



# HORIZONS UNLIMITED

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REDEEMING LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER

Insights For  
Each Day

December • January • February 2007-2008



In 1979, I observed in the life of a friend a devotional practice that seemed unusual to me. Every day, she would walk into an open field across the parking lot from her office, then 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.

In John 10:27, Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Prompted by this verse, I began to train myself to be able to distinguish the voice of the Lord from all other voices. 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.

The passages in this devotional are drawn from words the Lord has spoken to me in times of daily fellowship with Him. As you begin this devotional, wherever you may start to read, make Jesus your way, your truth, and 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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A ministry of  
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All scripture references are taken from *The King James Version*, unless otherwise noted.



# Turn Your Life Around

*...by submitting your life to Jesus Christ. If you do not recall making a confession of Jesus as your Lord and Savior, 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.*

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**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!

## From Sheepfold to Shepherd

Psalm 78:70 (AMP)—*He chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds.*

**D**uring David's day, he was God's choice and selection to lead His people, who were His inheritance long before David assumed his role and assignment. For a time, another man, King Saul, was in the position that God had chosen for David. When God chooses you, He is also responsible for taking you to the place of His assignment for you. And it appears that God observes how we handle what we're doing in the natural to help determine the success of our spiritual assignment.

The people of Israel were in need of a shepherd—a leader—but they were God's inheritance, not David's (Psalm 78:71). If we take a lesson from that today and never forget that God's people don't belong to us but to Him, He will allow us to work with Him on their behalf.

*Pastors, are you listening?* Verse 72 of Psalm 78 reads, "So David was their shepherd with an upright heart; he guided them by the discernment and skillfulness which controlled his hands" (AMP). What's the lesson in this for us? It is always God's choice whom He wants to lead His people. Therefore, it becomes His responsibility to take us from our sheep pen, pigpen, or *anywhere we are* and, hopefully, be able to teach us how to *discern* and to *do*, just as He did with David.

Occasionally, we learn to *discern*, but fail to *do*. At other times, we *do*, not having discerned first what exactly is to be done. I believe we can achieve balance when we train ourselves to stay humble, recognizing that all things and all people belong to Him. For whatever reason, God chooses us not just to work *for* Him, but to work *with* Him. But we must understand that He always has the lead role. His supporting role is that of being our leader, not our follower. You will be surprised at where He will take you *from* and where He will take you *to* if you will stop trying to make it happen.

## **The Devil Is Not On Vacation — Neither Am I!**

**P**rior to leaving New York on trip via train along the Pacific Coast, I reminded the Father that I was grateful for all He had been doing in my life and ministry, especially during the past 13 months. To show my appreciation, I wanted Him to know that although I would be away from the pulpit at RLCC for a couple of weeks, I was available to work with Him at any time during this trip.

After arriving in Los Angeles, I went to a grocery store near the hotel to get some bottled water. Upon leaving the store, a young girl commented that she liked my necklace. I thanked her and asked if she was a Christian. She replied, "I don't think so, but I need a church to attend."

**It's so refreshing  
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I recommended a few for her consideration. Then the Holy Spirit said, "She's ready," so I asked her if she'd like to invite Jesus to live in her heart. She asked, "Do you know how to do that?"

We were on a moving walkway, and I led her in a prayer for salvation before we got to the end of the walkway. She thanked me and gave me a hug, as only young people who are happy know how to give. We exchanged names and went our individual ways. My assignment was complete, but the Holy Spirit is still working in the situation and will see to it that what was begun in that young girl will be continued and completed until the day of Jesus Christ.

I praised God for the part He allowed me to play in that young girl's life. It's so refreshing to rest in His work and to be content to do what He asks of you. I no longer have to see everything to its conclusion. I just trust in Him.

## The Righteous Practice Righteousness

1 John 3:7 (NKJV)—*Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.*

**T**wo phrases I hear too often among believers are, “I can’t help myself” and, “God knows my heart.” I agree, none of us can help himself or herself, which is why God allowed Jesus to come into our heart. We desperately needed His help. And He has given us what we needed.

