

# HORIZONS UNLIMITED

*Pastor Sarah W. Utterbach*  
REDEEMING LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER

Insights For  
Each Day

June • July • August 2006

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# HORIZONS UNLIMITED

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## Insights For Each Day

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A ministry of  
Sarah W. Utterbach



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For future editions of *Horizons Unlimited*, please write  
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All scripture references are taken from *The King James Version*, unless otherwise noted.



**T**he passages in this devotional are drawn from words the Lord has spoken to me in my daily fellowship with Him. I know they are divinely inspired because of what Jesus said in John 10:27: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

More than 20 years ago, I was prompted by this verse to begin to train myself to be able to distinguish the voice of the Lord from all other voices. Since Jesus said that as one of His sheep, I would hear His voice, then I began to expect to hear Him. When He said, "I know them," I concluded that those who know me speak to me. And, the better we know each other, the more often we talk. So I decided to cultivate such togetherness with the Lord by beginning each day with Him, before the clamor of the day had a chance to begin.

Jesus stated that His sheep "follow" Him. To know Him became more than a mere suggestion—it became my desire, resulting in a way of life. I no longer want to walk any other way with anyone else. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life I pursue.

As you begin this devotional, wherever you may start to read, make Jesus your way, make Him your truth, and make Him your life.

*Precious Father, please take these words and seal them in the hearts of each reader desiring to have You reveal Yourself to them. May You, precious Holy Spirit, take each entry and expand it and increase it in the hearts of the hungry ones.*

*I sow this book into the lives of millions to be encouraged long after I am gone, for them to experience You in a very personal way, on a daily basis.*

*My desired harvest is that lives will be changed, souls will be saved, and that every victim will become victorious.*

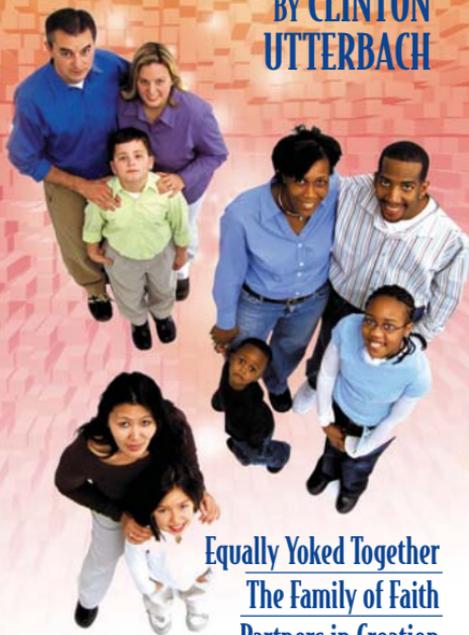
*Give them this day as their daily bread Your words, which will make them free. Feed them, dear Lord, as You did me, a daily supply so that they will return for a new daily requirement to keep us both sustained and maintained for Your glory, in Jesus' Name.*

His Joint Heir,  
Sarah W. Utterbach

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GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE**

Take the Palisades Parkway North to Exit 8W to Route 59 West. Continue on Route 59 through 6 traffic lights. Make a left turn at the 7th traffic light just after the train trestle into RLCC's driveway.

**FROM TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY**

Continue on the New York Thruway North to Exit 14 Spring Valley. Make a left at traffic light. Travel 4 traffic lights and make a right turn into RLCC's driveway just before the train trestle.

**FROM NEW JERSEY**

Take the Garden State Parkway North to New York Thruway South (sign will read 47 South 287 East & Tappan Zee Bridge) to Exit 14 Spring Valley. • Please ignore the NANUET ONLY exit sign. • Make a left at traffic light. Travel two traffic lights and make a right into the RLCC driveway just before the train trestle.

**FROM UPSTATE NEW YORK**

Take the New York State Thruway South to Exit 14 (Spring Valley). Make a left at traffic light. Travel two traffic lights and make a right turn into the RLCC driveway just before the train trestle.

**BUS INFORMATION**

The Red & Tan Bus Line (Coach USA) serves Nanuet from the 41st Street Terminal and George Washington Bridge in New York City and from various points in New Jersey. For more information, call New York Port Authority Bus Information at (212) 564-8484 and request information for buses stopping at the Nanuet Mall. RLCC is located next to the Nanuet Mall.

**TRAIN INFORMATION**

There is no weekend train service to Nanuet. During the week there is commuter train service only, which travels from Nanuet in the morning and to Nanuet in the afternoon. For more information, call (201) 762-5100.

# Schedule of Services

If you are ever in the area of Redeeming Love Christian Center, we invite you to attend our regularly scheduled services.

**SUNDAY**

Sunday Church School . . . . .9:00 a.m.  
Worship Service . . . . .10:30 a.m.  
Communion  
(1st Sunday of  
each month) . . . . .10:30 a.m.  
Baptismal Service  
(1st Friday of  
each month) . . . . .7:30 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

School of the Bible . . . . .7:30 p.m.

**FRIDAY**

Youth Fellowship . . . . .7:30 p.m.  
Prayer Service . . . . .7:30 p.m.

*Nursery facilities are available for most activities and services. Infants must be at least 6 weeks old.*

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# How This Devotional Came To Be

Dear Reader,

The devotional you now hold in your hand was 22 years in the making. Or, perhaps, the real fact of the matter is that *I* was in the making for 22 years in order to be able to bring this devotional to you.

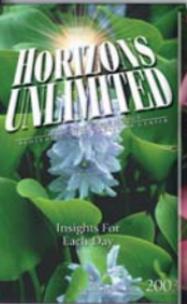
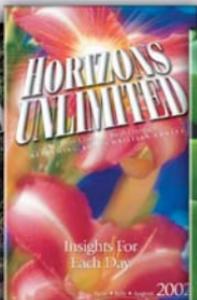
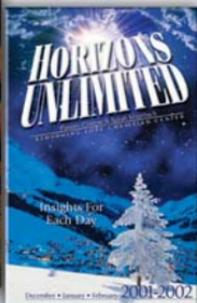
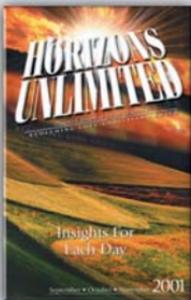
In 1979, I observed in the life of a friend a devotional practice that seemed unusual to me. Every day, my friend would walk into an open field across the parking lot from her office. There she would sit down on a rock to pray and write in what appeared to be a notebook or journal. After several weeks of watching this odd ritual, I wondered, *What is she writing down?* Finally, when the opportunity presented itself, I asked her and she said, "Oh, I'm just writing down what I hear the Spirit of God speak to my heart while I pray."

*God speaks to people?* I thought.

The concept left me both baffled and intrigued. I determined right then and there that I was going to start taking pen and paper into my times of prayer and devotion. I wanted to know if God would show up and speak to me, too. What I discovered was that not only did God show up to speak to me, but He had been there, *waiting for me* to listen, all along.

Not long after that, I heard a minister make a statement that marked me indelibly. His words forever altered the way I would both approach and present the Word of God from that day forward. Before he delivered his message, this man prayed, "Father, don't let the people just hear what I'm saying. Let them hear what You are saying to them *about* what I'm saying." Instantly, I recognized the distinction.

I realized that although every person present in the room that day would hear the



minister speak the same identical words, the Spirit of God would reveal and emphasize various truths in unique ways to each one of us, based upon our own individual needs and levels of understanding. That realization—coupled with my newly developed practice of writing down what God would speak to my heart by His Spirit and through His Word—transformed my life completely. It also gently propelled me into a degree of fellowship and intimacy with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit that I never dreamed was possible for me to enjoy.

The purpose of this devotional is not only to share the fruit of those times of fellowship with you, but also to let you know that the same intimacy with God is available to you as well. You *can* hear the voice of the Spirit of God. But, first, you must recognize that He does indeed want to speak to you. And He will!

During His earthly ministry, Jesus—the Son of the Living God, the Word of God made flesh—said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” (John 6:63). Jesus also said that the words He spoke were not His own—meaning that they did not originate from His own intellect. Rather, they were inspired words, words given to Him by the Father. That lets us know two things: Whatever the Father speaks to us individually will be consistent with what He has spoken to His people collectively, and whatever words He speaks to our hearts personally will be just as Spirit-born and life-giving as His words written in

the Scriptures.

Furthermore, we find that not only do we experience comfort, correction, and instruction in what God speaks and illuminates to us personally but also we discover key elements of His great and unique design for our individual lives.

To know one’s individual purpose is the ultimate insight from God. It is divine insight or spiritual revelation which flesh and blood cannot make known to you. Divine insight is beyond the reservoirs of man’s intellect. But it is not difficult to tap. The will and wisdom of God are as near and as available to you as your own breath *if* you will simply acknowledge Him, come to Him, ask with expectancy to hear, and then...listen.

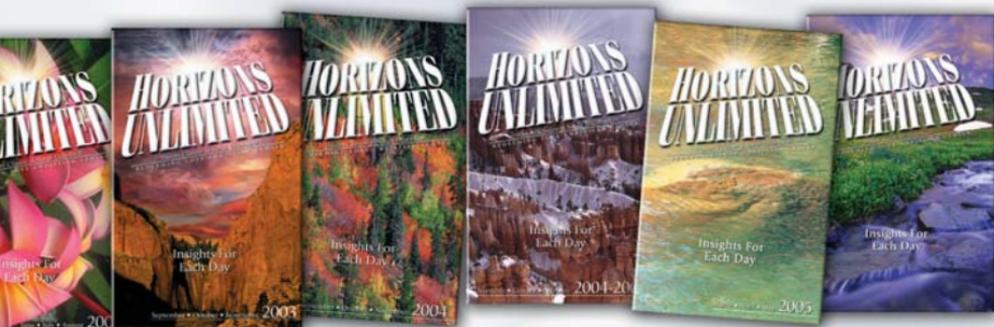
I encourage you to open your heart and allow the Spirit of God to speak to you about your own life and needs. And as you read the following devotional passages and excerpts of what He has spoken to my heart, I pray that you do more than merely read the words I have written on the page. I pray that you hear what He is speaking to you through them, and then embark upon your own journey with Him into the discovery of all the many wonderful and exciting things the Father has planned for your life.

Keep looking up; Jesus is expected!

His Joint Heir,

*Sarah W. Utterbach*

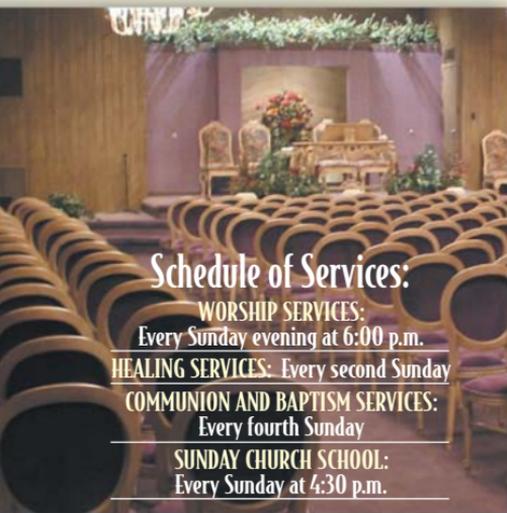
Sarah W. Utterbach





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AT THE VILLAGE



## Schedule of Services:

### WORSHIP SERVICES:

Every Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m.

HEALING SERVICES: Every second Sunday

COMMUNION AND BAPTISM SERVICES:

Every fourth Sunday

SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL:

Every Sunday at 4:30 p.m.

For more information, please call the church office at

**(570) 424-2300**

or Redeeming Love Christian Center  
in Nanuet, New York: (845) 623-9300.

We invite you to join us for Sunday evening services at our facility in the Poconos!

## Directions to REDEEMING LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER at the VILLAGE

Take Route 80 West across the Delaware Water Gap (\$.75 toll) into Pennsylvania. Exit at 302 (Bartonville). After exiting, proceed to the traffic light and turn right onto Route 611. Passing the Howard Johnson Hotel, proceed to the second street on the left, which is Wigwam Park Road. Turn left onto Wigwam Park Road. In a short distance you will come to a stop sign. Make a left turn (you are still on Wigwam Park Road). Continue on Wigwam Park Road for approximately 2 miles until you see the sign "Redeeming Love Christian Village." Turn left onto Cranberry Road. Proceed several yards to the entrance of the Village on the right. The Village is at the intersection of Wigwam Park and Cranberry Roads.

### FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

Take Route 80 West. (Follow the directions above from Route 80 West to RLCV.)

### FROM THE TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE — WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Take the New York State Thruway North to 287 South. Take 287 South to Route 80 West. (Follow the directions above from Route 80 West to RLCV.)

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Take the Garden State Parkway North to Route 80 West. (Follow the directions above from Route 80 West to RLCV.)

### FROM NORTH NEW JERSEY

Take the Garden State Parkway South to Route 80 West. (Follow the directions above from Route 80 West to RLCV.)

### FROM UPSTATE NEW YORK

Take the New York Thruway South to 287 South. Proceed to Route 80 West. (Follow the directions above from Route 80 West to RLCV.)



## Sifting His People

Judges 7:2 (NKJV)—*And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'"*

I suspect that Gideon felt pretty confident going out against the Midianites when he had 30,000 soldiers or people backing him. But God knows human nature better than anyone. He knew He could not give the Midianites into the hands of the Israelites and get any glory for Himself. By their basic human nature the Israelites would claim that they won the battle and not that God had done it for them.

Notice God said they were too many for Him "to give the Midianites into their hands." When are we going to realize that every victory we enjoy is because of God giving it to us? Therefore, it matters not the size of those with you or against you, God is still the giver.

**When are we going to realize that every victory we enjoy is because of God giving it to us?**

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The Lord simply told Gideon to separate the ones who lapped with their

tongues from the ones who got down on their knees to drink. The choice to lap or bend the knee was theirs.

I concluded God could not tell even Gideon the benefit of lapping because he, like so many other leaders, would not have trusted God to include his best friend or his family and would have attempted to influence certain ones.

Instead of focusing on the size of the people allegedly with us, we need to begin focusing on the size of our Lord and sing the song, "Little Is Much When God Is in It," with conviction.

Maturity is when you stop looking at the size of the crowd and begin to see God working through your widow's mite. With God, it is never the size of what you have or do; it is the sincerity and humility in which you do a thing.

Like Gideon, when you follow the Holy Spirit's lead, you never have to separate who you like from whom God uses.

## Love Prevents Him

Psalm 74:11 (NKJV)—*Why do You withdraw Your hand even Your right hand? Take it out of Your bosom and destroy them.*

**M**ost people make some effort to hold on to anything they make with their hands. It does not matter how amateurish it looks; it is something they did.

I still have several things our son made in elementary school—a tool box, a boat dock, a pin cushion, and a couple of other things. These have absolutely no value to anyone else, but over thirty-five years ago his little hands made them.

How much more does the God of the universe refrain from destroying us, His masterpiece.

Our actions in the natural warrant our being swatted like a bug. But His love prevents Him from destroying such a disobedient, disloyal, and dishonorable people. Do we remember to thank God for His love?

**Willful and deliberate wrongdoing is not the same as ignorant and accidental wrongdoing.**

There is a teaching going around that has deceived many into thinking, “I can do anything I want to as long as I confess my sins. After all, God promised that He would

forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Scripture also says, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he reap” (Gal. 6:7). Willful and deliberate wrongdoing is not the same as ignorant and accidental wrongdoing.

God is a loving God and desires for us as His creation to be so much a part of what He is. He has made tremendous plans to ensure our success in Him through Jesus, His Son, accomplishing far more through His salvation than our escaping the fires of hell. He wants us to allow His training to begin in us while we are here in the earth, with Jesus, not man, as our example. Jesus came to earth as a man to demonstrate that we, too, could live successfully here in the earth, in our flesh, with His anointing, His Word, and a heart to be pleasing to God as our motivation.

## A False Witness

Proverbs 25:18 (NKJV)—*A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow.*

Since a false witness is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow, that tells me that a false witness is an instrument used of the adversary to injure or destroy me.

A false witness is nothing more than a liar. If you have been falsely accused, you can expend a great deal of energy and time trying to prove your innocence, or you can do it God's way, which is to live a life of innocence and then leave your accusers to the Lord for Him to judge.

Matthew 15:18-19 (NKJV) reads, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart; and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

**A false witness is nothing more than a liar.**

Only the Spirit of God can influence the heart of a man or woman willing to let God make a change or correction. David knew he needed God to create in him a right spirit (Psalm 51:10). A false witness needs the same surgery because a heart that is not right or renewed will make you think evil; commit murder, adultery, or fornication; lie, and become a person who will testify of untruths and evil-speaking of even God.

If a person will blaspheme against God because his heart is in need of repair, certainly you and I are subject to have him say anything against us. Since we know that we are subject to the lies of man, our only defense is to be innocent of what they say. We may not be able to prevent their words, but we must remain innocent, then we can begin to believe God that He will change their hearts with a right spirit.

Refuse to be a club, a sword, or a sharp arrow against another human, "Having a good conscience that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ" (1 Pet. 3:16).

## Will You Be Found Innocent?

Mark 14:55 (NKJV)—*Now the chief priest and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none.*

**B**eing innocent is the greatest weapon you have against the adversary.

Your words and thoughts are your greatest enemies when used by the devil to keep you off balance. Learn to keep quiet and commit every offense against you to the Lord.

I had a reputation for standing up for my rights, but I never felt good about it even when I got what I wanted. I always felt reduced to the level of the offenders. Then one day I got the revelation that

**There really is joy doing good for those satan tries to use against you.**

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I had the right to refuse to exercise my rights, and that's when living for Jesus became productive and profitable. We have to roto-rooter out our previous thinking which always led us to want to defend ourselves or justify our actions toward others.

One of the greatest achievements you will ever enjoy is to wake up and find that you are no longer affected by what others say or do concerning you. A greater thrill is to find yourself praying for those opposing you. There really is joy doing good for those satan tries to use against you. When you settle that, the devil and those imps he influences are the only real enemies you have.

Since Jesus has overcome the devil and defeated him on our behalf, we only need to resist him from trying to establish a stronghold in our lives. Give him no place. Never entertain any of his suggestions. Exercise the authority that Jesus has given you acknowledging that satan only has limited ability and strength. The authority we have been given is without limitations. The devil knows that he is defeated already, but he is aware of our ignorance of the truth, and the truth is the only thing that will make and keep us free.

Anyone can be found guilty with sufficient evidence. However, would there be adequate evidence to find you innocent though you've been wronged repeatedly?

## Can You Support as Well as Lead?

Deuteronomy 3:28 (NKJV)—*But command Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.*

Jesus set in the church some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11). They have their position and purpose. They are to be leaders in these areas, and they will always be training others to support them. God is watching how we support others He sent to train and equip us before He allows us to take the lead.

First Corinthians 12:4-5 reads, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." Verse 7 says that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every person for the common good. That is the bottom line, "for the common good" of all. That is what God is interested in. When He allowed Jesus to hang on the cross at Calvary,

**God will always lead when we allow Him to, which is why we have been given the Holy Spirit who leads us in all truth.**

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He did not have any special interest group in mind. He loved the whole world and gave. Any special interest group resulted from the choice to believe and receive His Son. They then became uncommon and special, but His love was His gift to all humanity.

God will always lead when we allow Him to, which is why we have been given the Holy Spirit who leads us in all truth. Then we just will not see what God has for us, we will inherit it as our personal possession. It profits you nothing to know the promise without the wherewithal to possess it. God made promises to us for us to possess them all.

To be a shepherd, you have to be willing to teach and train the sheep according to what pleases God. That's the greatest joy you can have. Christianity is about joy in the Holy Ghost, not fun in the flesh. Preach righteousness and holy living and then you qualify to lead because you are supporting God and His Word.

## All I Need

**A**s I am maturing in my relationship with You, Father, I recognize that a life of pursuing things is in vain. The desire of my heart is for more of You and less of the world.

*I thank You for allowing me to experience all that I have so that I could discover that You, and You alone, satisfy. I need a roof over my head, clothes on my back, food for my stomach, hope of Your glory for my future, and faith to stay steady while I journey through this world.*

*There is so much more to be done than what I have done. Forgive me for allowing my sensitivity and focus to be on me and not on the masses that are so full of darkness and on their way to destruction.*

***I acknowledge all of my weaknesses and come as a little child wanting Your glory, which will prepare me for the life to come.***

*I know not where we go from here. I only know that I want to be in the number of those You can depend on. Help me to perceive what Your plan is, which only comes from more time with You.*

*I've known Your promises and the excitement of having them fulfilled in my life. Now, I want Your presence revealed in and through me like never before.*

*I acknowledge all of my weaknesses and come as a little child wanting Your glory, which will prepare me for the life to come.*

*I surrender all of my so-called treasures to You to be used as You see fit and deem necessary because nothing I have compares to the price and prize of being Your child. Not just made in Your image, but a temple that emanates Your glory for all the world to see.*

*Speak through me the message that will touch and teach friends and foes. Help me to show them that life here is more than a game to be played. It is a time of preparation for what You would have us to do in service for You.*

*I renounce and reject anything in my life that is not of You and ask Your forgiveness in Jesus' precious name. Amen.*

## Just Stay on the Main Road

Isaiah 35:8 (NKJV)—*A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it. But it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.*

**I**t is all about staying on the main road. You don't have to be an Einstein, in fact, you can even be a fool; just don't be foolish enough to get off.

It does not say "A" Highway of Holiness, as though there are options. No, it is "The" Highway of Holiness. It is one main road that can be found only by a continued commitment to live for the Lord.

In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus says, "Enter by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way

which leads to life and there are few who find it." We hear so much about our liberty in Christ Jesus that we think we have a license to do whatever we want. Anything that is the least bit difficult, we want to avoid. The difficult narrow gate is a piece of cake compared to the price to be paid if the wrong choice is made.

