

Why You Can Expect Significant Breakthroughs in 2018

The National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB) released its December Small Business Optimism Index to close out last year. The average monthly small business optimism index set an all-time high for 2017. According to Juanita Duggan, NFIB president and CEO, "2017 was the most remarkable year in the 45-year history of the NFIB Optimism Index." The monthly average of 104.8 beat the previous record of 104.6 established in 2004. The index jumped sharply higher the day after the 2016 election and remained high throughout 2017. The December optimism index fell to a still very strong 104.9 from November's near-record 107.9.

According to the NFIB December Jobs Report, surging small business confidence is translating into concerns about finding enough qualified workers. According to Duggan, "small business owners are converting their optimism into action and a majority of small business owners cannot find enough workers to meet higher customer demand." Wages are expected to increase as a result.

In December, a record high 54 percent of small business owners reported they could find no more than a few qualified workers (a one-point increase from November). Twenty-three percent of small business firms planned to increase compensation for its employees—the second highest percentage increase in history. Continued strength in the economy with related optimism, will require small businesses to increase compensation to compete in a tight labor market.

The NFIB has high expectations for U. S. small businesses in 2018. In reporting the optimism index Duggan said, "With a

massive tax cut this year, accompanied by significant regulatory relief, we expect very strong growth, millions more jobs and higher pay for Americans.”

In the kingdom, biblical expectations are critical for accessing the resources of heaven to accomplish the Lord’s calling for your life. Although necessary, expectations are not, in and of themselves, sufficient. Kingdom citizens who are fulfilling their purpose have accepted the lordship of their King. They have committed their resources (time, talent, monies and goals) to the King and in exchange receive heavenly resources for the benefit of the King’s purposes. This type of kingdom citizen is not in rebellion—their loyalty is not divided and they are not of this world. Citizens who will accomplish a significant heavenly purpose are good stewards. They will use the Lord’s resources wisely and will make effective use of their time and talents. Fruitful citizens will also have biblical expectations.

As sons and daughters of the King, we need to recognize that His word is inviolate. His word declares that if we want to have our prayers answered, we have to believe. When the believer approaches God in prayer, the size of the problem or challenge does not matter. Our God is omnipotent. He is all-powerful and, as such, all things are possible to one that believes.

“And whatever you ask in prayer, if you believe, you will receive” (Matt. 21:22).

“Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you will receive them, and you will have them” (Mark 11:24).

“Jesus said, ‘If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes’” (Mark 9:23).

Belief and expectation are the fruit of faith. Without faith, we cannot please God. We have to believe that He exists and

that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. Without faith, there is no substance to the things we hope for, and there is no evidence for things we don't see. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith. We obtain faith by hearing His *logos* and *rhema* word.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

"Let us look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:2).

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

The supernatural is required to fulfill the Lord's purposes for our lives. If we can imagine fulfilling His purpose in our own strength, we have not received a full revelation of our purpose. The Lord is sovereign and He can do anything He wants regardless of any situation. But the Lord suggested that faith is necessary for miracles. Jesus did not do many miracles in Nazareth because of a lack of faith. Jesus healed the woman with the flow of blood because of her faith.

"He could not do any miracles there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them" (Mark 6:5).

"But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her, He said, 'Daughter, be of good comfort. Your faith has made you well.' And the woman was made well instantly'" (Matt. 9:22).

We also need the power of the Holy Spirit for the supernatural. The Spirit is the representative of the Trinity

on the earth today. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father and lives in us by the Holy Spirit. His infallible word was inspired by the Holy Spirit. Our inspiration comes via revelation of His word by the Holy Spirit, direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit or through others by the Holy Spirit. We receive power from on high with the gifts and fruit of the Spirit.

What are we expecting in 2018? The level of our expectation is an indicator of our faith, our relationship with the Lord, and the power of the Holy Spirit operating through us. God loves us and wants good things for us. More importantly, He wants us to accomplish significant things for the kingdom in 2018. Let us exchange our human expectations for the heavenly kind. Let our actions correspond to heaven's expectations.

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