven't told your daughter that she's beautiful, will you tell her, if you think so, I hope you do. If you haven't told your daughter or your son you're proud of them, that you're on their side, that maybe you're a little critical but you're proud of them. Would you tell them? Don't make it true that oh he would never do that. Would you tell them before you die? Would you give them that gift? Some of you are in your mind right now, you're like I'm just not going to do that. I'm sorry, I just can't do that. I'm not going to do that. If you can't say it, could you at least write it down in a card and give it to them? If you do, I promise they will hang onto that card the rest of their lives. Why wouldn't you give away such a tremendous gift when it cost you nothing. What a gift it would be. And what a gift it is to your neighbor when you encourage them. What a gift it is to your friends to tell them I'm so glad to see you. I missed you. To tell your wife or your husband I'm so glad I'm married to you. I'm so grateful I get to do life with you. To tell your grandkids I'm so proud of you. I'm so happy to have you in my life. Even when you say those things again, you feel your own life lift up. And that's not why we do it, but there are just so many benefits. There are so few things in this world that have such a great personal benefit at such little cost. Why wouldn't we do it? When you lift other people up, you lift yourself up. When you lift other people up, you'll be lifted up. And don't forget to bless the Lord. Isn't that interesting that we bless the Lord? I was talking to a friend of mine and I said in a prayer or something, Lord we bless you, or we bless you, and he goes you don't bless the Lord. The Lord blesses you. And I said no, it's a two-way street. The Lord blesses you, and you bless the Lord. He goes no, only the Lord can bless. You don't bless the Lord. That's not right. And then I finally look at him, I go bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. There's like a hundred scriptures that say bless the Lord. And there are other scriptures, as well, that say worship the Lord, praise the Lord, thank the Lord, but there's also these ones that say bless the Lord. Well what does that mean to bless the Lord? What does that even mean? What does it mean to bless the Lord? Well let me ask you, those of you who are parents. Or maybe those of you who are teachers. Have your students ever blessed you before? Have your kids or grandkids ever blessed you before? You ever had a friend that blessed you in that way? There's something about children blessing adults. The word bless also has to do with happiness. That it makes you, asher in Hebrew. Its barrack. But asher, that you're happy, you feel lifted up. Isn't that interesting that when you praise God, you bring joy to His heart. What a great thing. So I just want to encourage you to do that. Man, the biggest lie that the enemy would want to tell you is that your words don't have incredible power. Power to move mountains into the ocean. I mean really. To change lives. With just words, you can change lives. That's why, yes, it's amazing. And so today, my friend, lift someone up today. Would you lift someone up today? Today, bless the Lord before you go to bed and bless Him when you rise. Would you do that? Would you just try it and see how much better your life becomes. When you use your words to impact the lives of your neighbor, and to bless people, it'll come around. It'll make all the difference in the world. Lord, we bless your name, and we thank you for life. Thank you that we get to be here in your presence. We are so grateful. Forgive us of the times when we've been so offendable and arrogant and we just ask God that you'd forgive us in Jesus' name, and help us to be more like Christ. It's the best way to live life. And Lord, I pray for my friends here, and I'm just thankful for them. I pray that you'd bless their families, and bless all their work.

Invest in God and People. It Pays Dividends

I pray that you'd open doors this week for them, as they're facing trials and challenges in their family life. Health problems. Lord, let this be a week of victory. I just proclaim that over you. This will be a week of victory in your life. And make sure you give God the praise when it happens. It's His work. And Lord it's in your name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you His peace, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.