We must reprogram ourselves to stop looking for instant gratification and ask the Lord's help for the long haul. He promised to teach us the "good and the right way" (1 Sam. 12:23). You may not know where to get started, but you know to continue the way you are going cannot be profitable. First Samuel 12:20 reads, "Then Samuel said to the people [that includes you], 'Do not fear, you have done all this wickedness: yet do not turn aside from following the Lord but serve the Lord with all your heart.'" To turn aside and go after other things is choosing that which is empty, unprofitable, and without deliverance. Why? Because they are nothing (1 Sam. 12:21).

**We must reprogram ourselves to stop looking for instant gratification and ask the Lord's help for the long haul.**

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# LIFT HIS NAME

by Clinton H. Utterbach

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Lift His name  
Let your life announce His presence  
Light the world  
With the brightness of your witness  
Lose yourself  
In the glory of His spirit  
Love the way  
He intended us to love.

('Til) (while) the music of our praise  
Lets the sovereign of the age  
Write His love upon the pages of our lives.

Lift His name  
There's a world out there that's waiting  
Looking for peace and lasting satisfaction  
Driving them is a lust for fame and fortune  
If it comes, it's here today  
And gone tomorrow.

And the world that God adores  
Will come knocking at your door  
Both the wealthy and the poor  
Wanting you to share some more  
'Til the ranks of God's great army  
Be established in the earth.

'Til the music of our praise  
Lets the sovereign of the age  
Write His love upon the pages of our lives  
While the music of our praise  
Lets the sovereign of the age  
Write His love upon the pages of our lives.

And the world that God adores  
Will come knocking at your door  
Both the wealthy and the poor  
Wanting you to share some more  
'Til the ranks of God's great army  
be established in the earth.

'Til the music of our praise  
Lets the sovereign of the age  
Write His love upon the pages of our lives  
'Til the music of our praise  
Lets the sovereign of the age  
Write His love upon the pages of our lives.

Lift His name  
Lift His name.

## Surely There Is a Hereafter

Proverbs 23:18 (NKJV)—*For surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.*

**T**here are some who say that it is hard for them to believe that there is life, or anything else, after death.

Whether you believe it or not, there is life after death.

Ceasing to breathe here on this earth, on this planet, is not the end of your story. Your story will never end. It will either be rewarded by the Lord or tormented by the devil.

The devil knows that he, the false prophet, and the antichrist

will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. Because he has no hope for a future with God, he wants to see how many others he can prevent from their hope with the Lord.

**Ceasing to breathe  
here on this earth,  
on this planet,  
is not the end of  
your story.**

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I am yet without a clear picture of where the spirit of a believer goes once it leaves the body until Jesus appears for both the dead in Christ and those who are alive

and remain to be caught up together to meet Him in the air. I do know that all of us who believe in Him will have a new name, a new body, and a new place to live for all eternity.

When Paul spoke of believers asleep in Christ, he did not make it clear where our spirits would be. But Paul said a saint departing was asleep in Christ until He appears. When He appears we'll be out of here in the blink of an eye with our new bodies that will enable us to enter into heaven. Without a glorified body you and I cannot enter into heaven. The place is too holy for non-glorified flesh to inhabit.

Proverbs 23:18-19 (NLT) says, "For surely you have a future ahead of you. Your hope will not be disappointed. My child, listen and be wise. Keep your heart on the right course." Listening and being wise are our responsibilities. Keeping our hearts on the right course is our responsibility also.

## So That I May Not Be Shaken

Acts 2:25 (NKJV)—*For David said concerning Him: "I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is at my right hand that I may not be shaken."*

**T**he right hand is considered the place of power. For most people the right hand is more developed than the left. The odds of being born right-handed are greater than being born left-handed.

Can you see the Lord at your right hand? He is there for a purpose. He does not want you to be shaken by lies, events, and activities around you.

We do not go through life without suffering. We will never be free of temptations and trials. Life provides us with things to enjoy as well as things to endure. But we have something that none of those in the Faith Hall of Fame in Hebrews had going for them. They remained faithful without the Holy Spirit or the person of Jesus Christ. We have both; therefore, we are without excuse not to succeed. To succeed means to stand up, rise up again, stablish, stir up, and strengthen.

**We will never be free of temptations and trials.**

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Jesus came to cause us to be able to do all the above in His name. It is the name that is above every other name. Therefore, we go forth with the authority in that name to tread on scorpions and serpents and all of the devil's ability and strength. The name of Jesus reigns, and we, His body, will never be shaken because He is at our right hand upholding us with His right hand. Tell every face that has come against you to shake you that you are stablished and strengthened. Therefore, you will never be moved again.

Clinton wrote what perhaps is my favorite song of his, "Your Reflection." One of the lines says, "Lord, I don't want my light to be a shadow, just a silhouette that fades and goes away. But when I look into the mirror of my life, I want to see You looking back at me." That's the way not to be shaken.

## Your Testimony of His Greatness

Deuteronomy 3:24 (NKJV)—“O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what God is there in heaven or on the earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?”

God has proved out some things in my life that I would have never thought to ask Him for or even have been able to handle when He first spoke this word to me.

If God is speaking to you to say or do a thing, obedience to it then (unless He has indicated another timeframe) is what He is expecting. Testimony from

**Memorizing scripture is good, but unless the Spirit of God has spoken it to you personally, it will not stabilize you in rough waters.**

person to person can never be what inspires your next action for God. Scripture says you overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the words of your testimony.

Another's testimony will never cause you to overcome. You have to be led by the Spirit of God based on His written and spoken word to you because it is the only foundation you have to

keep you steady when the winds of adversity blow.

Memorizing Scripture is good, but unless the Spirit of God has spoken it to you personally, it will not stabilize you in rough waters. Jesus said, “The words I speak unto you are spirit and life” (John 6:63), not what someone said about what He said.

The only witness you have to others is what God's mighty hand has done in your life. No one can tell your story better than you, and no one should be telling your story. They should have their own story because the same God who shows Himself strong on behalf of others wants to do the same for you.

We are not stepchildren or bastards. Our Father's name is God; His Son, Jesus, is our Savior; and His Holy Spirit is our guide and teacher. Why are we, His children, allowing our testimony of His greatness and His mighty hand to be based on what someone else said about Him? Since He has begun to show Himself who He is, He will continue and conclude the matter.

## Trust in God's Mercy Forever

Psalm 52:8 (NKJV)—*But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.*

**N**ever confuse wealth with riches. There is nothing wrong with wealth providing you understand that your trust must remain in the Lord. Any fool with a little luck or being in the right place at the right time can contribute to your becoming wealthy. But only one believing in God and His words will experience true riches.

Wealth does not keep you morally pure and corruption free. It does not bring you closer to God, nor does it ensure that you will remain on the path the Lord has decided for you. In fact, if you do not have the mind of Christ and the wisdom of God, wealth could be used by the enemy to provide you with so many luxuries that pull you away from trusting God, and you start to believe that what you have is what you are about.

**Wealth offers you creature comforts, but true riches are an inheritance from the Lord.**

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Wealth offers you creature comforts, but true riches are an inheritance from the Lord. As I read daily in this journal, I am amazed at the number of times I quote my mother. Many of the truths she imparted to me were from Scripture, but a great deal were practical wisdom that life had taught her. Because much of what she said was based on God's Word she laid a foundation for me to build upon.

Mother never left us with wealth. However, most of the riches that will last began with something the Lord inspired my mother to say to me. It all began because the God who created me had a plan for my life, and He would use whomever He would for my spiritual maturity.

Check with the Lord today what you are to plant in the lives of your little ones and others. Rest assured that it must be their trust in the Lord's mercies that they will be as green olive trees in His house. Praise Him for what He is doing.

## You Are What You Eat

John 6:53 (NKJV)—*Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."*

**W**e have often heard the expression, "You are what you eat." There may be some merit to that regarding natural food. But it is true when it comes to spiritual food.

It is true because Jesus said it was so. I have learned that that

**When Jesus said, "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you," He was not speaking of the breath in our bodies.**

alone is good enough for me. Often the understanding of what is being said is unclear when I first hear it, but I have chosen to believe it anyway. Sometimes the revelation comes immediately, other times it takes years before I know all that is being said.

The people around Jesus said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" (6:60). Everything the Bible says is a hard saying if you are looking for a reason not to obey it. But those who are convinced they have the mind of Christ and the wisdom of God will return to a verse or topic until the light of its truth comes on for them.

When Jesus said, "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you," He was not speaking of the breath in our bodies. Calvary provided for the forgiving of man's sins, which allowed him to become a brand-new spiritual man. Beyond that it provided the ability to become so related as one with Jesus that to communicate with Jesus necessitates a mutual abiding to impart His very life and nature. Things previously secret or unknown are supernaturally revealed to us who refuse to remain carnal in our Christian thinking.

If you want to spiritually discern what Jesus is saying concerning His life in you, choose to eat His flesh and drink His blood. You'll become what you eat.

## Purpose

Romans 14:9 (AMP)—*For Christ died and lived again for this very purpose, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.*

**P**urpose as led by the Spirit of God is a good thing. Purpose without the Spirit of God leading can be selfish, inconsiderate, and destructive.

Jesus left His estate in glory with purpose to please the Father, whose only purpose was restoring His creation to Himself in love. If we, as Christians, have any other aim or goal for life, we are missing our purpose.

“None of us lives to himself, but to the Lord; and none of us dies to himself, but to the Lord. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or we die, we belong to the Lord” (Rom. 14:7-8 AMP).

**When you belong to the Lord,  
nothing else really matters.  
Nothing, not even death, according  
to Romans 8:38, can separate a  
believer from God’s love.**

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These verses helped me when Clinton fell asleep in Jesus. There were days I had to resist being angry with Clinton for not staying here to enjoy what God was doing. But after reading these verses, I began to see that perhaps, had he remained, I would have been so preoccupied with caring for him that I may not have had the time to discover how good God is. So whether in death or life, we both still were the Lord’s. Glory!

When you belong to the Lord, nothing else really matters. Nothing, not even death, according to Romans 8:38, can separate a believer from God’s love. Clinton is asleep in Jesus, and I am alive in Jesus; but both of us have one purpose—to see Him at His appearing. We both belong to the Lord, and we both will never be separated from the Father’s love. All that makes me happy and want to shout with joy.

In the meantime, I have a goal to reach the unsaved and equip those who are still living in the earth. I grow in my determination to be a better representative for Him.

## Bonding vs. Bondage

Matthew 10:37 (NLT)—*If you love your father or mother, more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine.*

Probably the closest of human relationships between two people are those between spouses and children. Some people would rather have a relationship with their children than with their spouse. The relationship with a spouse requires work. Most relationships between parents and offspring are molded over the years, and sort of flow.

Eli was considered to be a good man; yet when it came to his sons, he was too weak to require them to do right. As priest and judge of Israel, Eli should have turned his sons over to the Lord when he found out he was not strong enough to deal with their wrongdoing. He expressed his displeasure without suitable discipline (1 Sam. 2-3). Anytime

**There is nothing wrong with bonding with your children, just make sure the bonding does not lead to bondage.**

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you choose anyone over the Lord and His call on your life, you forfeit more than you ever expected to have to give up.

There is nothing wrong with bonding with your children, just make sure the bonding does not lead to bondage. Hannah loved Samuel as much as any mother loves her son, but she was able to wean him from herself and commit him to the Lord. Can you do that? Hannah knew what Eli's sons were doing, and yet she gave her young child into his charge. She was not giving him to Eli; she was giving him to the one God used to prophesy her pregnancy in the first place, the Lord.

We can trust God with and for a lot of things; but when it comes to our children, we cling to and cuddle them almost to the point of crippling them. Yoda, the little character in "Star Wars," once said to Skywalker, "Train yourself to let go of that which you fear losing the most, otherwise it could lead you to the dark side."

Pray and ask the Lord's help with bonding void of bondage.

## Our Citizenship Is in Heaven

Philippians 3:20-21 (NLT)—*But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere.*

Until Clinton went to sleep in Jesus, I never realized how many different opinions existed concerning a person's departure from these earth suits that we occupy.

Many believe literally that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. They see that as an immediate experience in which, because they cease to exist in physical form here in the earth, they are instantly transformed to be in the presence of Jesus in heaven.

It sounds good and exciting, but if it is true, then what are we waiting for?

Those of us who are truly seeking Him enjoy life with Him without experiencing

death. When I became born again, I became new. Like Jesus, I live in this house of flesh which one day will take on His glory and mighty power. Then I will not be confined any longer by a weak, mortal body. In the meantime, I can train myself to live in His presence while here in the earth. You and I can't receive glorified bodies until He appears to catch us all away. Folks, it will take a glorified body to occupy space in heaven.

**Folks, it will take a glorified body to occupy space in heaven.**

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I have no problem with Jesus living in heaven. I believe one day I will also. But if I am eagerly waiting for Him to return as my Savior, that has to go beyond being born again because I made Him my Savior 65-plus years ago. If at that time He's going to use His mighty power to change me for my trip to heaven, then I want to stop saying physical death ushers you into His presence now.

## Luminous

Matthew 5:14 (NLT)—*You are the light of the world—like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see.*

**A**s Jesus' disciples, we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. We are used by God to preserve and protect the earth. Considering what the earth's inhabitants are doing, those of us saved, filled with the Holy Ghost, witnessing for Jesus, are why God has not yet let them self-destruct. As salt, we are preserving them, and God is giving them time to repent and come to Christ before it is too late.

It is time for all believers to set aside selfish interests and ask the Lord to help us see where and when we can best represent Him. You may only see yourself as a match-size light. But a match lit on a hill can still be seen. During World War II, a soldier could practically lose his life if he lit a cigarette while in a foxhole. His comrades would attack him before his habit for smoking gave away his location to an enemy flying overhead. A tiny lit match could be seen from a great distance.

**The Bible does not say we  
are going to be light.  
It says we are light.**

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We are like a city set on a hill that cannot be ignored. We are the place of refuge, a fortress with protective

walls for them to run into for peace, comfort, and protection. If God did not intend for us to be luminous, shining bright, He would have left us in darkness where we were. But, because He wanted us in Him and Him in us, light was made available to us, for in Him there is no darkness. We need only to allow His light to shine through us to them.

Let's continue in His Word that our cup fills to overflow into the ones most in need of light. The Bible does not say we are going to be light. It says we are light. I have never seen a light refuse to shine. Go into the dark areas, they need your light and mine.

## Oaths Too Late and Void of Power

Acts 23:14 (NKJV)—*They came to the chief priest and elders and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul."*

**F**rom all that I read, they must have gotten very hungry because they waited too late to make their vow. Paul had already received a word from the Lord that as he had "testified of me in Jerusalem, so must also you bear witness at Rome" (Acts 23:11).

Paul was on a mission. He was receiving visions and encouragement personally from the Lord. His assignment was to speak for the Lord, not just of the Lord.

Jesus came to Paul in a vision and said, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10).

**Pay no attention to the vows of the enemy. The devil's vows cannot compare to the Lord's promises to you.**

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Paul encountered two groups in Corinth, those who believed and those who chose not to believe. He met Aquilla and Priscilla. He also met those who opposed him and blasphemed. He met Justus, a worshiper of God. Paul was staying with Justus when the chief ruler of the synagogue, Crispus, and his entire household plus many Corinthians heard and believed. Paul knew that in order to believe you had to first hear, and he was committed to telling others about Jesus.

Jesus never said there would not be those threatening you or vowing to kill you. Never concern yourself with who or what is against you. Pay no attention to the vows of the enemy. The devil's vows cannot compare to the Lord's promises to you. Paul had to do what all of us must do, believe Jesus or focus on the threats of the adversary. Stay encouraged by what Jesus promises you, and though you may be baffled, beaten, and attacked, being faithful to Jesus' promise will ignite His presence and nothing will prevent your progress.

A promise that persuades will always be performed.

## Leaders Pay a Higher Price

Deuteronomy 32:51-52 (NLT)—*“For both of you broke faith with me among the Israelites at the waters of Meribah at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin. You failed to demonstrate my holiness to the people of Israel there. So you will see the land from a distance, but you may not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel.”*

**B**reaking faith with God is not a good thing. It is very costly, especially for His leaders. God has different expectations for His leaders and failure to meet them could, and usually will, result in your not experiencing what He has for you in the earth. In the natural, we see this as a punishment for Moses.

Moses issued a warning in Deuteronomy 31:29 that the children of Israel would experience the Lord’s anger if they turned from

**Never allow those you signed on to help you frustrate your effort for the Lord.**

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God’s commands. Paul gave a similar warning to the church in Acts 20:29-30. The difference is that the children of Israel willfully provoked God, and the church, through neglect

and breaking faith with the Lord, allows savage wolves from among them to rise up to deceive them and seduce them.

What does a leader do about this type of thing? Moses became angry, which resulted in him and Aaron failing to demonstrate God’s holiness among the people. Paul commends the brethren to God and to the Word of His grace which he knew was the only thing able to build them up and give them an inheritance among the sanctified, those set apart.

Moses’ life encourages us to keep on. Paul’s life is our example that with the help of the Holy Ghost and the name of Jesus, we can complete our God-given assignment.

Leaders are to lead and to follow only Jesus. Never allow those you signed on to help you frustrate your effort for the Lord. Command them to the Word of His grace.

I want my inheritance among the sanctified because I am set apart and refuse to be negatively affected by the actions of others. How about you?

For God's gifts and His call are irrevocable—He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call.

Romans 11:29, The Amplified Bible



## Peculiar Treasure

Exodus 19:2 (KJV)—*For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.*

**T**he Lord may be able to use one of His ministers, like Moses, to deliver you out of your Egypt, but He will not stop you from pitching your tent in a wilderness because you refuse to climb the mountain before you.

Many of us settle just for being delivered: "Please don't ask me to go any further; I am satisfied just being at the back of His mountain."

No, you are not, which is why you keep murmuring and complaining.

### **God wants us to know Him intimately.**

God is on the mountain. He is always at the top of everywhere we stop.

Thank God that Moses went up to God. Because he did, the Lord

began to speak His plan to Moses. God was clear about what they were to do to be pleasing to Him and laid out the conditions to become "peculiar treasure" status.

Where are you today with the people you have been sent to lead? Are you going to stay with them at the base of the mountain, or are you going on until you hear from the Lord?

There comes a point when you have to choose to pursue God regardless of the people or neither you nor they will mature. Failure to go after God will leave you with nothing to say to His people. He will only speak to you what they need to hear when your choice is to leave them for more of Him.

God has decided that, like Israel, we are to hear His voice, keep His covenant, and allow Him to take us to a level far above just knowing about Him. He wants us to know Him intimately. He wants to elevate us to a kingdom of priests unto Him, a holy nation, a peculiar treasure.

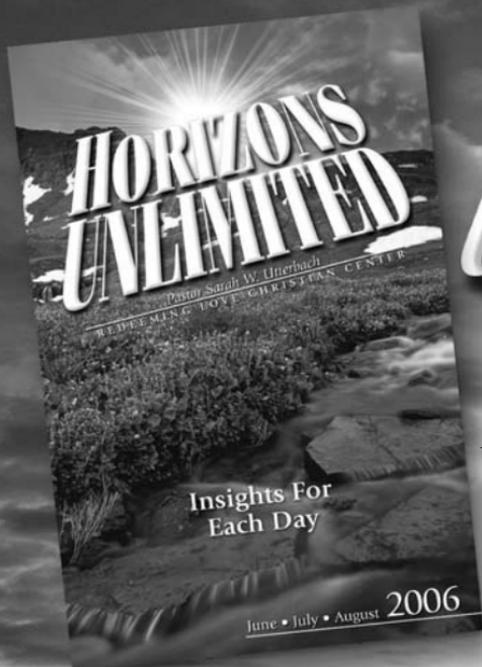
Get ready to break camp and climb the mountain where we can find Him. God is no longer speaking to us through Moses. Are we listening?

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... My love and kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace and completeness be removed, says the Lord, Who has compassion on you.

—Isaiah 54:10

# A Haughty Heart or Humility With Honor

Proverbs 18:12 (NKJV)—*Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility.*

**T**alk about a wake-up call. This verse can tell you more about yourself and others than you thought possible.

Observe your attitude and behavior first. Are you modest and meek? Do you concede for the sake of the whole? If your answer is “yes,” then you have grasped that without the Lord you are nothing, going nowhere; but with Him in first place in your life, you discover that you are far ahead of where you ever thought you’d be. It makes you more humble at every level He takes you. However,

the opposite is true if you think you deserve everything you have and are unwilling to share what you have freely with others as the Holy Spirit directs.

When you are aware that it is the Lord who has made you who and what you are,

**When you are aware that it is the Lord who has made you who and what you are, you are learning humility.**

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you are learning humility. You understand that there is no room for a haughty heart, and the more humble you become on the road to His splendor in your life, the more honor He, God, bestows on you so that the glory you have brings glory to Him.

There are two ways to soar and be made higher and loftier in life. One is to allow the Lord to raise you to great height, which is called honoring you. When this occurs, the more humble you are. The other is to become proud and lofty in your heart and allow yourself to think that you are who you are by your own abilities. This is a dangerous position to be in because it is called haughtiness, and when it reaches your heart and your actions, it indicates that you believe you have made you what you are today. Look out; destruction is about to visit you.

Just as humility precedes honor, destruction follows haughtiness.

## Defenseless

*Proverbs 25:28 (NKJV)—Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.*

**T**here are no cities that I am aware of in the U.S.A. with walls around them. We are supposed to be living in a civilization that respects life, and the legal boundaries in which everyone is to operate are within.