I also agree that God knows your heart, but I suspect He’s wondering why you are still practicing what your old heart dictated before He changed it. If you say you are a child of God, yet you fail to practice righteousness, then someone is deceiving you, and I presume that it is *you* doing the deception. God never does a partial job. Listen to this: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Hebrews 13:20-21).

**It’s not that we don’t know what to do. We simply have not learned to be as little children who know how to trust.**

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God knows He has to mature us to do His will, which is the only thing that is pleasing in His sight. There is no good work apart from Him. It’s not that we don’t know what to do. We simply have not learned to be as little children who know how to trust. Children are so naturally trusting that they have to learn how not to trust. None of us can be great tennis players practicing golf all day, or vice versa. If we expect to be righteous as He is righteous, we must practice righteousness.

*What are you practicing today?*

## We Often Operate Singular When God Is Speaking to Us Plural

*Luke 5:4-5—Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon [Peter], Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.*

Jesus knew they had more than one net; He had observed them washing them (verse 2). He told them, “Let down your nets,” *plural*. He was attempting to reward them for the use of their boats. But like so many of us, they partially did what was asked of them. Peter said, “...nevertheless at thy word I will let down the *net*,” *singular*, which was why that single net broke. When Jesus spoke, multitudes of fish came forth, each trying to be the first to obey Him! When they did not find nets, they all tried to get into the one net, which could not contain them.

I suspect Peter and the others were allowing discouragement and disappointment to cloud their hearing. After all, they had caught nothing previously, although they had fished all morning. I suppose that it would have been a lot easier for them to wash one net over again than to trust the word of the living God—to trust something that went against their natural and professional reasoning—and have to rewash many nets.

When the destitute wife of a dead prophet approached Elisha concerning her two sons who about to be made slaves, he asked her what he could do with what she had? She responded that she had nothing (2 Kings 4:2). Then she corrected herself, saying, “Well, I do have a little oil.” Elisha told her to borrow “not a few” containers from her neighbors but, rather, all she could get. She did, and the flow of the oil only ceased when she had no more containers to fill (2 Kings 4:6).

Likewise, as many nets as Peter could have thrown in the water would have been filled with fish, because the law had been spoken. How often we limit our blessings because we limit our Lord.



## Confront To Correct Before Exposing

Proverbs 30:10 (TM)—*Don't blow the whistle on your fellow workers behind their backs; They'll accuse you of being underhanded and then YOU'LL be the guilty one!*

One thing the Body of Christ has not grasped yet is the necessity of confronting for the purpose of correction. When you look at this verse closely, it is not saying not to expose negative co-workers. It's saying not to go to the boss or other co-workers without first talking to the guilty party.

When you and I allow those we work with to not do their job (without our confronting them), we become as guilty as they are. Several things could be the cause of their lack of attentiveness. They could have a medical challenge they are not aware of, or it could simply be the case that we are having to do our work as well as theirs, because we allowed it to happen and a pattern has developed.

One way to confront before exposing is to say, "You may not be aware of this, but I have been conscious that your recent work pattern has changed somewhat. Is there anything I can do to assist you?" In doing this, you have neither accused nor attacked anyone. You simply gave the person an opportunity to evaluate his work performance and to make the necessary changes on his own.

You should always confront for correction first so that you are not guilty of being underhanded either toward your co-worker *or* your employer. In any event, after you confront for the purpose of correction, if no changes are made, it is unfair to the employer not to make him or her aware of a challenge with a team member or members. It's no better than stealing from the boss when you allow co-workers to continue to collect pay for a job that is not being done. In failing to expose when necessary, you could be keeping your employer from getting the co-worker some much-needed help.

You don't ever want to be guilty of contributing to the company's lack of production. If you confront an issue and changes are made, you will have been a blessing to both sides. If no changes are made, you will have the satisfaction of not cheating your employer.

