

VOICES OF HOPE



DR. LASHARND A BECKWITH

MISSION

Ignited by faith, we live out God's love by embracing, equipping and empowering vulnerable people in Southern California

VISION

Sharing the love of Christ, we are a community to care and be cared for...

Where the vulnerable are safer and stronger

Where the dependent are self-sustaining

Where the isolated dwell in community

Where the weary will be given hope

VALUES

*Compassion / Advocacy
Collaboration / Respect
Innovation / Stewardship*

Happy Friday blessings!

I hope you enjoyed the week. As this week comes to a close, I am always thrilled to say something to you that I hope will inspire and encourage you to keep moving forward. As I thought about what to say to you today, my mind went to the word "success."

Success is defined as *"the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. It is a favorable outcome that may be in the form of the attainment of wealth, favor, or eminence."* Okay, but then I asked myself, what does success look like for the Believer? Are they the same? Indeed, there is nothing wrong with wanting wealth, favor, or eminence. There is nothing wrong with setting goals and putting your all into achieving them. There is nothing wrong with those ideals. There is also nothing wrong with being content with where you are and what you have.

As a young girl, I always dreamt of the day that I would travel the world. I imagined being an independent woman, with furs, jewelry, nice cars, and multiple houses. I also dreamt of being a businesswoman. I did not grow up with these things, but I imagined them. As I grew older, it was made clear to me on many occasions that I was not equipped to run in the same crowds as those I aspired to emulate. Until one day, a woman coach entered my life in high school. At that point in my life, I had only been around church people who were not white-collar professionals. She was the epitome of what I wanted to be. For some reason, she took notice of me too. Maybe she felt sorry for the girl with the long dresses and awkward look, not that popular, but still wanted to be somebody. Ms. Hollingshead took notice of little obscure me. She let me do small tasks around her office, and I began developing confidence in myself. So much so that I tried out for different clubs and teams. It's too much to tell in this email today (you can read it in my book, *"When You're Happy with You."* To make a long story short, I began to think I could be like her because of her.

Many days after leaving Ms. Hollingshead behind, many tried to remind me where I had come from and that I did not have what it took to be in their space. The good news is, I had begun to believe that I did belong there. I also want to clarify something here. I ALWAYS had grandparents who thought that I could do and be anything I wanted to be; they supported me, but they were not equipped to show me how. They did do this: When I wanted to go to college, they made a way (I was the first one in the family, and many since me have gone to college and finished). They prayed for me, and they believed in me. If I claimed a goal, they echoed my chances of achieving it. Along the way, I had to act, continue to develop, pursue, learn from mistakes, grow, have faith in myself, and most of all, I had to learn and build GRIT.

I will give you one more definition today, GRIT. *"Grit is passion and perseverance for long-term and meaningful goals."* What does that mean? It means if you want to succeed, set your path, keep your eyes on the goal, don't let white noise distract you, and keep at it. Angela Duckworth said, *"GRIT isn't talent, it isn't luck, and it isn't how intensely, for the moment, you want something. Instead, GRIT is about having a goal you care about so much that it organizes and gives meaning to almost everything you do. It is holding steadfast to that goal, even when you fall down or mess up."*

I will add, GRIT is sticking it out even when things aren't going your way. Proverbs 4:25-26 says,

*"Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.
Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure."*

Blessings,

Dr. LaSharnda Beckwith
President & Chief Executive Officer