However, there are many occupants in this country's cemeteries and jails because there are people who are uncivilized in their hearts and have no regard for that which belongs to another.

There is a solution, and His name is Jesus. He will not prevent people from making wrong choices, but He will empower anyone who receives Him to make right choices.

I recently asked someone to repent for poking his tongue out at a peer. He did so reluctantly, and suggested to his peer that he had justification. I was disappointed at this person because I know that he knew better and tries

hard to be pleasing to the Lord; but for the moment, there was a yielding to the flesh.

It is each person's responsibility to govern

himself. Whenever we yield to the flesh, we have lost the rule over our spirits and we are out from under the protection, though not the detection, of the Lord. For us, the children of God, who have found our safety in our relationship with His Son, there is no need for living in a manmade fortress. We can only enjoy His ongoing protection when we rule our spirits. We cannot afford the luxury of allowing our spirits to be out of control.

The best sermons in the world are the ones lived, not necessarily the ones spoken. Others probably will remember what you do longer than they will remember what you say.

Bring glory to the Lord Jesus by allowing His reflection to be seen in you. I don't want you just to tell me about Him, I want to see Him living in you.

When you fail to obey Him, you become defenseless. Show me His Word as a weapon.

**Others probably will remember  
what you do longer than they  
will remember what you say.**

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## Abandon Yourself to God's Purpose

Philippians 2:13 (Everyday Bible)—*Yes, God is working in you to help you want to do what is pleasing to Him. Then He gives you the power to do it.*

**W**ithout the help of the Lord energizing us with the desire to please Him, we would never want to do things His way. But after He created in us this willingness to make Him happy, He then provides us with the power to accomplish it.

For me, and perhaps for you also, there were certain things I thought I wanted in life, only to discover that where I am is almost the total opposite of what I thought was best for me. I became

**I totally abandoned my will and my purpose to His because "Father Knows Best."**

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wary of bumping my head against the many walls God allowed to deter me from going in the opposite direction from where He had planned for me. One day

I simply threw up my hands, and submitted myself to His will and His deeds for my life. I totally abandoned my will and my purpose to His because "Father Knows Best."

Many of us thought God was going to use our gifts for His glory. For me, it was Him taking nothing and creating gifts for which I would have never thought to ask. This magazine, which you are presently reading, was God's idea. Without a formal education, writing a daily devotional wasn't even a consideration. "The Choice Is Yours" live, call-in radio broadcast that I do weekly was God's idea. Yet, thirteen years later, I still do it with no advance script, notes, or ideas about the format. I just show up, turn on the equipment, and introduce myself. Two hours later, only God can get the glory for the salvations, the impacting of lives through the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual answers shared. I sometimes don't know what the questions are, so how can I know the answers except I've learned that spending time with Him prepares me.

## Because Jesus Is There

I recently attempted to read a book authored by a writer of many books. I never had heard of the person. Halfway through the book, what started as one of the most joyous days I have ever had was gradually getting dark and heavy. My joy was ebbing out of me. My breathing was becoming more difficult, and my strength was made weak.

I could not figure out why this day was so different from the day before and began to suspect that the changes were associated with the book I had partially read.

This book was about the horrors of hell. I know I'm saved, and it was not frightening for me to read the book. I have the assurance of Jesus' Word concerning my future with Him.

The book spoke briefly of heaven; and throughout it, Jesus often was mentioned. As I began to meditate on heaven and hell, the thoughts of heaven made me happy. I realized that nothing in my life ever compared with the way hell was portrayed so I could not relate. Then, I heard myself say, "I don't want to avoid hell because of its horrors, I want to go to heaven because Jesus is there." For me, nothing negative could frighten one into salvation; my desire is to go where the Father and Jesus dwell. It is their love, and what they have done to change my life, that keeps me daily striving for heaven.

**"I don't want to avoid hell  
because of its horrors,  
I want to go to heaven  
because Jesus is there."**

---

The Bible has little to say about hell; there are a couple pages that mention heaven. While writing this message, I was impressed to stop, take the book to the trash, and get it out of my home. I did; almost immediately the pressure that I was experiencing began to leave. I believe the Lord said, "If I wanted you to know about hell, I would have taken Paul there and returned him with instructions about it to write to My body. You keep your focus on heaven; strive to go there because this is where Jesus lives."

## Caesar's Household

Philippians 4:22 (NKJV)—*All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.*

According to Scripture, we believers are to greet all other believers (4:21). How do we do this when we allow division because others are different or worship at another assembly?

You can't, without the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ being in your spirit and directing it in line with His Spirit. Since His Spirit is always toward everyone, ours has to be also. Imagine—the imperial palace of Caesar was not off limits to the salvation message and the Holy Ghost's influence.

Have you ever wondered how the message of Christ reached the

slaves and servants who worked in Caesar's palace? I suspect that many of them were present when Paul

### **Too often, we write people off as impossible to reach.**

appealed to Caesar, and God took that opportunity to expose them to the good news. Though they were still servants and slaves of a heathen monarch, they were free in their spirits by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. They wanted the church to know, "Our circumstances may not have changed but our condition has, and we are truly free to greet you as well as join you in praise to the Lord Himself."

Too often, we write people off as impossible to reach. But the Spirit of Christ in us is like running water. It will find every opening and every crack, and then fill them. When we look through the eyes of Jesus, we will see things more clearly, and see people in a better light. No one is beyond the reach of Christ.

Where do you live? There are those there who need a crucified, resurrected Christ. Are you allowing your spiritual probe to search for the hungry hearts where you work?

Though Caesar's palace may be off limits to you, the person, and you do not have access to a Muslim temple or a Jewish synagogue, the Spirit of Christ in you and the love of God that is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost is not restricted.



With my whole heart  
have I sought thee: O let  
me not wander from thy  
commandments.

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I  
might not sin against thee.

Blessed are thou, O Lord: teach me thy  
statutes.

With my lips I have declared all the judgments  
of thy mouth.

I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,  
as much as in all riches.

I will meditate in thy precepts, and have  
respect unto thy ways.

I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not  
forget thy Word.

Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may  
live, and keep thy word.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold  
wondrous things out  
of thy law.

—Psalm 119:10-18

## Gifts Are to Be Shared

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)—*As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another.*

**E**ach one of us, at one time or another, has received a gift. Even Jesus, as a baby, was given gifts at His birth. However, He did not come into the world to receive gifts. He was given to the world as a gift, and a very high price was paid to insure that each of us has opportunity to experience Him. God did not give Jesus because we deserved Him. He gave Him because we needed Him. Think about it. You and I would never have had access to the Father without the gift of Jesus Christ.

Because of Jesus, those of us who believe in Him have certain gifts. Because of the Holy Spirit, those who believe in Him also have certain gifts. I am not speaking of abilities, skills, and talents. I am speaking of

**Freely you have received,  
freely give.**

---

the supernatural gifts given that impact the lives of others. If it's supernatural, it comes from God the Father.

He never gives gifts for us to selfishly hoard. What He provides is what we need to work with Him to meet the needs of others. What He does for others through us is in the form of spiritual gifts. In fact, if you have received a supernatural gift from God, you can't use it for yourself anyway. When using it on behalf of another, it is to be without charge. Freely you have received, freely give.

If you are aware that God is performing some special miracle through you, He's not trying to make you some "big cheese." He is trying to get you to see that He considers you trustworthy, which means more responsibility not more personal gain. When you work with and for God, you never have to concern yourself with "what's in it for me?" Just do your job for Him and watch how He rewards you.

Your gift is to be shared without a price tag. Someone needs what you have. God is observing.

## I Am in Charge of My Choices

Ephesians 5:18 (NKJV)—*Do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.*

**M**ost of us have been exposed to people who are under the influence of strong drink or drugs. Often, the strong drink/drug encourages them to say or do something that they ordinarily would not. The Holy Spirit will do the same thing. The difference is He only stimulates us to do good for the benefit of others and the glory of God. Strong drink and drugs never affect others positively.

Paul said, "Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:26,27). Look at the number of times these verses state what I must do. Why? Because I am in charge of my choices. I can choose to get drunk from strong drink; I can choose to get high using drugs; or I can yield to being filled with the Holy Spirit. One choice causes someone to act foolishly. Another encourages faith to do something in line with God's promises, which we otherwise might have been reluctant to do.

I agree that every person that receives Jesus Christ has received the Holy Spirit. However, as a believer without the infilling of the Spirit, I was a carnal Christian. What little I had was centered on me. However, when I was filled with the Holy Spirit, I wanted to pray for people and lead them to Jesus Christ.

When I got drunk on strong drink, sometimes I did things that later caused me shame. When I got drunk with the Spirit, I never had any regret for my actions. My desires changed from self-centered to Christ-centered. Before, I wanted what I wanted, when I wanted it. When I was filled with the Spirit, I began to deny worldly lusts. I chose to live soberly and righteously. I now was in charge of my choices.

## Mental Soundness

Isaiah 53:5 (NKJV)—*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.*

This is one of the most quoted scriptures in the Bible. While one of my missionary friends and her husband were visiting with us at RLCC in Nanuet, she asked, "What does chastisement mean?" I told her I'd look it up and get back to her. You think you know a thing until you're asked, then you realize how little you really know!

The words for chastisement in the concordance read "reproof, warning or instruction, also restraint, bond, check correction, discipline, doctrine, and finally, rebuker." As I meditated on these words, the Holy Spirit began to speak. What I recorded was, "Whatever punishment was required to insure that you walk and live in peace, Jesus bore. He bore correction, discipline, and doctrine needed to guarantee you to be single-minded in godly choices; the rebuker of your peace encountered Jesus on Calvary's tree and was defeated and destroyed."

He went on to say, "Confusion, doubt, and doublemindedness went the way of your sins and iniquities. You need never fear them again. A refusal to be concerned with that which concerns you is your key to walking in mental soundness, choosing only to think those things that are pleasing to God."

I had never seriously thought about that verse other than to claim my physical healing. I now see it in a whole new light. We take mental soundness for granted. But do we comprehend the awesome price that Jesus paid at Calvary for us to have it? The ransom that He paid included more than salvation for us to have eternal life. He wanted us "happy, well, rested, safe and whole." There is not much more than that worth having. Madness and oppression are part of the curse of the law for disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68).

Thank God I have been redeemed from the curse of the law and made complete in Jesus Christ. Mental soundness is for the obedient. It's your choice.

## Mimic Christ

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NIV)—*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.*

Unlike so many leaders of today, Paul was not attempting to gather people to himself to dictate to or control. He wanted followers to mimic the Spirit of Christ in him. He was committed to follow or imitate the One who called him to serve at all costs, and he wanted those he taught to do the same.

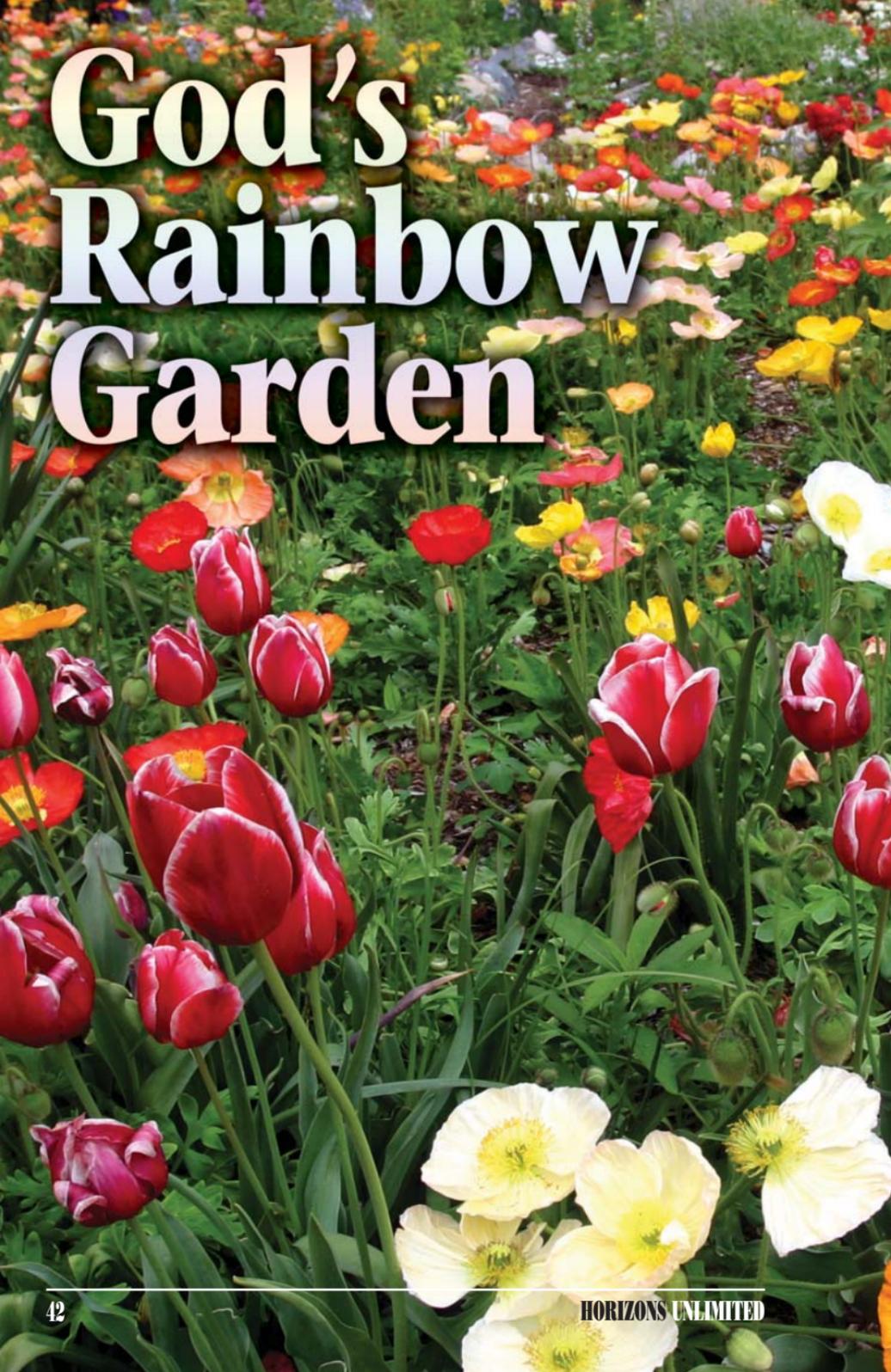
Often, in an attempt to compliment me, ladies will say, "I want to be like you when I grow up." My usual response is, "I made a choice to be like this before I grew up, then proceeded to do what was necessary to insure my future by putting away and setting aside the weights that hindered my progress."

Our progress is impeded by the weight of which we have not yet let go (Heb.12:1). The word "weight" means a mass, bulging by the load. It's the burden we carry that slows us down and stunts our spiritual growth. Neither Jesus nor Paul walked around with spiritual weights. If we are going to follow them, then we have some serious examination to do as well as believing for the wisdom to make right choices.

**Imitation is not just a form of flattery. It is having selected one that is successful at what he is doing and copying him with the Holy Spirit's direction.**

To mimic another starts by meditating on what and how he does what you want to copy. Do not be content to think about what he is doing, make a choice to begin to imitate and follow him. Count the cost before you make the vow, then get up from the feet of Jesus and walk in His footsteps. Imitation is not just a form of flattery. It is having selected one that is successful at what he is doing and copying him with the Holy Spirit's direction. Always allow for the Holy Spirit to validate what you are about.

You were not born to be a copy of anyone. God does not want just copies. He wants those of us to take the good of another and allow Him to finish our unique mold.



# God's Rainbow Garden



# God

did not make us different colors to separate us. He made us different colors to distinguish us in His garden.

As beautiful as a rose is, God made other flowers to compliment its beauty not to compete with it.

Furthermore, God is a God of variety, and the variety He created within us was not done so for our benefit but it was for His pleasure.

## Never Lose Your Praise

Psalm 63:7 (NKJV)—*Because You have been my help,  
therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.*

**W**e often sing a song that says, “If the devil can’t steal my joy, he can’t steal my blessing.” The devil may not be able to steal your joy, but you can lose your joy. I’ve been there. For a believer whose personality and makeup are usually joyful that can be a frightening moment.

What I found out when my joy could not be found was that I still had the ability to praise. Praise was a choice I could make when joy was nowhere in sight. Praising by faith can and will restore your joy. If it seems to diminish again, don’t lose hope

and give up. Treat it the same way you do the other fruit of the Spirit.

**Drop everything today  
and ask God to show  
you how to get in the  
“shadow of His wings.”**

---

I don’t know all the reasons why a person can suddenly lose his joy, but I do know how to get it back. Choose to rejoice.

Follow hard after praise. It’s easy when this comes naturally, with little or no effort. Never allow the feeling of not wanting to rejoice stop you. It’s not about flesh or feeling. It is a choice you make.

How badly do you want your joy back? There may be times you will have to contend for it. I can tell you this; if you have ever lost it and you get it back, you’ll never take it for granted again. You’ll have greater respect and appreciation for it. Trust me, nothing else matters when you are void of His joy.

Drop everything today and ask God to show you how to get in the “shadow of His wings.” Then, start rejoicing. If Peter’s shadow could provide healings for the infirm, how much more will the wings of the Almighty hover over you to offer you a chance just to rejoice. It is in the rejoicing by faith that your joy will be restored. Never lose your praise.

## Profitable for Nothing

Jeremiah 13:7 (NKJV)—*Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the sash from the place I had hidden it; and there was the sash, ruined. It was profitable for nothing.*

**T**his is one of the great lessons-for-life stories of the Bible. The Lord used this sash and Jeremiah's obedience to follow His every word to show us that exposing what is valuable and useful to the wrong elements will cause it to lose its value and usefulness. Though Jeremiah was obedient to what the Lord directed him to do, he could not save the linen sash because it had been exposed to that which would cause its destruction forever.

I believe the Lord is showing us the importance of remaining faithful to Him and His direction for our lives. We can be ever so useful to the Lord. But, if we run with the

wrong crowd and dabble in things contrary to God's plan, we can become ineffective and profitable for nothing.

Our value is determined by the Lord because He alone is our judge. We can be like the people of Judah and Jerusalem who refused to hear His words and stepped from being His people to being called "this evil people" who would not hear. As I see catastrophes all over the world today, my mind and heart wonder, "Are these the beginning of sorrows leading to the return of Jesus for His people? Are we having the positive effect on others that we were saved to have?"

First Thessalonians 1:9-10 reads, "For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come." Wrath is coming, but as Jesus' followers our deliverance is guaranteed.

We are to be profitable in the kingdom of His dear Son. We need to watch what we expose ourselves to on a daily basis.

**Our value is determined  
by the Lord because  
He alone is our judge.**

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## Self-Control

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)—*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

**T**hough all of the above are fruit of the Holy Spirit in us, they will not be manifested and enjoyed by others if we fail to yield to His prompting. Another way to say it is, “These are all fruit that are released for the benefit of others as we submit to the leading of God’s Holy Spirit in us. You’ll know us by our fruit.”

Without purposing in our hearts and requesting God’s help in assisting with the harvesting of His fruit, we will not have the necessary resources to cultivate these glorious attributes. Let’s look at self-control.

**Even God does not control us.  
He will attempt to  
influence us; but the  
ultimate choice is ours.**

When we walk in the Spirit of God, He gives us what is necessary to control ourselves. God does not control us; we have to submit to His Spirit in us to be in control. All of us are capa-

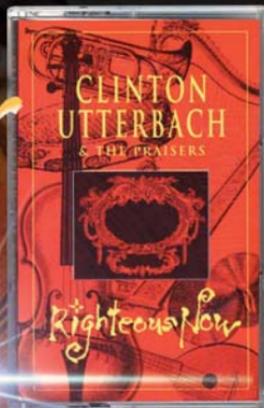
ble of “a case of the uglies” without the Spirit’s help in controlling how we think and what we do. The Spirit provides the power so that we can control ourselves. It is up to us to take hold of the power rather than to let loose of whatever wants to take over. We are in charge. We can choose to do right or wrong, good or evil.

The difference between the world and us is the choices we make. The world is motivated and urged to do the same things we, at times, want to do. However, we have a voice inside reminding us that we have been given power to resist rather than being negatively influenced.

I can’t control you and neither can the devil. Only the individual person can control himself or herself. Even God does not control us. He will attempt to influence us; but the ultimate choice is ours. “Choose today what He decided yesterday, then walk in His benefits tomorrow.” This was given to me by the Lord sometime ago. I can tell you it works every time, all the time. Self-control is my responsibility.

CLINTON UTTERBACH  
& THE PRAISERS

# Righteous Now



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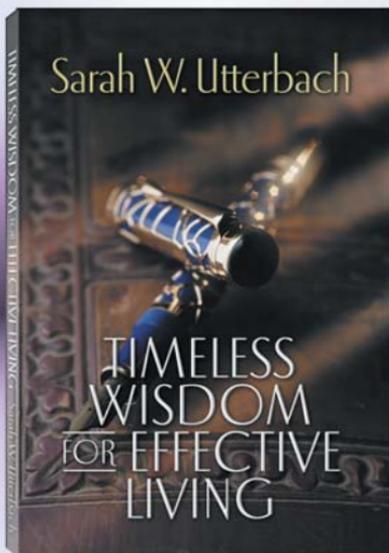
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## Unto the Image

Judges 2:3 (KJV)—*Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.*

A snare is deceptively attractive, and a thorn is an irritant. What the enemy sends to deceive us, God allows to become a thorn to irritate us. So many have grown cold and turned their backs on God because of the devil's promises to them. Never forget that satan is a liar, and there is no truth in him. Don't think that he has any goal other than to kill you, steal everything God has made available to you, and destroy you.

