

BEYOND LIMITS · STORY + REFLECTION

Don't Allow Fear To Stop You.

Bruce Horstman · August 28, 2026

One woman refused to let her limitations become her identity. Her legacy began with one question—and one courageous request.

THE STORY

I recently listened to a message by preacher and attorney Dr. David Gibbs. When he was eight, his mother was stricken with polio. She spent some years in an iron lung and was confined to a wheelchair for the remainder of her life. Still, she desired to be of use for the Kingdom. One day, a preacher stopped by, and David's mother asked how she could be of service. This preacher was planting a church, and after he prayed, he offered her the opportunity to teach a Sunday School class.

With only a few students, Mrs. Gibbs taught each Sunday, but she had a bigger vision. She wanted an extensive bus ministry to bring children to hear the Gospel. With David in tow, she visited a large bus business on a cold, snowy day. As they struggled toward the door, David dropped his mother, who screamed with searing pain. After lying on the cold ground for thirty minutes, David took his mother into the building.

Mrs. Gibbs asked the desk clerk whether the company could donate a bus and driver for church ministry. The clerk summoned the president of the company. As he listened to her request, he immediately said, 'No' as a final word. She asked if he was the owner, and when he replied that he was not, she asked to speak to the one who could grant her request.

The owner refused, but from his office window he had seen her fall, which caused him to ponder what to do with this determined woman. Mrs. Gibbs persisted until he granted one bus and one driver. She asked for another bus because both the north and south sides of town needed to be served. The owner granted her two drivers and two buses. David said, 'Mom, you got buses. How did you do that?' She replied, 'I asked.'

The account becomes even more astounding. Over time, the bus company kept volunteering buses and drivers until five thousand children were bused in for Sunday School. Mrs. Gibbs did not stop there; she witnessed to many drivers and won them to the Lord. It was estimated that more than two hundred missionaries and more than one hundred preachers were called from this Sunday School program—all because Mrs. Gibbs asked.

WHAT HER COURAGE REVEALS

This story hits me right between the eyes.

Not because of the buses.

Not because of the numbers.

Not even because of the incredible impact.

It is because Mrs. Gibbs could have spent the rest of her life explaining why she could not.

She had every legitimate excuse imaginable: polio, pain, a wheelchair, limited mobility, dependence on others, and physical suffering most of us cannot comprehend.

Yet her question was not:

‘Why did God allow this?’

Her question was:

‘How can I still be useful?’

That is a Kingdom question.

What really jumps out at me is that she did not start with five thousand kids. She started with one conversation. One request. One uncomfortable ask. One bus. Then another. Then another.

Eventually, thousands of children heard the Gospel because one woman refused to let her limitations become her identity.

You know what this reminds me of? Joshua’s stones.

Nobody standing at the Jordan River stacking rocks imagined generations of children would ask, ‘What do these stones mean?’ Mrs. Gibbs was stacking stones:

*One bus.
One child.
One Sunday.
One prayer.
One conversation.*

Years later, missionaries and pastors were walking around because of decisions she made while sitting in a wheelchair. That is legacy.

WHAT CAN I ASK FOR NEXT?

Mrs. Gibbs teaches a powerful lesson.

Sometimes the question is not, 'What opportunity did I lose?'

Sometimes the question is, 'What can I ask for next?'

The Kingdom often moves at the speed of an invitation.

Mrs. Gibbs asked.

The bus owner said no.

She asked again.

And history changed.

That is a pretty good reminder for those of us trying to figure out what comes next. Maybe the next chapter does not start with having all the answers. Maybe it starts with asking.

As Ephesians 3:20 reminds us, God often does 'immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.' The striking thing is, He still tells us to ask.

And Mrs. Gibbs did. The rest became part of her legacy.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

What limitation have you allowed to become part of your identity?

What useful, courageous, or uncomfortable request might open the next door?

What is one 'stone' you can place today for someone else to discover later?

Fear does not get to write the final sentence.

Retold and reflected upon by Bruce Horstman from a message by Dr. David Gibbs.