As long as Joshua and the Elders who outlived him were alive, the people served the Lord (2:7). Why? Because having seen

**Thank God for the young  
people who are on fire  
for God. Our prayers should  
cover them constantly.**

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the works of the Lord, they believed the one, true God. After that generation died, another generation arose who knew neither the Lord nor the works He had done for Israel.

History seems to be repeating itself. Like the Israelites, this generation we're living in seems to have forsaken God. They appear to be clueless as to who is the real Lord. Thank God for the young people who are on fire for God. Our prayers should cover them constantly. Family members who have had a positive track record with the Lord appear to have ceased sharing about His goodness and His faithfulness. How can they know about what He has done in our lives if we don't show them His love?

Flesh, fun, and folly seem to be dictating their future. It's not about losing them because you offer a standard to them; we're losing them because we provide no standard. Young people were not given as a possession to complete your life. They were given for us to train so that we can raise up a generation to serve the Lord. You were not intended to be your children's buddy. The devil certainly won't be. Teach them to conform to the Lord's image. It's the only way.

## Losing Your Life for Failing to Listen

2 Chronicles 35:21 (NLT)—*“What do you want with me, king of Judah? I have no quarrel with you today! I only want to fight the nation with which I am at war. And God has told me to hurry! Do not interfere with God, who is with me, or he will destroy you.”*

**J**osiah failed to heed the voice of God speaking through this non-covenant Egyptian and it cost him his life. Never become so sure that God would not do a particular thing in a particular way. It was not the norm for God to deal with an Egyptian in this way, but since God is God, He can do what He wants to do.

Josiah made the mistake that so many of us do. He focused on the messenger to the neglect of the message. He assumed King Neco was the enemy. He therefore ignored King Neco's words stating that he was on assignment from God to ensure that the job was done to God's satisfaction. Had Josiah not been so impulsive in this matter, he would have lived. Had he conferred with God as to the truth of what King Neco said, he would have been spared.

Never assume anything where God is concerned. Ask Him about everything and listen for what He has to say about the matter. Imagine a person who is well pleasing to God all of his life, losing his life unnecessarily. Why would God allow this to happen to His servant? Because King Josiah refused to accept the truth from God because it did not come through the right vessel according to his thinking.

Please stop leaning to your own understanding. God is not bound by what we think, say, or do, when provision has been made to discuss everything with Him, freely. The lesson in this for you and me is though something has not been the case in the past, it does not mean that God will always do the predictable. But He will never allow us to be defeated without first informing us that He is doing a new thing, or using some strong new people in our lives. Josiah formed an inaccurate opinion because he had not pulled aside to communicate with the Creator.

Body of Christ, the Holy Ghost was given to show you of things to come. Truthful people should not die because we're not sensitive enough to listen to Him warn us.

*Then those who feared the Lord  
talked often one to another; and the  
Lord listened and heard it, and a book  
of remembrance was written before Him  
of those who revered and  
worshipfully feared the Lord and who  
thought on His name.*



*And they shall be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I publicly recognize and openly declare them to be My jewels (My special possession, My peculiar treasure.) And I will spare them, as a man spares his own son who serves him.*

*—Malachi 3:16, 17, The Amplified Bible*



## A Worker with Wisdom Always Increases

Proverbs 13:11 (KJV)—*Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.*

**T**hough this verse does not contain the word wisdom it certainly is implied. It is wisdom to understand that everyone needs to work. Why? Because the Bible says, “If you don’t work, you don’t eat.” If you neglect to eat long enough, you will simply die. The wisdom to work guarantees that you will increase. If you never receive another idea, skill, or gift, you will increase because of your labor. Work is not a dirty word. Most of what all of us have today is because God blessed our labor, not just gave us His favor.

I am not a workaholic. However, I often have many “irons in the fire” at the same time. People want to accord me Super Woman status and it is true. Only the “super” part comes from God. It appears that the more I extend myself in His work and show His compassion for other people, the more energized I become. What that means is that I will do more. It is another form of the seed-time and harvest principle. When you fail to do, you become tired and you sow nothing for God to increase.

Anyone can gain wealth but it is often fleeting and lacking in a solid foundation. It is here today and gone tomorrow. But increase provided by God has substance and very often longevity. Wealth gotten by vanity can have quicksand as its foundation.

We know that there are abusive employers just as there are negligent employees. But let us make sure we are not guilty of being abusive or negligent. Nor should we use either as a yardstick to measure how we work or how we pay. Pay should be based on performance, not on previous negative experiences with employees. Work as unto the Lord knowing that you are so good at what you do that whatever salary you receive from people will not match your work ethic and skills.

RLCC has several employees who, while paid a decent salary, are certainly under-compensated for what they bring to the table. However, we watch the Lord do supernatural things for them regularly. I would never trade my Holy Ghost benefits for any amount of dollars and cents. God’s increase is indescribably delicious.

## Any Man's Spirit Is Accessible to God

Proverbs 20:27 (KJV)—*The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.*

**O**ur tendency is to think that God will speak only to those who are saved, and that is not true according to the Bible. Ezra 1:1 reads, "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, ..." What he said can be read in the next verse.

Believers often act as though we have an exclusive club where the membership is closed to all but a chosen few, which is totally contrary to John 3:16. King Cyrus said to those in captivity, "The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem which is in Judah" (Ezra 1:2, KJV).

Some denominations faint at the thought of God asking the heathen to build Him a house. Church, it is time for us to wake up. God is not in a box nor will He be limited to our narrow little way of seeing and doing things. I used to be surprised when God used those who were non-Christians to do His bidding. Then I studied the Bible and discovered that King Cyrus, King Darius, and many others were used by God for a purpose and a season. Sad to say, but often they are more willing to do, be, or give to the thing of God than some of His children.

One thing I know is that God has a plan, a schedule, and a timeframe. When His people won't cooperate with Him, He will use others. Many times they become His people, while as heathen they got involved in His ultimate purpose for mankind.

I am thrilled that God can reach the spirit of every person. Some of us would be in serious trouble if a non-Christian had not stepped in to assist us. I occasionally hire heathen because their work is often better done than a Christian's work. I try to keep them around me until I have been a witness to them and God has stirred up their spirit to receive His Son Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. God will be God regardless.

**F**or I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he comes.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.





For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and may sleep.

For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

*1 Corinthians 11: 23-32*

## Assigned to Help Another

Esther 8:1 (KJV)—*On that day did the King Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her.*

**W**hen are we no longer responsible for just ourselves? When we acknowledge that where we are or even that we are in life is because of the love and grace of almighty God. They say that the “first law of nature is self-preservation,” and that is true. That is, until you get a new nature. Then we begin to operate by the first law of the Spirit, which is love.

I believe that God gives each one of His children an assignment that no one else can accomplish. Esther had an assignment. She had been privileged to be selected as queen to a man who not only loved her, but who also was in a position to either execute or imprison an entire nation or free and promote them. Not only had Esther been brought to the kingdom for such a time as this (Esther 4:14), but this king who earlier lost out on a good relationship with a good woman, Queen Vashti, was still a part of God’s plan to alter history for His people. It is so easy for us to criticize and give up on people who did not always handle everything in the right way.

Another child of God was also on assignment. He is called Jesus Christ. He is called the Beloved Son. And where much is given, much is required. Sometimes we want the title and the benefits of being one who belongs to God. But have we thought about the fact that as a child of His we are on assignment? We are not just in line for the benefits, but for the assignment.

Never allow your acceptance by man to blind you to your call or assignment. If you hold your peace when God has called you to speak up and speak out, not only will He raise up another in your place, you and all that you are trying to protect with your silence, will be in jeopardy. There will be more than loss of life and limbs, there will be a loss of fellowship with the Father. Guilt and shame will torment you for failing to stand up and be counted.

His grace is sufficient for you when you receive His Son Christ Jesus. The blessings and covenant rights are yours at the new birth. After prayer and fasting make a choice that you would rather perish in death than to fail God in life, and you’ll never die.

## Defeat Their Evil with Your Good

Proverbs 14:22 (KJV)—*Do they not err that devise evil?  
But mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.*

**I**t is hard to imagine that there are some so blind and deceived so as to be used of the enemy to actually plan and organize evil. Planning evil takes less effort than it does to plan and organize good. There is never any opposition to planning ugly and evil. In fact, those who devise evil have an abundance of cooperation. But because our spirit is still housed in flesh, we have to really work at coming up with good.

Anyone who purposes in his or her heart to do good will receive instant opposition. The key to winning is acknowledging that you win regardless. The Holy One has been given to empower you with an undefeatable ability to live above the evil that is ever present in the world. Think about it, there is nowhere in the world where evil is not found. There are some places where evil seems to be more rampant than others, but it is still there in whatever dose or size it appears.

The only reason that anyone would devise evil is because they are ignorant of truth as a person. John said, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (1:17). We pray for and witness to people partially to help them avoid the fires of hell, but also so they can know the truth. When a person has truth and understands the consequences of wrong choices, for the most part, they correct some things in their lives.

Proverbs asks, "Do they not err that devise evil?" The error of their ways is to find themselves void of mercy and ignorant of truth. Since this is the case we cannot expect them to give what they themselves have never experienced.

The promise for those who devise good is that we can look forward to mercy and truth. We have the advantage that we can defeat evil with good and confidently know that evil will never assassinate the guy wearing the "white hat." In our case, we wear the white robe of righteousness resulting from a sincere heart to do good and do right. It works.

# Enjoying the

**W**ith His decision to obey the Father's will for mankind, Jesus appeared to have suffered much on the cross. His focus, however, was never on the cross and the suffering. Jesus focused on the glory He would receive again, the glory that was once His with the Father (John 17:5).

God promised Him that He would divide Him (Jesus) a portion with the great (Isaiah 53:12) and would highly exalt Him and give to Him the greatest name in three worlds—heaven, earth, hell (Philippians 2:9). Jesus would then divide the spoils of satan (Colossians 2:15). He was classified and counted with us sinners, bore the sins of the many that had sinned, and made intercession for us all (Isaiah 53:12).

When we choose to obey the Father, often it appears to be difficult but if we are to enjoy the spoils of the enemy, reclaim and possess what is rightfully ours, then we must be as the husbandman that waits patiently for the precious fruit of the earth (God's creation). We must demonstrate long patience for it until we, with Him, receive the early and the latter rain.

The coming of Jesus is so near. Be patient and faint not, neither be weary in well doing. Release the force of patience that will establish and strengthen your heart (Galatians 6:9; James 5:6,7).

It won't be long before we will be leaving here. Any day now, we'll be going home. Hallelujah.

# Victor's Crown



## Did God Tell You To Do It?

1 Chronicles 28:20 (KJV)—*And David said to Solomon, his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord.*

**T**he completion of the temple was not a concern of Solomon's, because it was God's idea to assign him the task of building it. Everything that was needed to complete it to God's specification and satisfaction was provided. That is as it should be. Too many ministers are dying or falling into ill health because they are trying to do something that was a nice thing to do, but it was not at all authorized by God. As Clinton liked to say, "God supports that which He authorized."

Remember it was for the "work of the service of the Lord." It is not to carry your name after you are gone. It is not to compete with the work of other ministers when we are on assignment from the Lord. Every care and concern, question and request should be laid at the feet of Jesus and tell Him, "I am available for service, but how to perform, I know not." I sense that that approach is pleasing to the Lord. God never overburdens His children with things to do for Him. He gives us the grace for each God-required task. It becomes a burden when we insert and include our ideas and attitudes.

As a parent and pastor, I never want our children or members to view serving us or the Master as a chore or challenge. I love serving Jesus because I say yes when I mean yes, and no when I mean no. When I say no it is not because I don't want to do any more. But I have learned that what He has asked can become convoluted with what are simply nice but not necessary things to do.

Of course, there are workaholics in the church, who fill every day with something to do, leaving the people with no time to pray or just sit in the presence of the Lord. More can be done when people have had time with the Lord first than all the planning and strategies people could ever produce. God will give you what to do as the leader/pastor or parent, then make available the resources to do it with time to spare for Him. Always ask yourself, "Did God tell me to do this thing?"

## Don't Believe Everything You Hear

Proverbs 14:15 (KJV)—*The simple believeth every word:  
but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*

**T**here are a group of Christians who fall into what I call the “salesmen” category. When they come into your presence they begin spouting off without so much as a hello. They are so used to practicing their sales pitch, they fail to perform the basic courtesy skills. Until you get used to them, you almost feel under attack when they come around. They are usually harmless and the content of their “word bazooka” is not world changing or detrimental to you and God’s plan for your life. Thank God.

What we need to be aware of is to not allow either a “bazooka mouth” or a “smooth talker” to affect what and how we hear. We can’t stop them from discharging their words, but we have the power to filter out what is not profitable for us. We are not to be the simple, who believe every word they hear. Wise people listen to everything that is said, however, they question all comments to judge what has a positive effect on their future.

Have you noticed that people who have much to say are seldom used of God to minister truth and life to you? When they open their mouths, what proceeds out is usually their opinion, their preference, and their flesh. For anyone with a sensitivity to the voice and Spirit of God, encountering a “bazooka mouth” is like having a conversation with one with a severe case of bad breath. The only thing that I have learned to do with Christian brothers and sisters who “speak before they greet” is to say to them, “Good morning, good afternoon, or good evening.” What I have found is that slows them down for the moment, but the message is usually missed.

What are you going to do? Pray for them, apprise them of their effect on you, and believe God that this is the worst sin they are guilty of. Most of all, thank God for His grace to provide you with the wisdom to be able to discern what is being said while at the same time continuing to walk in love towards all men. It helps in developing the fruit of the Spirit in you.

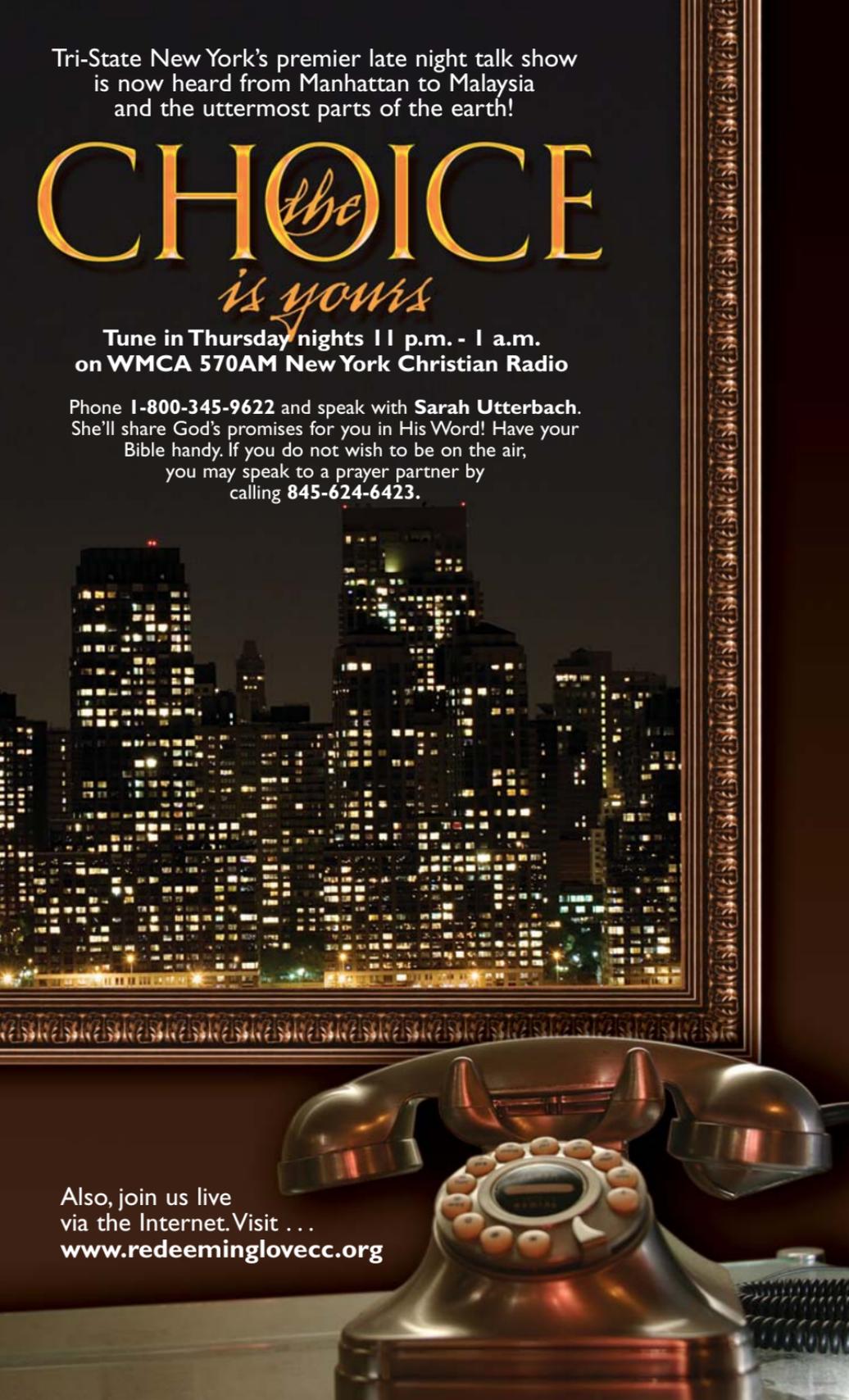
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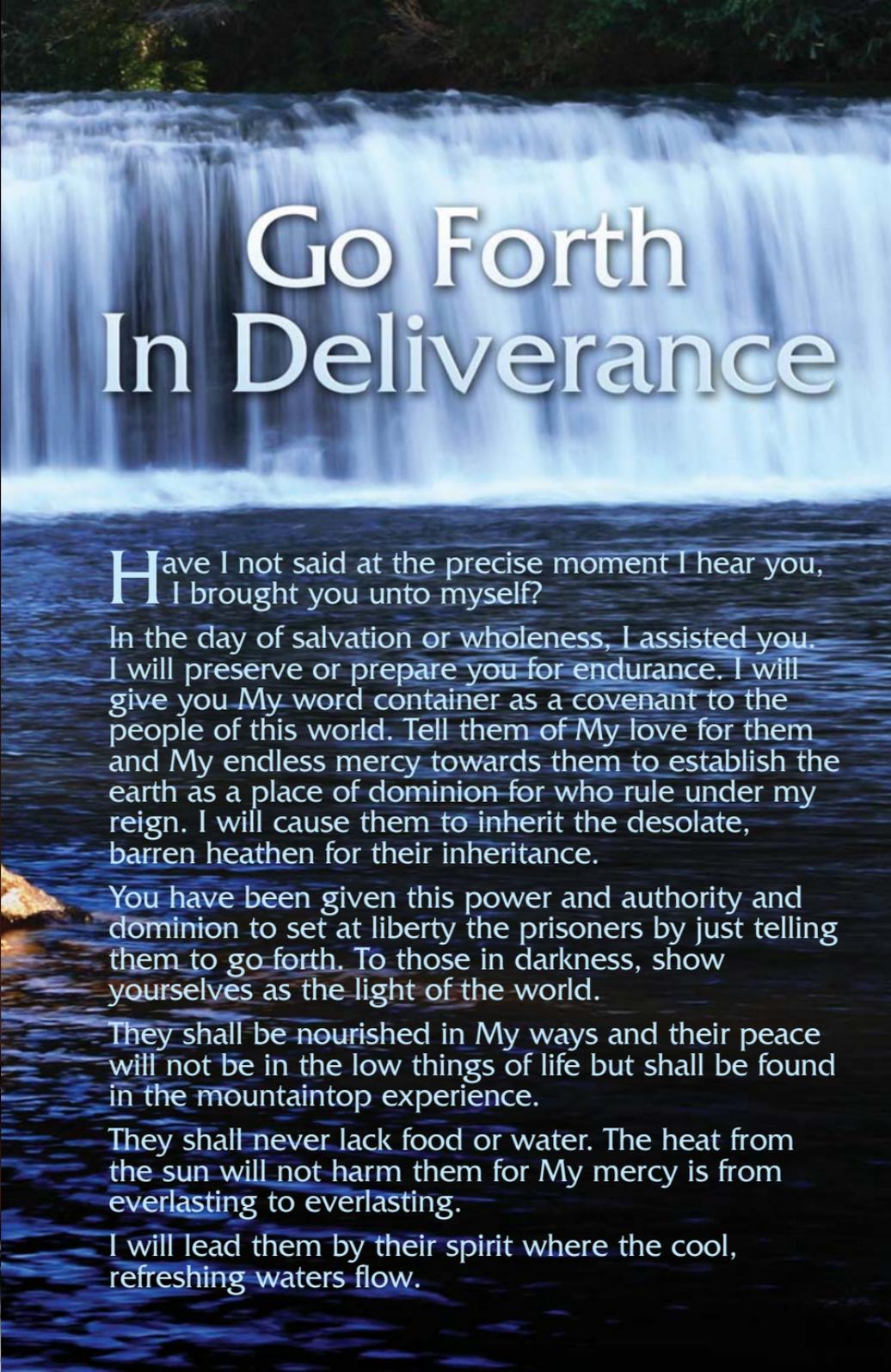
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# Go Forth In Deliverance

**H**ave I not said at the precise moment I hear you,  
I brought you unto myself?

In the day of salvation or wholeness, I assisted you. I will preserve or prepare you for endurance. I will give you My word container as a covenant to the people of this world. Tell them of My love for them and My endless mercy towards them to establish the earth as a place of dominion for who rule under my reign. I will cause them to inherit the desolate, barren heathen for their inheritance.

You have been given this power and authority and dominion to set at liberty the prisoners by just telling them to go forth. To those in darkness, show yourselves as the light of the world.

They shall be nourished in My ways and their peace will not be in the low things of life but shall be found in the mountaintop experience.

They shall never lack food or water. The heat from the sun will not harm them for My mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.

I will lead them by their spirit where the cool, refreshing waters flow.

## Does God Hear Your Voice?

Psalm 142:1 (KJV)—*I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.*

**T**his verse in Psalm 142:1, says to me that I am the one to call on the Lord for His help. He wants to hear my voice making known my request to Him. I personally have not found in the Bible that I need a prayer partner to approach the throne of my Father God other than the Holy Ghost. I know Matthew 18:16 talks about the prayer of agreement. However, a closer look at it says two of you on earth agreeing should both ask of the Father. In case you are not aware of it, the Holy Ghost who prays the perfect will of the Father is on earth. He is never in strife with anyone. He holds no resentment towards anyone and He wants my request to be granted more than I do. He never says that He is in agreement with me, but secretly resents my petition.

People should pray together corporately, but they should never become dependent on another human in order to reach God. Some Christians who call their prayer partner every day, first thing in the morning have nerve enough to get off the bed to make the call never having greeted the Father for making it possible to see another day.

My spiritual Father in the Lord is a godly man, and knows how to reach God and teaches on prayer. However, the few times that I have approached him concerning prayer was simply to ask him to agree with what I had already prayed. I told him what I had prayed and the Scripture I was basing my prayer on. I could see the glimmer in his eyes as a proud father would have when his child has done well. He would certainly pray with me if I asked him to, but for him to know that I have learned to rely on the same source that he does makes for him a glad heart.

My suggestion to you is to make a deliberate choice to gain the confidence to be bold enough to talk to your Father and your God personally. Just as He wants us to recognize His voice speaking, He wants to hear our voices for He recognizes each and every one of them. Please do not let your voice be marked absent when others are present. He awaits your call, request, and petition. Begin anew with the Holy Ghost.

## What Kind of Vessel Are You?

2 Timothy 2:20 (NKJV)—*In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.*

**T**he house does not have any say about who is in it, but the vessels can choose which type they want to be.

A structure will be whatever its owner says it will be. Once upon a time, what is now the home of RLCC was a nightclub dinner theatre. The devil used it for his purpose; we took it over to use for God's purpose. The building was not asked what it wanted to be, it was told both times what it would be and we did not even have to build it.

Over the last twenty-six years, I have taught what the Spirit has directed me to teach; I do not have separate messages, even for the children. Yet it is as though some were sound asleep and never heard a word that was said. Did you know that refusing to live a wholesome, godly life and dilly-dallying in the things of sin gives the devil the right to dictate what you will be and who you are? The difference between a building and us is that we can change masters or owners at our will. However, we do have to exercise our will for the change to be effective.

Have you seriously considered what kind of vessel or instrument you want to be? God is not making the decision for us; He just uses the best of the best for His purpose. You and I are in God's house and family. Why settle for just being in the house? Plan with His help to be fit for His use. A wooden or clay pot has a use, and it cannot alter what it is made of. But praise God we can choose to become vessels of honor and not dishonor.

Today is your day to destroy the cycle and the yoke that have hindered you from the fulfillment of God's plan for your life. Confess your faults and your fears to the Lord. Tell Him what you really want to be that lines up with His plan for your life. Renounce satan and every demon assigned to you. Then step out in faith in your walk with the Lord. You will soon discover that your walk will line up with your words and speaking to things will change the course of your life forever. Read Mark 11:23-24.

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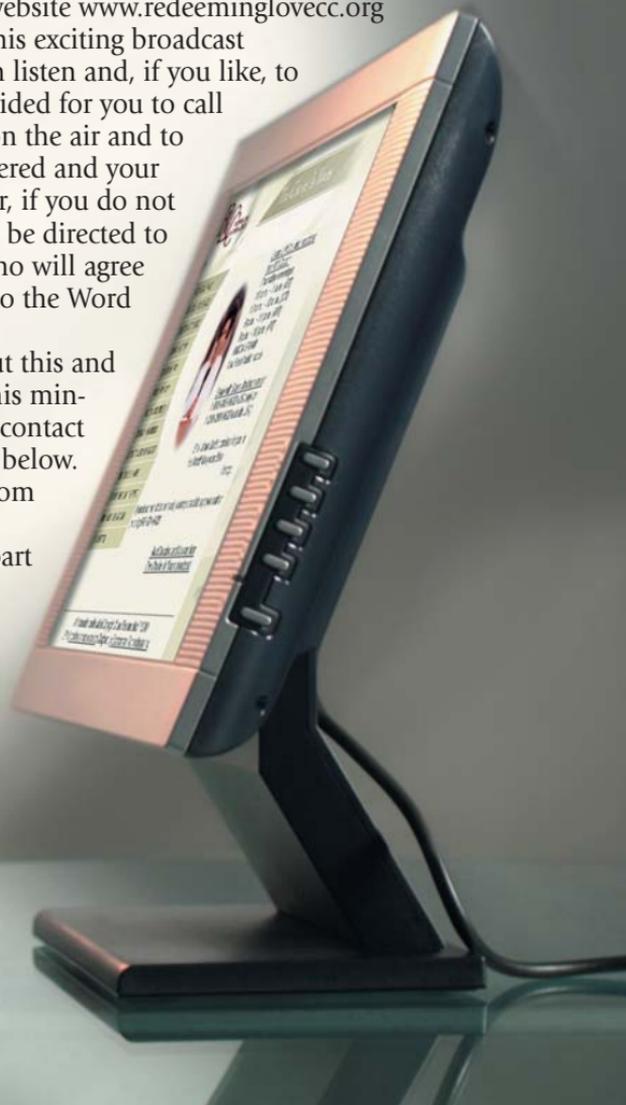
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# Turn Your Life Around



*...by submitting your life to Jesus Christ. If you do not recall making a confession of Jesus as your Savior and Lord, we invite you to say the following prayer. Confessing the prayer marks the beginning of a new life or being "born again" as Jesus explains in John 3:3-6.*

## Father in Heaven,

*I believe that You are God and that Jesus is Your Son. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and that after three days, He arose from the dead. Today I make a quality choice to turn from my past ways. Jesus, I ask You to please forgive me of my sins and I invite you to come into my heart to be Savior and Lord of my life. Make something new of me. Create in me a hunger for Your Word. By Your Spirit lead me to a church where I may gather together with other believers and be taught Your promises and principles accurately and uncompromisingly. I want to fully understand my responsibility and authority as Your child. Thank You for salvation and for the promise of abundant life—spiritually, physically, economically, and socially. Father, I purpose to give Your name the praise, honor, and glory with my words and with my life, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Amen.*

**Note:** If you prayed the preceding prayer, welcome to the family of God! We invite you to contact us so that we can mail you a memento of this important step. We're waiting to hear from you!

## Drunk or Not, He Still Had a Covenant with God

Genesis 9:24 (NKJV)—*So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him.*

There has been speculation as to what Noah's younger son did to him while he was drunk from too much wine. I have not found the specifics in the Bible and the Bible is not shy in providing some pretty graphic details about a number of things.

When Mother was alive, while reading her Bible she would suddenly say at times, "Can this really mean what is written here?" Once I asked her to share the passage in question, then replied, "Yes, Ma'am, that is exactly what it means." Her response sounded something like, "My Lord, my Lord."

Sometimes Mother did not want to read aloud what was written. I later realized that she was embarrassed. Yet God was not. He inspired men of old to write it all for our benefit and correction when and where necessary.

If God wanted me to know what Noah's son did, He would have had someone to record it. What I became excited about was even though Noah became drunk on wine the covenant with God was still intact. And he was able to discern who did what to him and he had the authority to bless or curse anyone who violated him in any way.

The cursing of one's offenders was allowed back then. But not for us today. We are expected to respond with the Spirit of Christ flowing out of every word and deed. What would Jesus do? I suspect we already know the answer to that question.

Does the devil have you thinking because you missed it recently that God has removed Himself from you, stripped away all of the gifts of the Spirit, and the anointing you once operated in is gone forever? He is a liar and the father of all lies and as one of my family members once said, "and there ain't no truth in him."

Are you genuinely sorry for the failure, not because you were caught, but because you hurt the heart of God? If yes, then go to 1 John 1:9, ask His forgiveness, turn from the thing that caused you to miss it, and I promise you that He, God, will do what He said He would do because He never withdrew them when you missed it. Aren't you glad?

## Please Hurry

Psalm 141:1 (NLT)—*O Lord, I am calling you. Please hurry. Listen when I cry to you for help.*

Imagine asking the One who created everything in six days, the One who sees the whole picture concerning everything and everyone, to “speed it up.” At times, I wonder what God’s reaction is to some of our prayers. Anyone praying to God to “Please hurry” is not praying in faith. That person is making such a request based on what is clearly visible to the natural eye.

I am the first one to admit that waiting is not something any of us enjoys doing. Like you, I would prefer to get it now, have it in my past, and move on as rapidly as possible. Looking back on each time I disagreed with God’s

delay, I realize that my anxiety and unwillingness to relax did nothing to move the hand of God any sooner. What I have discovered is

**I am the first one to admit that waiting is not something any of us enjoys doing.**

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that His seeming delay was

not a denial but a way of cultivating some of the Spirit’s fruit in me so that His power to demonstrate His gifts would be greater in quantity and in quality. “Please hurry” is no longer a part of my vocabulary with God. Aside from the fact that such a prayer request doesn’t work, I have learned that I need the extra time to finish certain things. Plus, for God to be late according to His plan and His schedule, He would have to disqualify Himself as God.

Don’t throw out the phrase “Please hurry” entirely. Humans often need to hear it because they either don’t see the complete picture or your priority is not their priority. But did you ever notice that our prayers of worship or agreement or thanksgiving never include “Please hurry” at all? It is only our cry to Him for help that we want expedited. “Not only now, Lord, but yesterday would have been even better.”

The next time you pray to God, make sure your request lines up with His will, His word to you, and His own schedule. Take your eyes off the problem and focus them on the prize. When you do, you’ll discover that “Please hurry” will never enter into your petition again.

## God's Promises Never Die with People

Joshua 23:14 (KJV)—*And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spoke concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.*

**W**hat a way to go! What could be more satisfying as a leader of the people and a servant of God than to know that those you have loved and taught received every promise God made to them.

I want to say to those around me what Joshua said to the people of Israel: Good things all come from God. He only promised us good things. When anything else shows up reject it, because

**Keep your focus on Jesus and receive all of your inspiration to achieve your aspiration from Him.**

"we are not allowed to receive anything from strangers." At least that was my mother's word to me. The devil should be a stranger to every believer, so don't

accept anything from him. I know about him, which is enough for me to stay out of his clutches. I don't know him because he is not a part of my life and lifestyle. I don't expose myself to him, nor do I entertain him. Paul said, "I know Jesus in His resurrection and the pardon of my sins."

Father God is not capable of lying to us, His offspring. Therefore every word promised is done already in the spirit realm. You and I simply must learn by faith to bring what is into where we want it to be. Love and enjoy all the saints of God. But have no confidence in human flesh. Keep your focus on Jesus and receive all of your inspiration to achieve your aspiration from Him. Sometimes people you love will pass on with promises unfulfilled. But God's promises are His words, and they are all fulfilled in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## God's Word Is My Comfort

Psalm 119:50 (KJV)—*This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.*

Living pretty much guarantees that you will experience some form of test, trial, or attack from the wicked one. Since we are to stop murmuring and complaining (Phil. 2:14), then what do we do? My question is: Has murmuring, complaining, or repeated discussion corrected anything that challenges you? So what then are we to do in the midst of it all? The psalmist has given us the answer in Psalm 119:50 (NLT), "Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my trouble."

The light went on in my life when I discovered that "my purpose in life was to possess what God had promised." There is no comfort quite like finding out the Word of God that covers my situation. Once I do that, it is almost as if a cloud or blanket descends over me and whatever had interrupted my tranquility no longer looms big over me.

Once I learned that nothing in my life takes God by surprise and that He and His words are equal to every situation that I will be presented with, I stopped calling on my pastor, friends, and anyone else for comfort. One of the greatest lessons I have learned was never to pursue any person but the Holy Ghost to bring relief into my life. However, He has at times used individuals to come, unsolicited, to share just what was so needed. I cannot tell you how reassuring that is to know I did not have to look for a human, but when one came, they were already anointed of God with the message for my hour.

It is important to keep God's Word ever before us because we are never to forget His precepts: for with them He has quickened us (Psalm 119:93). When you want to feel safe and secure, remember what God has said: "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me" (Psalm 119:98). There will always be something attempting to rob you of your God-given peace. But when you have become wise according to God's Word you will not be moved with concern. You don't have to beat the devil at his game, simply be wiser in the Word of God, which defeats him every time.

## Good Reason to Trust God

Psalm 105:14 (KJV)—*He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes.*

**T**here are three basic requirements for each of God's children:

1. Give thanks unto the Lord
  2. Call upon His name
  3. Make known His deeds among the people
- (Psalm 105:1)

I do not think that that is too much for us to handle. It is not too much to ask of us because of God's commitment to us through Jesus by way of Abraham.

When God establishes a covenant with you, it is not for the moment only. It is for the season that you are in and for every generation following.

Once God makes a promise to you, it matters not to Him how many are with you or how the numbers decreased. He will do just what He said He would. Verse 12 of this chapter in Psalms reads, "When they were but a few in number, yea very few." God is not as interested in the quantity of your work; but He is very interested in the quality of what you do.

When you are strangers in strange places in life and wandering from place to place, the Bible says He allows no person to harm you. God's eyes are roaming to and fro throughout the whole earth, searching for people willing to trust Him.

How do you know when you are trusting Him? You begin to consult with Him concerning every choice or selection. You are trusting Him when your next move finds you thinking more about doing His will and pleasing Him than about you "doing your thing" because it benefits you. Trusting God is when your thoughts and actions are more about being of benefit to people than personally hoarding and accumulating wealth and possessions.

It matters not the title or status of any human bent on harming you or trying to thwart your God-given assignment. You can trust the Lord Jesus Christ to cover His commitment to you because of God's covenant to you in Christ our Lord. So it matters not who is out to harm you from the mugger on the street to the king in the palace. God will deal with them, if you simply trust Him.

## Holiness: Your Ticket to See God

Hebrews 12:14 (KJV)—*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

**M**other did what she believed to be right when it came to disciplining us as her children. She never read anyone's book about child rearing. She did not confer with children psychologists, counselors, or even her own mother. We were hers and she did what she believed to be the best thing, the best way. Her methods seemed at the time a little barbaric. But today she is asleep in Jesus resting in the fact that her son has never been to jail or on drugs; he has retired from a career with the government as an electrical engineer. And her baby girl pastors Redeeming Love Christian Center in Nanuet, New York.

I believe that this verse in Hebrews 12:14 is more than a promise that we will see the Father when we die. I sense that a choice here and now to live holy and at peace with all people allows me to see who He is in my study of His written Word.

When I pursued a life of sin and pleasure, I assure you that I did not see the Lord in the light I do now. Before when I read my Bible, it was mere words on a page. Now I stay excited. Reading the Bible now is the same as meeting with your very best friend on a daily basis. Some days it feels like a wonderful time with your fiancée anticipating the soon-coming wedding day.

Mother disciplined us as it seemed good to her. But God disciplines us for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness. The Lord has made this wonderful way to ensure that we make heaven. And by the same way, God allows us to live here in the earth, happy and whole. Heaven will be better, I am sure, but a life of holiness here has its own reward.

Imagine seeing Him, not with natural eyes, but with your eyes, ears, and heart so clean that every time you open your Bible He manifests Himself to you. You and I have been named in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:4).

Don't you want to see the Lord? Why wait until you die? Put off the old man and put on the new. It is your ticket to see the God show.

## Blameless and Harmless

Philippians 2:15 (KJV)—*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*

**T**he world's curiosity for Christ will not be piqued if we, the children of God, talk and act just like they do. However, though the Bible commands us not to, our minds constantly tell us, "Join the crowd! They're having a blast!"

In the past, I have had some of those "blasts," and the wages of sin is still death. I did not physically die but came close enough to it to know that the price was higher than I wanted to pay.

Today, we live among people who have turned from or refused to come to God. Consequently, these people are perverse, crooked, and morally corrupt. Nevertheless, we can be absolutely unaffected by this age and these people. In fact, in the middle of the darkness, we are to be lights.

Lights were made to shine. Our light shines when we are irreproachable and without fault. The illumination of God's Spirit in our recreated spirits is brightest when we walk in innocence and simplicity.

Simplicity is not stupidity. Stupidity is thinking that we should just go along with the world's program and we'll be okay. On the other hand, simplicity—and the victory for the children of God—is refusing to grumble or hold grudges. It is eliminating external debates. It is saying what Jesus and the Bible say, and moving on.

People will always want to challenge the Word of God. But years ago, God taught me how to deal with them. He showed me that most people cannot stand to be ignored; when we act as if their arguments don't affect us, they rant and rave until they finally see themselves—and often they don't like what they see. That's when the Spirit usually speaks to them, and they are ready to experience the kind of peace we have. That's when we can lead them to Christ.

*Dear Father God, thank You for teaching me by Your Spirit that I don't have to fight my battles. You honor Jesus' prayer to not remove me from this world, but to keep me from the evil one. I bless You for showing me how to be innocent of all accusations, blameless and harmless in the middle of this distorted and morally corrupt age.*

## How to Prosper

2 Chronicles 31:21 (KJV)—*And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.*

**A**n abundance of books are written on prosperity and how to get rich. Some of them can certainly be an aid to point you toward right thinking about how to receive some blessings of the Lord. However, some are just nice marketing tools to prosper the author and the publisher, presenting techniques so far from Bible principles that you will become lost and frustrated.

This verse is one of the simplest ways that I know to experience God's blessing, and yet millions miss it in its simplicity. Let's look more closely at it. Notice it says "everything he began." Don't wait for someone to tell you to get involved. Volunteer and let them assign you or look for something needed to be done and do it.

Next, is "service in the house of God." Too many people in the church are looking to be paid for what they do in the service of the house of God and that is all they get. When the house of God is serviced from the heart, the prosperity accompanying that is without measure. Hezekiah checked out the law and the commandments as to what pleased God. He did it not halfheartedly, but with all of his heart because he wanted a relationship with God and not the pastor. He did what he did for God's house when the pastor was nowhere around observing.

Jesus the man was approved of God (Acts 2:22). Surely if He had to be validated by the Father, you and I cannot expect less. Signs, wonders, and miracles follow anyone willing to speak truth and live holy. Pastors do not or should not ordain anyone into the ministry who has not demonstrated the same things that showed that Jesus was approved of God. Pastors recognize gifts; they do not give them. Deaf ears, blind eyes, and broken lives were all healed while I was still working my secular job. Doing what Jesus did as a man in the earth caused me to be recognized by people long before I was told to go into the ministry.

Serve the Lord with your whole heart. Works are to accompany your faith, and recognition of gifts and talents will follow.

## If You Can't Beat Them, Join Them

Esther 8:15 (KJV)—*And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.*

One way for us to attract those who have yet to receive Jesus Christ is to be happy in what we have in Him. Light, gladness, joy, and honor came to the Jews because one of theirs was in leadership (8:16). As Christians, we have every right to rejoice when a godly man or woman is elected or appointed to office. "And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them" (8:17). We never want people to be afraid of us, but we should never downplay the position God puts us in. God places us in positions so the world will want to incur our favor because we are in charge. They don't know we are committed to walk in love toward them.

Not only is what we as Christians have different and powerful, it is also profitable to those who join us. We stress in our church the importance of making the newcomers feel welcome and valuable. There are too many cliques and private clubs in church at times in competition with one another to be more or better. No one can have more of Jesus than anyone else. It does not get better than being saved and filled with God's Holy Spirit. Church, stop blocking out the newcomers. Remember, you were once one of them. I believe that when we cease having favorites we will find greater unity in the church. That will cause improved harmony and result in more power released for the benefit of the masses.

God never intended for us to hoard anything. It is sometimes challenging to get some people loose from their finances. Fear makes people hoard money. I am not talking about giving everything away to the point of becoming a statistic yourself. I believe giving, the same as receiving, should be divinely inspired. I believe God observes and looks at a few checks and balances before He opens the windows of heaven on your behalf. But some would rather give their loot than their love. God wants you to share both freely as directed by His Spirit in line with His Word. Do you hear?

## Knowing What to Do Is Not Automatic

Proverbs 7:4 (KJV)—*Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman.*

**I** respect education. I admire gifts, skills, and talents in people. However, if that is all you have going for you, you are vulnerable and at risk. The end of this verse tells us why we need to say to wisdom and understanding who they are to us: “That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words” (Prov. 7:5).

This is not just speaking of a female, it is also referring to anything or person that will distract you from the voice of God and His perfect plan for your life. The principle should be heeded in the natural, but please see the deeper meaning of this entire chapter. This chapter is a warning for anyone who allows themselves to get away from the Word of God, the ways of God, and the wisdom that will make and keep you free.

Salvation is the greatest thing that has ever happened to any of us. There is nothing compared to the benefits that accompany receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior. However, the benefits do not automatically manifest. There are some things that the Lord does, there are things we, His children, must do at times, and then there are things we often do together. When each of us is doing what we are called to do, then results accrue to us and quickly. Stop sitting around waiting for your ship to come in, especially if you did not send one out.

By the same token, that impulsive spirit which you have cooperated with cannot and must not continue. It is designed to get you in trouble and keep you there. The time has come for us to pay close attention to the person and ministry of the Holy Ghost. He was sent to teach us all things that pertain to life and godliness. He was given to lead and guide us into all truth. He was made available to show us things to come. When we recognize and utilize Him and all that He represents, things will change for us. When we become more cooperative, we give Him something to work with. You did not automatically become a Christian, you had to respond to His initiative. Well, by His Spirit He is still pursuing a relationship with you so together you can get things done.

## I Know What I've Called You To Do!

*Isaiah 61:1 (NLT)—The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me because He has appointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and to announce that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.*

Since this whole idea for ministry was God's and not ours, we must learn to rest in His Word and His plan. He knows that for us to take the good news of salvation, health, peace of mind, and prosperity to those in need, we had to have His Spirit anoint and energize us so that we could be a living testimony to those to whom we are sent.

Preaching and teaching God's Word are the best tools you can

**The key is being willing  
to be used by the Lord  
on behalf of others.**

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have, but people, being the creatures that they are, tend to observe the messengers before they submit to the message. Since you are sent to comfort the brokenhearted, don't you have the right to approach God

with the need to mend your heart also? How effective can you be to others when you are in need of the same things that are hurting them? God will use your testimony of victory, but it would be cruel of Him to send you to others without your victory report to tell others "how you got over."

Wherever you are emotionally or spiritually at this moment, know that the God who called you with the message of good news to the poor, comfort to the brokenhearted, declaration of release and freedom to those captive (both in and out of a physical prison), will not abandon you. No, He will provide first His Spirit, then whatever other resources you need to meet the needs of others. The key is being willing to be used by the Lord on behalf of others. Hold fast to your confession, and then act on that which you confess with confident assurance that the One who sent you never forgets what He has called you to do.

## But When I Am Afraid

Psalm 56:3 (NLT)—*But when I am afraid, I put my trust in you.*

**W**e can't prevent fear from coming to us any more than we can stop temptation from visiting. How we respond when fear or temptation arrives separates the winners from the losers.

Because of 2 Timothy 2:7, which reads, "for God has not given us a spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind," *I used to be frightened of the fact that I was sometimes afraid!* I thought it was a sign that I was without faith, until the Holy Spirit taught me to treat fear the same way I did weakness.

Jesus Himself said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). He did not say that I would never feel weak. He did promise that His grace was sufficient for me to rely on His strength. I decided that since that was true concerning when I felt weak, I would apply the same principle when I felt afraid. His grace is sufficient for me in all things, so when I feel afraid His faith is made perfect.

**God delights in showing up for any of His children who place their trust in Him. Stop trying to handle your affairs yourself. Trust in the One who made you.**

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God delights in showing up for any of His children who place their trust in Him. Stop trying to handle your affairs yourself. Trust in the One who made you. Let Him produce the strength when you feel weak, the faith when you feel afraid, and the way of escape that you need in the midst of temptation. He will do it!

## Promised Inheritance

Hebrews 11:8 (KJV)—*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

**I**t takes faith to obey a call especially when you are clueless as to where it is that you are asked to go. It takes faith to go, therefore, faith must first come to the one spoken to. The call is given, a choice is made to obey then, and faith is released then.

Faith to obey usually occurs the moment your spirit registers to “let’s do it.” The moment faith prompts you to obey is the moment your inheritance kicks in. At this point it is only a promise, but to the one who promised you something, it is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your trust in their word.

When I believe that someone trusts me, having no evidence that I will or can do what I promised, I become creative in ways to bring it to pass. When a person trusts me every obstacle is seen as an opportunity. Some people want to be called to stay close to that which is familiar, comfortable, and convenient. I suppose that I was so grateful that God called me for any reason, or for that matter would even talk to me, it never occurred to me to desire a particular place to go.

Clinton and I served the Lord in several places. We discovered because He ordered our steps and opened doors for us to enter for a season, that we were willing to stay or go. The Lord always told us where we were to go, but not once did we expect an inheritance because we obeyed. The bonuses and benefits from obeying the Lord with an attitude of excellence and appreciation are wonderful. But discovering that I want to serve Him even if there are no benefits is more thrilling than I could have imagined.

We observe the world and even ministers acting like the world in that they are looking to see “what is in it for them” before they agree to go, obey, or get too involved. Those people miss the sheer fun of it all which is the look on a face, the smile that once was a frown, and the words “God bless you,” or “Thank you for enlightening me with truth.” Try putting a price tag on that and you will learn that it is priceless.

## The Enemy Will Possess What You Fail to Occupy

1 Chronicles 10:7 (KJV)—*And when all the men of Israel that were in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities and fled: and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.*

**I**srael focused on Saul and not on God when Saul killed himself. So when Saul died, Israel had no other established strength and they ran. Are we not often guilty of the same thing?

God never wanted them to have a king in the first place, but they insisted. When we insist on what we want and not on God's plan for us, we will find ourselves running in fear when what we insisted on does not last or provide what we were looking for. Saul killed himself because he was afraid of what the Philistines would do to him when he was found wounded. The Bible says, "He suffered no man to do them wrong" (Psalm 105:14). Yet Saul was wounded. It was not because God allowed the enemy to injure this king. Saul died for his transgressions that he committed against the Lord (1 Chron. 10:13).

The people of God had depended on a human and forgot that Jehovah God—their Deliverer—had been

their all and all. Then when the man was no more they ran and scattered. This allowed the enemy to come in and possess what God had so generously provided for them.

Who are you looking to for your source and life? What will the death of any one of your mentors or leaders do to you? There are precious men and women of God whom I love dearly, I respect and admire them a lot. But I know of no one, from my mother to my children, whose passing will cause me to run or give up one inch of what God through Jesus has provided for me. By the same token, if the Lord required me to give it all away today, I could and I would. It would be my privilege to obey Him. But no devil in hell or the earth will possess what God gave me because I ran and left it behind. My life is hid in Christ and I choose to stay in Him.

### **Who are you looking to for your source and life?**

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## My Substance Is Familiar to You

*Psalm 139:16 (KJV)—Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

**T**here is nothing new in our lives, and any incident or accident involving us does not catch You unaware, O God. You saw us before we were born. Every day of our lives was recorded in Your book. “Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed” (NLT).

Before one day of my life began, you had already ordained the seconds of my life. You knew what I was going to look like, be like, and do for You when I was yet unformed.

I am not a surprise to You. You are neither shocked nor discouraged about me or my life. You have the full picture, and my end is already planned. It is a plan for good, and not evil. It is a plan to prosper and succeed in all things.

I just need Your help in revealing to me what You have already recorded about me. Since You know what I think and what I will say, help me to think Your thoughts and speak what is pleasing to Your ears.

Not only can I not flee from Your presence; I don't want to be anywhere where I cannot sense You. I know, according to the Word, that You are with me in all things, at all times, but there is a special thrill in sensing You near.

I know You are in me, but the assurance of Your presence is what quickens me and makes me confident to be bold and speak boldly.

As this day unfolds, may the glory and wonders of Your majesty be released in all things. Present me with opportunities to do what is Your will—not just to satisfy myself but to benefit others.

Thank You for letting me know and reminding me that You are very familiar with me and have known me from before I manifested in the earth. You chose me, in Christ, before the foundation of the world.

We are longtime friends. I desire to cooperate with You fully.

## Watch Being Provoked by People

Psalm 106:33 (KJV)—*Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.*

I was very much aware that Moses did not get to go into the Promised Land with the people of Israel because he did not do what God said to do. Moses smote the rock twice instead of speaking to it as God had instructed him. There is more to that but I never saw it until I read this verse in Psalm 106.

In Numbers 20:8, God gave Moses explicit instruction to: (1) Take the rod. (2) Gather the assembly together. (3) With Aaron, he was to speak to the rock while the people watched. God said the rock would give water, and Moses and Aaron were to bring water out of the rock and give drink both to the congregation and their beast. Verse 10 records that Moses obeyed to take the rod and gather the congregation together before the rod. From that point on Moses “missed it,” because “he said unto them.” But God never told Moses or Aaron to say anything to the people, let alone verbally attack them. After all, they were God’s people and Moses was His servant representative.

Moses did not teach them the primary principle in the matter, which was to speak to anything that God said to speak to and watch it produce what God purposed for the spoken word to accomplish. It was still quite a feat to strike the rock and have it give water. But the principle was missed. The lesson in it for us is that we are not to ad lib or improvise when God has already spoken specifically to us concerning a thing.

How many times have we missed out by attempting to “help God out” by doing a thing differently than what He said to us? How dare we alter what God has said as though we know more or have a better way.

Years ago, I asked our staff to share with us anything they saw or knew to make things at RLCC better. We would listen, however, they were not to implement anything that the Trustees had not approved regardless to how good it was. Why? Because God usually puts in charge those whom He plans to hold responsible for obeying Him. With that in mind, I don’t want to find myself upset with you or be displeasing to God. Therefore, we will do it the way that He has instructed us to go. Surely you can understand that.

## Wisdom and a Wife

Proverbs 8:35; 18:22 (KJV)—*For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord. Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord.*

**B**oth wisdom and a wife are important and should be found in this order. Without having found wisdom you will not recognize the right wife when you find her. All of us need favor of the Lord and He delights in rewarding His sons with both life and a wife.

Men, failure to find wisdom (who by the way, is not lost, just unavailable to those unwilling to seek after her), will hinder you from finding the life God intended you to experience. Surely by now you know that life is more than breathing. It is not what you eat, where you live, what you wear or have. Life is maturing in the things of Christ by the Word of God in actions—wherever you are, whatever you are doing, and especially with whom you do things.

Life without God's wisdom is existing; it is not living. Wisdom allows you to make godly choices. Wisdom helps you to recognize truth from fiction. Wisdom shows you paths to walk on and paths to avoid. Wisdom speaks of excellent things and the opening of its lips shall be right things (Prov. 8:6). Wisdom loves those who love her and those that seek her early and diligently shall find her (Prov. 8:17). Wisdom, like a good woman, has to be pursued and shown that you love, respect, and care for her. Wisdom, like any fine lady, does not want to be taken for granted or abused. Wisdom will abandon and divorce anyone who fails to appreciate her value. She, wisdom, will work with you, help you build a life together, and require little more than love to stay with you through whatever life presents as "showtime."

The best book in the world to study on "how to" where a woman is concerned, is Proverbs on wisdom. If you will do what wisdom wants and apply it naturally to the woman in your life, you will never fail in your relationship. The bonus for obtaining wisdom and a wife is that you also obtain favor of the Lord. There are no favors anywhere like God's favor. Choose today the grace of God to learn how to obtain His wisdom. Once you have her you are ready for a wife, even if you have a spouse. I suspect wisdom can teach you how to enjoy her God's way.

## And It Came to Pass

Genesis 24:15 (KJV)—*And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out.*

I'm not so sure anymore that God delays what we ask for. I suspect that He is examining us to see if we are ready to receive and handle what we have requested. One thing I have learned: God doesn't deny us anything we can manage.

One reason the servant's request came to pass before he finished speaking was that he was on assignment for Abraham, who was being used to fulfill God's plan for mankind. Isaac, the covenant son, needed a wife. Abraham was old, and things needed to be done quickly. God was simply waiting for the servant to make the request. God, being sovereign, could have arranged everything any way He wanted, but when He designates a particular way to do a thing, He will not violate what He has established to accomplish His perfect will.

**Isn't it wonderful that God is moved only by His Word and not by the conditions or circumstances around us?**

Isaac could have been given a wife when he was thirteen. However, it was God's time for him to marry at the age of forty. What would you have done while God worked His plan? Abraham was old when Isaac was born. Yes, he had God's word about being the Father of many nations, but what was the delay? Abraham may have thought: God, first You ask me to sacrifice the lad. Then, You provide a sacrifice in his place. Now he's approaching forty and still no wife or heirs. When, God, when?

Isn't it wonderful that God is moved only by His Word and not by the conditions or circumstances around us? He may only give you a piece at a time. He told Abraham where to sacrifice Isaac. He did not tell him which mountain until He arrived there. Are you waiting on God? Good. He will fill in the gaps shortly. A delay is not a denial. If God promised, wait on Him. What He promised you will surely come to pass.

## And So He Prospered

2 Chronicles 31:21 (NIV)—*In everything that he undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.*

**W**e see that Hezekiah did what was right and truthful before God. Because he chose to seek God wholeheartedly, God caused him to prosper.

Certainly, talent and skills are good to have; they will open doors for you. Personally, however, I would rather hire people who are obedient to God, who seek the Lord in every area, and who work wholeheartedly. It matters not what gift God has given to a person. If that person is not obedient to God and neither seeks Him nor works wholeheartedly, that person will not be an asset to me as an employer.

I would rather train one obedient, God-seeking worker who is not a slacker than have five employees who are arrogant and cocky about what they can do. People who are wise in their own eyes have no fear of the Lord. They often lend themselves to evil. When they do, they become sickly and dried up in their bodies (Prov. 3:7).

The greatest promotions and rewards come from God to those who give themselves wholeheartedly in service to Him. If you as a Christian need to be supervised in order to be productive, something is wrong. Christians should work as though the task or job is for their own profit or business. More importantly, we ought to view our labor as unto the Lord.

We seldom think of seeking the Lord as to how to do our work. Doesn't it make sense that when we are working for the Lord, He would be the ideal Person to consult about what, when, where, how, and with whom to do our work?

No one can tell you how to please me better than I can. No one can tell you how to please the Lord better than the Lord Himself can. Don't be selective about what you choose to discuss with God. He wants to be included in everything you do.

## Are You Ready for Your Day in Court?

Malachi 3:5 (NLT)—*"At that time I will put you on trial. I will be a ready witness against all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me," says the Lord Almighty.*

**T**oo many Christians live as though there will not be a day of reckoning for their deeds done in the body.

God promised that He would personally sit and refine the Levites, as one does gold, because He wanted them to bring acceptable offerings to Him (Mal. 3:3). Today He is observing our faith and is watching our love walk, which causes our faith to function.

Nearly thirty years ago when I was a manager at IBM, I awoke with the thought of Malachi 3:5 in my mind. I knew God was speaking to me because that very morning there would be a budget meeting where salary increases were to be decided, affecting our employees.

Corporate headquarters had allocated the money for us to use to reward our staff for a job well done. However, my third-line manager had ordered us to provide smaller percentages because she had a personal project she wanted done; she hoped to impress her superiors by staying within her budget and still completing the new project.

At the meeting, I remembered this verse and announced that I could not and would not defraud those assigned to me of their earnings. I took out my Bible, read this verse, and stated that as a Christian I could not comply with this ungodly request.

The silence was so thick you could have cut it with a knife. Of about fifteen managers, I was the only one who refused.

Why did I take such a stand? I knew God had given me this verse for that purpose. But it was not just because I was convicted by this scripture. When I had attended an employee development class years earlier, we had role-played this very situation, and I had been promoted to management because I had refused to sell out an employee under pressure from upper management.

We are going to have a day in court when we will be judged by how we handle our leadership privileges and by their effect on others who trust us to do right by them. Do you want to be acceptable to Him? Then do what is right for those who depend on you to represent their best interests.

## Behold the Beauty Around You

**I** believe the Lord is saying, "What do you see as you look around you? Are the colors and changes in nature your doing or Mine?"

"No beauty in the natural compares with the makeover that has taken place within you. The beautiful you inside is straining and longing to be released, so do not restrain and restrict the real you from surfacing. No sculpture or painting will warm the hearts of others like the beautiful you released to flow out toward others.

"Humans make up, but I make over. I know all the defects and blemishes and the root causes of them. Makeup merely covers the flaws. My love, My power, and My grace surgically remove that which is not pleasing in My sight. For your beauty, My child, is not external; it is

**You are a masterpiece,  
created by  
the Master Himself.**

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internal, and I alone have access to your inward parts. Do not be afraid to allow that which I have re-created in you to surface, for that which I have done is a good thing and must not be hidden.

"A butterfly was not made to live in a cocoon. It flies unhindered to catch the eyes of others who declare without hesitation, 'Oh, isn't it beautiful!' These beholders recognize My craftsmanship at the very sight of a butterfly; how much more will they see My handiwork in you!

"Therefore, do not hold back your true beauty. Sure, the world will think you are soft and strange. So what! They neither judge nor reward you. I alone reserved that privilege for Myself. You are a masterpiece, created by the Master Himself. As you live a life of praise to Me, I will go before you, be with you, and follow you to ensure that you are protected on all sides from harm.

"I love you, My child, and I know your love for Me. Now allow others to see through and in you what they, too, can be."

## Compound a Difference

Romans 5:11 (KJV)—*And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*

**I**t is so important for the body of Christ to study the Word of God and to be sensitive to the voice of His Spirit. We can easily hear a minister teaching a wonderful, scriptural lesson yet miss going to the next level with the Lord. However, there is no teacher like the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us into all truth (John 16:13).

The word “atonement” is used often in the Old Testament and only once in the New. I was taught that “remission” was our word for today: “Atonement was for Israel; remission is for us.” Certainly, remission is for us, but so is atonement.

“Atonement” means compounding a difference, reconciliation, change mutually, and restoration to the divine favor. Not only does atonement mean all this for us, but we also have been given this ministry of helping others to compound a difference, change mutually, and become restored to divine favor.

One of the best ways I have found to do this is through intercession. I don’t mean just choosing to pray for others. That is good, but that is not how to get it done. I sense that we need to worship the Lord to the degree that He will then direct us in what to do and will allow His Spirit to reach out to touch others through us (Rom. 8:26-27).

*Father, You have made us one with You through Jesus Christ, our Lord. You did it when we were lost in sin. Our atonement through Christ has brought us joy; and because we received the atonement as a gift, we can now give our gift to others as You orchestrate Your plan.*

*The work that remains is not a matter of gimmicks and games to appeal to the lost, the hurting, the distressed, and the dying. Our work is to show them You in our lives as we accept and enjoy our relationship with You. There is no more difference between us. You compounded it and made us one. When they see us, they should see You. May we daily worship You and stay in Your presence so that You can use us to attract others to You.*

## Cultivate the Friendship

John 15:15 (NLT)—*I no longer call you servants, because a master doesn't confide in his servants. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.*

There are no secrets between Jesus and me. There should be none between you and Jesus. That is what best friends are for. When I hear others say, "I just don't know what God's will is for my life," I know that they have not cultivated their friendship with Jesus. When He said, "I told you everything the Father told Me," He was saying, "There is nothing additional you need to know at this point because when you need to know it, the Father will tell Me and I'll surely tell it to you."

Would you withhold from your friend what he needed to know to be happy and successful in life? Of course not, and neither will Jesus. What a wonderful peace I enjoy knowing that He withholds nothing from me that is essential to my progress. Why would He? I am part of His body, and my part must be fruitful in order to complete the rest of Him.

What causes some people to be so comfortable with Him, regardless of their circumstances? Most likely, they have cultivated their friendship with God. We can do this pretty much the same way we do it with others. We spend time together. We discuss issues that are important to both parties, and we agree on what is best for all involved. It is not about individuals having their own way or promoting their own plans. Friends care most about the good of all, not merely the individual.

How much of each day do you spend with Jesus? Prayer is a privileged conversation with Him. But study of His words brings wisdom and power with practical answers for everyday questions and problems.

I have some friends with whom I converse occasionally. We share a mutual respect for each other and enjoy one another's company, but they can never be my source of direction for life's concerns.

Friendship must be cultivated to be fully enjoyed. Today, stop where you are and spend some time with Jesus, both in prayer and in His Word. It will make the journey you are on much easier. Your directions will become so clear that you'll smile at how simple your life has become.

## Don't Insult God with Selfish Desires

Psalm 78:18 (NIV)—*They willfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved.*

**W**e often confuse the desires of the heart with a spirit of lust. Receiving the desires of our hearts as a result of delighting ourselves in God is more than having a selfish request satisfied. Two words for “heart” in the Psalms are understanding and wisdom. When our delight is in the Lord and we are soft and pliable toward Him, He grants the request of our understanding and wise hearts.

With all that my Father has promised and provided for me, I insult Him when I selfishly petition Him for personal pleasure. When I truly delight in Him, in His desires and pleasures, then His understanding and wisdom are in me. And His desires are always directed toward benefiting others.

As Christians, many of us not only forget what God has done, and fail to see what He is doing, but also we give little thought to what He will do in the fullness of time. Instead, most of us are concerned with “Did He give me what I want right now?” We only think about what’s happening at this moment and whether our most recent requests have been granted.

We need to stop and think about this selfish approach before it takes us far from our Father. According to the Bible, such selfish desires lead to rebellion, spiritual forgetfulness (Psalm 78:40-42), and disobedience (verse 56).

Let’s examine ourselves closely to see if we have God’s understanding or wisdom on the matter. For example, let’s seek Him regarding our relationships. Some people’s friendship could prove to be disastrous to us and our purpose in the earth. Don’t get me wrong: there may be nothing wrong with them. They just may be wrong for us.

Let’s allow God to choose our friends and everything else we need. He will always give us His best for us.

*Father, You are a loving, faithful, and caring Father. You know what we have need of in order to fulfill Your plan for our lives. Help us to stay focused so that we derive pleasure in pleasing You. Father, You are fun to play with, fun to work with, fun to fellowship with. You are my joy; therefore, I have no personal demands of You. I love You for all You are.*

## Ever With You

Isaiah 43:2 (KJV)—*When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

Most of us would prefer that this verse read differently. We're not interested in experiencing anything that suggests the possibility of suffering or facing unique challenges. Most of us are trying to learn to walk on water, not through fire!

Nevertheless, here we're told that when we walk through fire, we shall not be burned. Reasoning says that if we attempted to walk

on water and failed, knowing how to swim would be our salvation. But walking through a fire is an entirely different ball game!

**God did not promise there would be no floods or flames. On the contrary, He assured us that, sooner or later, they would pay us a visit. He is, however, with us.**

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But what difference does it make? The same grace that allows you to walk on water will be sufficient to aid you in walking through fire.

The key to victory in such circumstances is to believe that God is with you, to trust that the raging rivers flowing through your yard will not overflow you.

The fires of life come to all of us, of that we can be certain. Our victory is that they have no power to burn us. That, too, is certain if we will but trust in the One who promised never to leave us or forsake us.

God did not promise there would be no floods or flames. On the contrary, He assured us that, sooner or later, they would pay us a visit. He is, however, with us. The water won't overflow us, and our Holy Ghost asbestos suit will protect us from becoming a two-legged piece of toast!

## God's Words Will Always Come to Pass

Psalm 105:19 (NIV)—*Till what he [Joseph] foretold came to pass, till the word of the Lord proved him true.*

**L**ike Jesus, Joseph surely wondered if the plan of God could be done another way. He was sent by God for a purpose; but to accomplish that purpose of God, Joseph first had to be sold as a slave.

Being sold or treated as a slave does not make a person a slave. What makes a person a slave is one's mentality and lack of knowledge of one's purpose in fulfilling the plan of God. What makes a person a prince or princess is to continue to serve God, worship Him, and stay faithful to integrity, regardless of the pit, the prison, or the palace.

You will find that everything God has spoken to you and through you will come to pass. The Word of the Lord will always come true. It will cause leaders in high places to send for you, release you, set you free, make you master of their house and ruler over their possessions.

Never be disappointed with being in charge of what belongs to another. Watch out for the spirit of "I want my own." There is more responsibility to being the owner than some are able to handle. Do what is best with another's things, as though they were your own; then watch God reward you (Luke 16:12).

The enemy is on call to strike you out if he can, but you can refuse to play in his game in the first place. We are not playing games. Our call is serious, our mission is possible, and our final destiny is in sight. We win!

*Father, I want to thank You for helping me learn that conditions may change but You never do. I would have intentionally avoided the pits and prisons, but You were there with me. Wherever I am, there You will be also. So instead of grumbling and complaining, I have learned to sing a new song. When I pray, occasionally the enemy's voice tries to break through. But my praise emanates from my heart, which sings only what You have spoken to me in our times together. It shall be done.*

## God Is Waiting on Us to Wait for Him

Isaiah 64:4 (KJV)—*For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*

**I**magine God having to wait on us to wait for Him because we are prone to push, pull, dial, insert, and inject what we think we need based on present situations and circumstances. Often, we get ahead of God, or get in the way of Jesus—and we generally mess things up.

There is nothing wrong with being achievers, as long as our achievement is according to the will of God in the timeframe that brings Him pleasure. No other God does what He does for those who are willing to wait for Him. One way we can wait for God is to wait on Him in service to others as He creates opportunities for us to minister to others.

The spirit of impatience is not from our Shepherd. True shepherds are willing to slow down the travel time to ensure that the sheep can safely make the journey. Esau said to his brother Jacob, “Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee” (Gen. 33:12). Jacob, the father of the children and the owner of the flock and herds said, “My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die” (verse 13). This leader was not just interested in making peace with his brother, though that was a part of God’s plan. He did not believe that peace had to be at the cost of the increase and blessing God had prepared for him.

God is waiting on us to wait for Him. He’s not just concerned about the reconciliation of a man to Him. He is interested in the frailty of the weakest as well as the might of the strongest. God has prepared for the whole person—spirit, mind, and body—and He is willing to take the necessary time to line everything up. The Goodspeed Bible says He is “a God beside thee that works for those that wait for Him” (Isa. 64:4).

Yes, you are capable of many good, noble, and mighty things, but God is at work by His Spirit, revealing to those of us who love Him what has not yet been seen, or heard of. Don’t you think it’s a good idea to wait for Him to reveal it to us, allowing us to wait for Him? Don’t make God wait on you while you learn to wait for Him.

## God's Intention

Exodus 9:16 (NKJV)—*But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.*

God does not do anything by accident or on a whim. He is deliberate about all things. He commanded Moses to pay an early morning visit to Pharaoh to let him know that He was the one and only and that He allowed him to stand in order to demonstrate His power so His name would become a household word.

Today, God wants to show through His children that this same strength has not diminished but operates in and through us to complete every task and to tell every ear who He is. He raised Pharaoh up to show His power. He raised us up to use His power.

One Sunday morning at our church, we were singing the song "My God Reigns." I shared with the congregation that, long before, a friend of ours, after being out of fellowship with the Lord, came to a worship service in our home. While singing that same song she began to sing, "I got raised." When I pointed out to her the correct words she replied, "I don't care what the song said; when I sensed the Spirit of God in this service I got 'raised.'"

After sharing this story, I asked the people to sing a couple of choruses using her words. When the people responded, the Holy Spirit began to move and speak through me, calling out conditions and breaking bondages.

When I asked all who were healed and delivered to come to the altar, a couple hundred responded. Among them were a man and woman who began to hug and cry. This brother and sister, with tears streaming down their faces, acknowledged that they had just forgiven each other after an extended period of bitterness and hatred. The family members came forward, and a Holy Ghost meeting was underway.

I wasn't scheduled to be at the service that day, but clearly God intended me to be there so that He could demonstrate His power and all present could proclaim His name. The sister who had been reconciled to her brother passed away one year later. God's ultimate intention was to enable that family to come together again and enjoy peace and unity before the sister entered eternity.

## Godly Sorrow Produces

2 Corinthians 7:10 (NLT)—*For God can use sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek salvation. We will never regret that kind of sorrow. But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in death.*

**W**hen you only regret getting caught, or suffering the consequences for a transgression you committed, you are not genuinely repentant. More than likely, you will commit the same transgression again. However, when you are sad, grieved, and heavy because of a wrong committed—even when no one knew about it, that kind of sorrow and repentance will lead you to salvation with no regrets about what you can no longer do. You simply do not want to displease God.

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When pleasing God is a greater priority to you than pleasing others or yourself, you are headed in the right direction. The key is genuine repentance—regret but not condemnation. This is not a license to do wrong; rather, it's an invitation to do right

by following after the Spirit and controlling the passions of the flesh. Condemnation is never from God, especially since He can use the sorrow in your life to turn you away from sin in order to seek salvation.

Long ago, I sought to rid myself of the discomfort I felt from sin. I enjoyed the way I felt when I did what was in line with God's Word far more than the pleasures of sin. Therefore, I adjusted my thoughts, words, and actions to come into obedience with God's Word. As a result, the benefits produced by that godly sorrow were rich and long-lasting.

The desire to do the right thing cannot be legislated or even preached into the heart of a person. No one can make another person do what is right. It happens only when godly sorrow has produced the desire to cooperate with the will of God by becoming pleasing to God.

## His Presence Defuses Satan's Power

Genesis 3:8 (KJV)—*And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.*

**W**ho made the garden and the trees? Imagine trying to hide yourself from the face of the Creator, God Himself. That is what sin will do to you. It will so warp your thinking that you no longer remember you once had the mind of Christ and the wisdom of God.

The man who once had the mental ability to name every creature or beast of the field and every fowl of the air (Gen. 2: 19-20) had fallen from grace to the point that he thought he could hide from God's presence among what God had created. He forgot that God was the One who put him in the Garden of Eden in the first place (Gen. 2:15).

In other words, before there was an Adam, there was a garden that had been created for Adam's provision and his pleasure. God knew where every tree was, its name, and its purpose for being there.

As long as they remained in the presence of God, both Adam and Eve were happy, healthy, and fulfilling God's plan for humankind. Eve's one decision to converse with anything or anyone other than her Creator cost her everything of true value.

This could happen to any of us today. Are we willing to risk one moment of the world's wickedness and its pleasure at the cost of fellowship with our Lord?

The devil wants you and me to entertain a brief conversation with him so that he can seduce us to worship the beast and his statue and to accept his mark on our forehead. Why? So that we will be tormented with fire forever (Rev. 14:10). It is not worth it.

So, don't talk to or listen to the devil even for a brief moment. Stay in the presence of God. Make it your life, because the presence of God in your life may not reduce the size of your enemy, but it will defuse his power to affect you.

Now that I have been restored to God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, I choose to not risk the relationship.

## Husbands, Entreat God for Your Barren Wife

Genesis 25:21 (KJV)—*And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.*

Luke 1:13 (KJV)—*But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name John.*

**H**usbands, entreating God for your barren wives will be honored when you really want your wife to conceive and you plan to assume your God-ordained duties toward your family. Plan to get involved in bringing up your child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord through godly example. You owe your wife and child this kind of commitment.

Undoubtedly, there are women who have cried and prayed and become weary in their attempt to conceive. When husbands acknowledge their spiritual leadership role in the home, they can stand in the gap for their wives and stand against the enemy who's trying to prevent them from experiencing their God-given right to have children.

Husbands, following is a prayer which you can pray to entreat God for your wife:

*Father, I stand before You as a covenant child with Your promises. I come to You on behalf of my wife. If I have allowed anything in my life that has prevented her from conceiving, I confess it and ask You to do away with it, and to open up the way for my wife's womb to be satisfied. I commit to You that when my wife conceives, I will dedicate this child to serve You and I will be the kind of father and husband You have ordained me to be. I will bring up my child in the nurture and admonition of You all the days of his or her life. I believe right now that I receive the strength to cause the seed to go forth for my wife to conceive. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I command satan to call down his forces which have no right to oppress my wife's body, for it is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God. In the name of Jesus, barren womb be opened and receive strength to conceive. From this point on, I believe that I receive an heir and together, Lord, we will serve You as a family all the days of our lives, in Jesus' precious name. Amen.*

## I Am Still Here

Psalm 129:2 (NLT)—*From my earliest youth my enemies have persecuted me, but they have never been able to finish me off.*

I can hardly remember a time when the devil was not trying to alter the plan of God for my life. The devil knows things that are not revealed to us at birth. In our ignorance and innocence, God still watches over us to help us fulfill His plan for us.

Parents need to learn to rest in that truth. I am not suggesting that they are exempt from their responsibility to train their offspring in word, deed, and example. But although they will not be able to protect their children from all the abuses and ills of life, they can be sure that the enemy's attacks will not finish them off.

My history includes unwanted advances from men and neglect from mean-spirited women who should have assisted me with my personal struggles, but didn't. My peers were as bad off as I was, so they could not help. But God gave my mother the wisdom to teach me how to deal successfully with everything in life.

In our youth my brother and I had a teacher who seriously worked to make our life a living hell. Our mother advised us simply to do whatever our teacher required so we would not have to be in her class a second year. That bit of advice has helped me over the years.

I never thought that I would be praising God for all of those people who, without realizing it, helped me become who I am today. So much happened to me at such a young age. I eventually discovered that there was no hope for me apart from a committed relationship with the Lord. When persecution, abuse, or rejection came my way, I always chose to do whatever it took to deal with it and resolve it once and for all. Otherwise, experiencing it a second time might weaken me.

Today, if you think you will not survive what you are experiencing, if the lack and loss in your life seem unbearable, choose to go through. With the Lord's help, you will look back and say, "From my earliest youth, my enemies have persecuted me—but they have never been able to finish me off! I have made it, and I will continue to make it, in Jesus' name."

## Immeasurable, Unmistakable, and Unending Love

Romans 8:39 (KJV)—*Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**E**ach time I read this verse, I realize that most of us don't have a clue about what it truly means to love. The emotional, "mushy-gushy" feelings we have about someone or something are not love. They are nothing more than emotional, "mushy-gushy" feelings!

This verse is telling us that we can't ascend to levels so high nor

sink to pits so low nor encounter anything built, formed, or manufactured that can create space between God's love and us because His love for us is found in Christ Jesus. God does not love us because of our natural personali-

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ties, abilities, or characteristics. He never views us in any way other than in Christ Jesus. When He looks at us, He sees the body of His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased; His kind of love cannot be measured. It is unmistakable. There is none like it anywhere. It has no beginning, nor does it have an end.

Our natural minds cannot comprehend that kind of love. Yet God gives it to us so we can imitate it as best we can, as often as we can, to as many as we can. This may prove challenging at first, but if we will dare to walk in God's kind of love, it will cause a new you and me to surface.

Challenge yourself today to begin "the practice of love." Start with those you are not particularly fond of or who have done an evil deed against you. Do something nice for them in return. This may take a little effort at first; but as you continue, you'll sense a change in them. Most importantly, you will begin to see a change in yourself that only the love of God could accomplish.

## Kept in Perfect Peace

Isaiah 26:3 (NIV)—*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.*

**T**his is God's promise to guard, protect, and maintain our lives. He will provide complete and full safety of mind, body, and estate for each of us who purpose to rest in the sustaining grace of Almighty God.

This promise does not mean that you will never experience an attack. It may even appear that you lack these blessings at different times in your life. The difference will be that if you learn to put your trust in God and rest confidently in Him, you will not lose your sense of safety and well-being. You will not be challenged by lack or neglect because you will have given all that you are and all that you have to the

One you trust—the  
One who has agreed to  
protect, guard, and  
maintain all that per-  
tains to your mind,  
your body, and your

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estate. This confident rest and assurance is perfect peace, which is not contingent upon the presence of anything or anyone but God. As Clinton said, “Peace is not the absence of something, it is the presence of Someone—God.”

Five years ago, after viewing on TV the devastating aftermath of the World Trade Center event, I determined that I would never again concern myself with the natural wealth of the world. Instead, I would work to spend time developing a relationship with the Lord.

*Father, thank You for sparing those who trust You. Thank You for allowing me to see just how transient natural things are and how one unanticipated storm can alter one's life forever. How quickly the homeowner can become homeless and the employed can lose his or her job. But we who place our trust in You will remain undisturbed, even if loss occurs. What is valuable in the Kingdom cannot be troubled by the storms of life because our confidence is in You, and You keep us shielded in perfect peace.*

## No Life Apart from His Son

1 John 5:12 (NKJV)—*He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

**T**his verse is so plain, so basic, and so uncomplicated that anyone should be able to receive it. Society makes rules to govern everyone. Those rules are usually the same for everyone; however, they are not always effectively enforced.

God says all people who have received His Son have *zoe*, or a quickening in Him. They have that spark of the Holy Spirit, who is the only One capable of inserting or injecting life into a human.

Certainly by now you must know that mere breathing is not an indication of life. Breathing is the inhaling and exhaling of the oxygen needed here in the earth to demonstrate activity in a

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human body. But that is not *zoe*; that is not life. Life comes as the evidence that God has given us eternal life, and that witness of life is found only in His Son (verse 11).

When we believe on the Son of God, the witness, the record, and the evidence of what God has provided for humankind is found within us and the fullness of God is made real. All wisdom, all understanding, the gifts without measure, and the ripened fruit of the Spirit are all within, waiting to be released in the direction of humankind.

We either have His life because we have received His Son or we are liars because we won't accept God's evidence of His Son. It is time to stop expecting everyone to abide by the same rules of society when many are operating with the life of God in them and many others lack the moral fiber needed to live in this world because they have not yet received the Son of God.

It's not too late. We can still work with God to introduce His Son to this world to cause them to come into His family. Let's do it—now.

## Nor Will He Go to the Wise

Proverbs 15:12 (NKJV)—*A scoffer does not love one who reproves him, nor will he go to the wise.*

Let's face it, Pastor, some people in your church don't belong there. They do not want the correction from you that will help them grow up. They do not want you to preach certain truths from the Bible. They will do their own thing under the guise of being led by the Spirit of God.

You, as the spiritual leader, think they will improve without addressing your concern with them. Not so. They do not want correction or your godly wisdom. Why? Because they think they know it all or at least more than you. Maybe they do. But God made you, and not them, the spiritual head of the local assembly that you pastor—therefore, walk in your authority and anointing.

**Do what is right for the good of the whole, and watch the scoffers line up or leave.**

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Failure to confront and correct in love allows them opportunity to infect other people who are vulnerable. You need to speak up. Yes, scoffers may leave. Good. Then you can assess the damage and begin anew with those willing to submit to your leadership—flaws and all.

I watched a precious brother and pastor relinquish his pulpit to another, only to have the one who took over cause uncontrolled damage. Our pastor friend died of a broken heart with a handful of people that he would rather befriend than pastor as he knew he should. God told Jeremiah, "Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee" (Jer. 1:8) and "lest I confound thee before them" (1:17b).

One of the wisest things you can do as pastor is ask God to blot out their faces while you preach, teach, and correct them from the Word. They may try to intimidate you, but refuse to be intimidated. Do what is right for the good of the whole, and watch the scoffers line up or leave. You win either way and so will those around you who watch how you handle the scoffers in your midst.

## Obedience and Disobedience Are Both Seeds

Romans 5:12 (NKJV)—*Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

Obedience is a seed sown, the harvest of which is a blessing. However, disobedience and rebellion are also seeds sown, the harvest of which is a curse. Through Jesus' obedience to be put to death for humankind's sins, we now have a choice to change.

God said to Israel through Moses, "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known" (Deut. 11:26-28).

Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). Follow the voice of the known God. He will always lead you in the path of obedience.

God watches to see if we will remain faithful to His commands. When we sow the seed of disobedience, He views it as our turning from Him to other gods. The One we turn to should always be the One who will reward and provide for us.

Second Chronicles 30:9 (KJV) says, "The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him." So today, come on home. A blessing awaits you. Why live in the pigpen when your Father's house, with all its comfort, is yours?

D. L. Moody contrasts the first man, Adam, and the second man, Jesus. One started out well and ended poorly; the other started out poorly and ended well. The first received a kingdom, a crown, and honor, but because of disobedience, lost it all. The second, because of obedience, received a heavenly kingdom and gained all.

Whatever negative conditions you are in today, you can change them through obedience. First, obey by acknowledging that this second man, Jesus, is the risen Son of God who died for the justification of all men. Plant that seed of obedience to God, and His plan for your life will be a harvest of peace, rest, health, and prosperity beyond what you could have asked or thought.

## One Who Denies the Existence of God

Psalm 14:1 (NLT)—*Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their actions are evil; no one does good!*

**W**hile atheists deny the existence of God, their denial does not affect His existence. Things do not disappear because we deny them.

The few so-called atheists I know say with their mouths there is no God, but their hearts are not corrupt. They don't go around plotting evil things, and their deeds are very good. They take on unnecessary time-consuming projects to bring joy to the hearts of others. In fact, they are more moral than many Christians I have encountered.

In Job 12:7-10, Job said to his friend, "Ask the animals, and they will teach you. Ask the birds of the sky, and they will tell you. Speak to the earth, and it will instruct you. Let the fish of the sea speak to you. They all know that the Lord has done this. For the life of every living thing is in his hand, and the breath of all humanity."

Since animals, birds, the earth, and all fish know that nothing lives without God's hand and breath causing it, I am satisfied that the most intelligent of all of His creation can and will receive the revelation of who He is.

I suspect that some who say they are atheists are really saying, "I want no part of organized religion." I don't either. God is out to establish relationships, not religious organizations. However, most things have to be organized because humans have not yet allowed themselves to be governed by the Spirit of God in them. Without organized, Spirit-led people of God, I shudder to think what chaos would exist all around us.

From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God has made. We can clearly see His invisible qualities, His eternal powers, and His divine nature. We are without excuse whatsoever for not knowing God, for we instinctively know the truth of God (Rom. 1:19-20).

I don't like the word "atheist" because it interferes with the fellowship of good, moral, clean-cut, and otherwise fine people. I accept so-called atheists because I understand the stronghold of the devil in their lives and pray accordingly.

## Overcoming Evil

Psalm 119:133 (NLT)—*Guide my steps by your word, so I will not be overcome by any evil.*

**W**e cannot overcome evil with evil. Neither can we sidestep and avoid evil as though it did not exist. Evil is real and must be addressed.

There are two approaches to evil that incorporate God's Word. One is to put the responsibility on God to direct your steps away from evil by His Word—and He can certainly do that. The psalmist requested that his steps be guided by the Word so that evil could not overtake him. The second way is to take responsibility for obeying the Word He has given us and to accept that our steps are already ordered.

No sane parent would lead his children into anything that would be harmful to them. That means God will not lead His children into evil. Truth from God, written or spoken, is sufficient to overcome all evil assigned against you when you act upon that truth.

You may ask, "How do I know that what I am hearing is from God?" That is easy. Jesus stated, "Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own" (John 7:17). The way to settle it in your heart by faith is found in verse 18, in which Jesus stated, "Those who present their own ideas are looking for praise for themselves, but those who seek to honor the one who sent them are good and genuine."

If you want to teach and preach, why do you want to do so? Do you see it as glamorous and prosperous? Do you think it will cause others to think more highly of you and accept you more? Or are you looking to do and say whatever the Father prompts you to say and do?

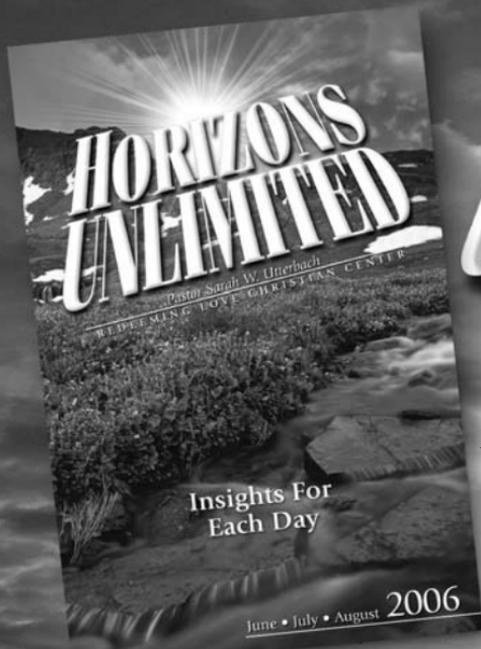
Obedience to the written, Spirit-inspired Word is the only way that I have found to overcome evil. Stop standing around hoping that the day's evils will pass you by. Become the aggressor, take charge, and live and speak what you are prompted and impressed to say or do. Then watch that thing you feared the most leave you alone.

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## Praise Summons His Presence

Isaiah 43:21 (NKJV)—*This people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise.*

God spoke these words about the nation of Israel, but His people have not always fulfilled their part of this statement. They were always His people because of His covenant with Abraham, but their actions and words were not always a praise to Him.

Our covenant with Him through Jesus allows for this promise to be ours also. God has formed and reformed us for Himself. We shall and do declare His praise.

During a Bible study at our church, the people offered up so much praise to the Father that He manifested the gifts of healing and prophecy in demonstration of His power. Several conditions were called out so that people could receive deliverance. Then, while we were still praising and about to receive the offering, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Someone here has a big toe that needs to be healed."

I spoke the word aloud, and a lady ran to the altar with both her shoes on. No one but God could have seen the injured big toe inside her shoe. I laid hands on her as a believer and prayed for her to be healed—and she was.

Again, as we were preparing to receive the offering for the evening, one of the members came forth to say, "I believe I have been impressed of the Lord to say to the people present, 'Your praise has summoned My presence.'" The Spirit said that God was looking everywhere to observe those taking the time to praise Him, and when He found sincere praise He responded with His gifts manifested.

We were formed for His pleasure; we must declare His praise. "Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:8).

God will visit with you, too, when you make the time to praise Him. Corporate praise in the assembly of believers is powerful and electrifying; but when you are alone, think about His goodness to you and His faithfulness in every situation. Meditate on that until your own personal melody forms in your heart. Believe this, act upon it, and receive a visit from the One whose presence changes all things.

## Ready for a Change

Romans 6:19 (NKJV)—*...just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.*

**A**ren't you glad that Jesus came to empower us to walk in the light of His liberty? Before we had His Word to light our path, we had no liberty.

As glorious as the old covenant was, it brought with it condemnation (2 Cor. 3:6). The new covenant has a greater glory because it makes us right with God. That is quite a change.

People who read only the writings of Moses have veiled eyes and minds so that they cannot understand the truth. But when they receive Jesus Christ, this veil is taken away (verse 14).

If you are ready for a change, then don't keep returning to the things that bound you in the first place. A desired change should cause you to search for a new thing. The truth is that our new change will come only when we believe in God's beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

The opposite of bondage is liberty, freedom, and restoration. What does His liberty mean to those who believe on Jesus? It means freedom from restraints; it does not mean lack of discipline. Liberty means citizenship instead of slavery. Liberty gives us a purpose, which is to reflect the glory of the Lord as the Spirit of the Lord works in us to conform us into His own image.

*Dear Father God, I want to thank You that You continued to nudge me by Your Spirit until I realized that I needed a change. I had the socially respectable part of religion. I even had a relationship with You, but it was ever so limited. Your truth demanded a change in me, and you prepared my heart to make one. I honor You today for showing me the purpose and plan You had for me from the very beginning. Help me convey this to the world both with Your words and by my actions. Since I am Your reflection, Lord Jesus, my desire is to show You in all of Your glory as I am led by the Spirit who causes the glory in the first place. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

## Satisfaction Is a Gift

Psalm 91:16 (NLT)—*“I will satisfy them with a long life and give them my salvation.”*

**W**ho is the recipient of this statement? Those who love, trust, and call on God. When you love God, it is easy to trust Him. When you trust Him, it is not difficult to call on Him.

Everything of value should begin with love. All of the imperishable gifts of life must begin with love.

When is one “satisfied” with an extended life? It may be different for each person. To be satisfied means to have enough; to be full of and have plenty, to the point of being weary. In other words, a satisfied person says, “Lord, I have had enough and desire no more.” Only you and I can know when we have been satisfied. Because of our love for God, we can choose when enough is enough.

Then God said, “I will give them my salvation.” What does that really mean? The word “salvation” here in the Hebrew is *Yeshuwah*. It means something saved; deliverance; aid; victory; prosperity; health; help; welfare. It is also one of the names for Jesus. God is saying to those who love Him, “I will give you My Son, Jesus. There is no need for you to pursue prosperity, health, help, assistance, and the winners’ circle. Just love Me, and these things are yours with My Son. Plus you can have an extended stay here in the earth.”

We determine that. God knows we are coming home to heaven when Jesus appears in the clouds. But He has also made it possible for us to stay until we are full and have had enough. These are promised gifts. How exciting!

Recently my half-brother passed away. Prior to his death, I asked him if he wanted to sleep in Jesus or to stay, so that I could get in agreement with him. He indicated to me he wanted to sleep in Jesus. I prayed the prayer of agreement with him, and the manifestation came six weeks later. I knew that he was saved, loved the Lord, and was entitled to the ultimate victory, the ultimate health and prosperity, the ultimate deliverance. He is asleep in Jesus now. Now, he is satisfied indeed.

## Spiritual Sacrifices: The Outcome of Natural Ones

*1 Peter 2:5 (NLT)—And now God is building you, as living stones, into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are God's holy priests, who offer the spiritual sacrifices that please him because of Jesus Christ.*

**M**y growth and maturity as a believer are based on discipline. Discipline—the natural sacrifices I make in obedience to the Word of God—prepares me to offer spiritual sacrifices that I would otherwise be unable to make.

Aren't you tired of losing ground and having to retrace steps you have been over before? Good! God has given us everything we need to work with as He prepares us as living stones for His temple and as His holy priests who make spiritual sacrifices. But we must first give God the natural discipline that shows we are willing to sacrifice for Him. We can forget about making spiritual sacrifices if we neglect to make natural ones.

Then, God can and will build us as living stones as we let go of operating only in the natural. The natural has a season, but that season is over for those of us who want to go on to be spiritual temples and holy priests. God's best was not living in a temple made by hands and having priests who needed to clear up the sin in their lives before standing in for the people.

We, His living stones and His holy priesthood, are His best and His final plan. Hopefully one day we will fully grasp the value placed on us as the creation of God, made in His image and likeness.

I used to read my horoscope to try to find out what my lot in life was to be. I even foolishly believed that I was getting advanced information. Then one day the Spirit spoke to me and said, "I wish you would give My Word as much respect as you do those horoscopes." I suddenly realized that I had been consulting the wrong source and that my faith was in the wrong report. That ungodly information changed daily, but God's Word never did.

I made the adjustment, and I asked for the Holy Spirit to help me stay focused. What I found was that life for me was a lot simpler than I ever thought it could be, yet at the same time I was accomplishing more as I was being led by His Spirit.

## Till I Come

1 Timothy 4:13 (KJV)—*Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

2 Timothy 3:1-5 (KJV)—*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

**I** believe God is saying: “Surely you are aware that My Word is true. Look around you at the many who have departed from the faith, just as the Spirit said would occur in the last days.

**“I will soon return.  
Therefore, stay occupied with  
the actions of reading My Word,  
while imploring, comforting  
and consoling those I bring  
across your path.**

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That is a choice that did not have to be. But, it is so that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

“But you, My child, do not concern yourself with what you did not cause. By My Spirit, I will speak to you all that you are to become involved in. Follow My leading only, for any effort or act on

your part that is not divinely inspired is a waste of your energy and is designed to deplete you.

“I will soon return. Therefore, stay occupied with the actions of reading My Word, while imploring, comforting, and consoling those I bring across your path. Involve yourself in receiving instructions, as well as learning and reaching toward what you learn. As you do these things, you will be actively cultivating and utilizing your faith and you will not be seduced to turn from your faith because you may not be able to stop others, but you can stop others from stopping you. Stay steady till I come. It won't be long.”

## Wisdom Is Always Productive

James 3:17 (NKJV)—*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.*

**A**re you at peace? If not, have you inspected your fruit lately? Do you still approach life like a bull in a china shop? Must things always be the way you want them? Do you enforce the letter of the law, or do you deliver the spirit of the law to others? Do you hold seats and spaces for certain people you are fond of, while requiring others to sit where they are told? When the pastor is present, are your attitude and behavior the same as what your family observes at home? Is everyone else lower than you in your eyes?

These are great questions for all of us to ask ourselves on a daily basis. They are not to make us feel guilty or condemned. They are to help us personally examine our fruit, to identify what kind of wisdom we are operating in and its origin.

I don't know about you, but I don't want to operate in counterfeit, diluted, contaminated wisdom when the real thing is available to me. I thank God for scriptures like James 3:17 that prick my heart and cause me to ask why I settle for the beggarly elements when I can experience the pure things of life.

Together, let's look at our lives to find out if we truly have wisdom from above. According to 1 Corinthians 1:30, Christ Jesus became for us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. That is good news. If your life seems to be topsyturvy and in turmoil, stop right now and ask God for a liberal dose of His wisdom for today's use. Then make an appointment to discuss tomorrow's amount first thing in the morning. Over the years I have found that God's pure, liberal wisdom only lasts me for the day. That's why I return for the pure stuff each day.

I must have God's pure wisdom. Why? Because I must have peace; I must practice gentleness; I have to learn to yield more; I need to dispense full measures of mercy; I cannot function as God's representative without good fruit, which allows no favorites and leaves no room for criticism.

Start now in making a daily request for God's pure wisdom.

## Yet Will I Praise Him

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NLT)—*Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation.*

**Y**ou may be unemployed at this point and all of the natural sources and resources may appear to be dried up. However, nothing should prevent you from rejoicing in the Lord. You can choose to say, "I will be joyful in the God of my salvation."

Joy does not come from our relationship or our dependency on others. Joy does not come from anything that is temporal or subject to change. Those things bring us pleasure and provide moments of happiness, but true joy comes from an ever-living God who gives everlasting life.

What do you do when others expect to receive what you no longer have to give them? This is what you do: give them what you have, which may be what they need more than what they requested. Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

When was the last time you gave a gift that only Jesus' name could pay for? David said, "I bow before Your holy Temple as I worship. I will give thanks to Your name for Your unfailing love and faithfulness, because Your promises are backed by all the honor of Your name."

Things in the natural may look bleak today, but that is because your focus is on the natural. I challenge you to tune in with your spiritual eyes. The world says, "Spend, spend, spend regardless." The Holy One says, "Believe, believe, believe regardless."

The prophet Habakkuk continued in verse 19 with an insight for you today. "The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer and bring me safely over the mountains."

If the mountain before you is too enormous for you to climb, that is good. Jesus never told us to climb each mountain. He told us to speak to it and believe that in His name, it will move, and you will walk safely to the other side. Be joyful in the God of your salvation.

## Void of Understanding and Perception

Isaiah 6:9 (KJV)—...*Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*

**U**nderstanding and perception are not connected to the brain. Both are processed in and proceed from the heart.

Several major Christian magazines and newspapers are full of advertising for meetings, conventions, seminars, services, conferences, and revivals all over the United States. But you seldom, if ever, see an invitation just to come hear or meet Jesus. When was the last time you were invited to a meeting for the sole purpose of coming to sit in His presence and just be with Him?

Agendas are so full of what we want to do to attract and excite the crowd that Jesus is often left out—and sometimes the place is so full that He couldn't find a seat if He got in. We may hear a lot and even see some extraordinary things, but do we walk away with understanding and perception?

What is the purpose of all these gatherings? I know the Bible tells us to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is (Heb. 10:25). But we seldom complete that verse, which says, "...but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Not only are the attendees instructed to come together in order to be encouraged, but so are the leaders. We need to ask ourselves if we are blessing those who bring light and truth to us by doing what we hear and see. Or do we feel that once we give in the love offering, our obligation to them is over?

Rather than receive a large check in the offering from you, I would prefer to know that you are doing what you've been taught, and that you are perceiving what the Holy Ghost is saying to you about what I have said.

Your brain cannot process what I teach you or do before you. Check out your heart. Make sure it is sound; then you will be filled with godly understanding and be able to discern according to a righteous perception.

## Trust in Me

Jeremiah 49:11 (KJV)—*Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.*

I believe the Lord is saying, “I never intended that children should depend on their parents; nor did I expect that wives would look to their husbands as their source. My plan was never to put couples together and include children in their lives in order for them to exclude Me as their supplier for all that pertains to life and godliness.

**“Give your children back to Me, for I gave them to you in the first place.”**

“Women and men should never try to ‘snag or catch’ a person of the opposite sex. I want you to dress up and make up to please Me first. Then do it because you have pride about

your appearance, which I designed.

“When you want to look good for Me, adjust the inner person to line up with My Word. When you want to look good for yourself, you’ll start early in the morning because you are with yourself twenty-four hours a day. On the other hand, when you dress to please others, you’ll only look good when they are present; then, if they fail to show up or they leave, you will be disappointed and hurt. So work, first, at our relationship. I will be a spouse to you when another has left you in the state of widowhood.

“Give your children back to Me, for I gave them to you in the first place. Your children never need be without a father, because I will preserve them alive. Certainly, you must teach your children early to respect their earthly father. However, they are to depend on Me to meet their need and their desire. Train up your children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not be frightened to lose an earthly parent. Children should be taught to honor and respect their parents. But they are to be trained to look to Me for everything.

“Likewise, I want you to enjoy the fellowship of other humans; but let your trust be in Me and Me alone, for I will never lie to you. I will never disappoint you. I will never abandon you for another, for there is no replacement for you in My heart. Your value to Me is far greater than you can imagine.”

## Your Space of Time to Obey

Hebrews 3:15 (NKJV)—*Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.*

I believe God is saying: “My child, it is written, ‘The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life’ (John 6:63). Therefore, if you will receive the glorious truth that I will personally speak to you and believe and act on it appropriately, then the words ‘life’ and ‘living’ will take on whole new meanings for you. For it is My delight and My desire to lead My children by My Spirit into My perfect plan for their lives.

“For in My perfect plan you will have peace in the cacophony around you. You need not be confused or dismayed; life is only a puzzle to those who refuse to be led by My Spirit. He will always lead you into life, light, and truth. Once you have heard My voice, do not render your heart to be stubborn and rebellious. I will consider it as witchcraft

**“Life is only a puzzle to those who refuse to be led by My Spirit. He will always lead you into life, light, and truth.”**

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and withdraw My anointing from you, as I did from Saul. My Son died so that you and I could commune together as He and I did. But remember that He said: ‘I only do that which is pleasing to My Father’ and ‘I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.’ Make My message to you a priority. For when you do, you communicate to Me how much you value Me and My words.

“Never withdraw or hold back on what I speak to you. I may take you a new way, but it will be the right way. I may introduce you to some new things; that is how inventions are born. I may require you to alter relationships. Don’t be afraid to let go. It may be that the very ones you have depended upon have hindered you from moving on and out with Me. Listen, for I am speaking. This is your space of time to obey.”

## God Will Hold You Up

Psalm 145:14 (KJV)—*The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.*

**I**t is certainly encouraging to know that God will get involved with His people as a prop for us to lean upon when life and wrong choices try to knock us down.

There are times when some Christians fall away, become overwhelmed, and appear to be overthrown. However, “The Lord upholdeth all.” There may have been moments when you felt like a fugitive from anything that is spiritual. However, “The Lord upholdeth all.”

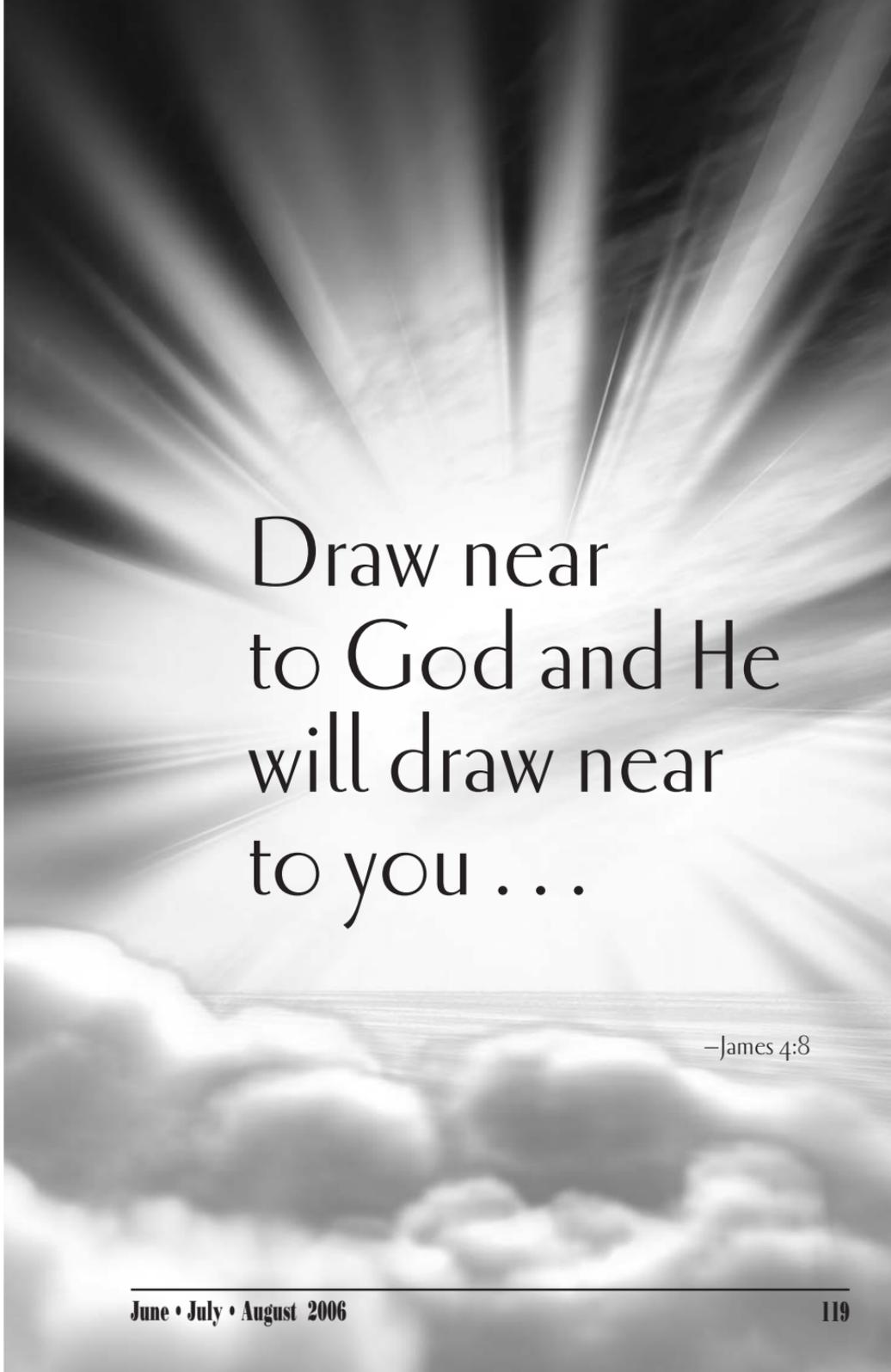
**There are times when some Christians fall away, become overwhelmed, and appear to be overthrown.**

He does not just uphold and prop us up. Rather, “He raiseth up all those that be bowed down”: He lifts us up. He comforts us through the circumstances and conditions in life that cause us to be bowed down. The Hebrew word

for “bowed” means “curve.” So when life throws you the curve ball, you can know that the enemy has designed it to cause you to bow down. However, you can choose to rejoice because your Father—the Creator of the universe, the Maker of all things—is committed to lifting you and comforting you at that time.

Therefore, you can stop looking to others for your props, for your comfort, or for your being lifted up. God has reserved that responsibility for Himself through Jesus, and He will provide it for everyone who will receive it.

*Most holy Father, I thank You that I can be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble. You have known my soul in adversities (Psalm 31:7). Tight spots may present themselves; affliction will occur; but none of these can keep You from providing Your peace to me as I focus on what is important: Your Word and the power behind the truth it truly represents. This day I confess and claim Your supernatural support in all my efforts for You, as well as in the challenges scheduled to visit me. Though I may fall or fail, I will never become a fatality, for I am free to live uprightly, in Jesus’ precious name. Amen.*



Draw near  
to God and He  
will draw near  
to you . . .

—James 4:8

## Hoping Power Will Not Get It

Esther 9:1 (KJV)—...in that day...the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them).

**A**re you fearful of a threat? For His people, God can alter all circumstances in a moment.

Jim Crow laws changed the attitudes of some weak people toward people of other races, but some things cannot be changed. Signs at water fountains said either “white water” or “colored water.” The water sign did not affect the water at all; it was still the same. However, attitudes changed. The people who previously drank from the same fountain now felt either superior or inferior.

The thing that changed Jim Crow laws was just another law to override them. Regardless of the color of your skin, it matters not what is written against you. God can and will move on the hearts of people willing to listen to Him and rewrite human regulations to put you on top.

The question is not whether God can fix it for you; the question is what will you do when you get to the top. Will you become just like your predecessor, or will you represent Jesus, the One who changed it for you?

I do not hope to have power over the devil, my only enemy. I have power over him because my Champion obtained it. Jesus' conquest gave me power to develop my hope into faith, which is the only evidence I need. I am not “a’hoping and a’praying”; my hope is in Christ Jesus, and my praying is saying what I believe based on what God has already promised me.

Anyone hoping to defeat or harm you probably never will, for there is no power in hoping anything against the people of God. Unless what you are reading is the Bible or what is God-inspired, do not allow what is written to determine the outcome of your life. The devil comes in to steal, kill, and destroy. He comes to deceive, and those who fail to learn who they are in Christ Jesus will fall for his lies.

Trust me, anyone who tries to form any weapon against you is hoping you are uninformed of God's Word. So if you don't know God's promises to you, make a decision today to learn about Jesus. He will teach you by His Spirit. Then faith to believe will take charge.