## A Copy to Resemble

1 Corinthians 15:49 (NKJV)—*And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

**W**e do not think it strange when a baby is born resembling his parents or some ancestor. In fact we are pleased when we are the one the child resembles! But our heads go “tilt” at the thought of someday having a profile like Jesus. In using the word *profile*, I am not speaking of just a side view of

Jesus. We shall take on His likeness, His stature, His image, and His semblance. Surely, if we can look like our parents in the flesh, we can look like our Savior in the Spirit.

**Jesus is the “prototype”  
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image of the heavenly Man?**

“*We shall also*” is a promise that must be fulfilled. We need to

work with God to make it happen. In fact, God and Jesus will not settle for less from us. We have been identified with Adam because of the things done in our flesh. Isn’t it about time that our deeds done in the Spirit identify us with Christ? Jesus is the “prototype” for us to copy in order to resemble Him. Is it so hard to comprehend that we can, in fact, bear the image of the heavenly Man? This is a promise made by the Lord Himself through the apostle Paul.

Ask the Father to help you to release His potential in you, and refuse to limit Him or His Word. When you begin to grasp this verse as a reality, you will begin to see the image change. Begin to declare: “Jesus is the Copy I am to resemble, and I will, therefore, reject anything that is not like Him.”

## The Role of a Train Master

**O**n a recent weeklong train ride, we encountered a group of stalled cars blocking the track that we needed to occupy in order to complete our trip. The train master assessed his role and responsibility and concluded that his primary function at that point was to get the passengers on his train to their destination safely and timely. Although the train was mechanically sound and running fine, the train master utilized the crew to help fix the problem with the car that was blocking the track. He went beyond his job description, which was to oversee the operation of his train, and assisted where the problem existed.

**Where are you today?  
Is your progress being  
hindered because you won't  
step in to take a lead role?**

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Sometimes it is necessary for us to go the extra mile to assist another before we can continue on our own journey. When you do only what you get paid to do, you miss opportunities to be used of the Lord to complete the task before you. Had our train master taken the position, *"That's not my problem; I'm not going to put my staff at risk,"* only God knows how long we would have sat there, missing our schedule. We needed that track in order to proceed, so it was necessary to get involved.

Where are you today? Is your progress being hindered because you won't step in to take a lead role? Thanks to our train master's choice, we ended up where we were supposed to be safely and timely. We arrived later than anticipated, but we were still on time for what was scheduled.

Jesus is our Train Master, and He needs our assistance to deal with the many problems people face in life so that we can keep His schedule.

## My Father Never Stops Working

John 5:17 (NLT)—*But Jesus replied, 'My Father never stops working, so why should I?'*

Jesus did not heal this man on the Sabbath—*obedience* healed him! Jesus merely told him what to do. The man did it, and his healing occurred. Today we have no doubt that this “invisible” Jesus can save us and cause us to spend eternity with Him. But we often question His ability or willingness to heal us. He tells us what to do to be saved and we believe Him. Yet how we resist when He speaks to us concerning healing!

The religious leaders accused the healed man of breaking their law on the Sabbath because he carried his sleeping mat. What about those who assisted him to get to the pool? Someone carried the man’s mat for him for 38 years—that’s approximately 1,976 Sabbaths!

I said to the Father prior to a recent vacation I took, “Although I will be out of the pulpit at RLCC, I am still on call to work with You when You set it up, because You don’t take vacations.” He took me at my word and allowed me on the first day to lead a young woman to Christ. The next day, I led two male relatives in prayer, and, finally, on the train, one of the tour leaders asked to join me for dinner, which she had to get permission to do.

### **...we must work with the Father when He is working.**

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After a time of exchanging questions and answers, I was privileged to lead her in prayer to be born again.

My Father never stops working, so why should I? This was one of the most fruitful vacations of my life, yet I never saw the inside of a church the two Sundays I was away. Attending church is good and right—it is a biblical command. But my point is that we must work with the Father when He is working. What is more important—just doing things religiously, or getting results with the Father? Ask the man who was lame at the pool.



## What You Do Determines Who Your Father Is

1 John 2:29 (NLT)—*Since we know that God is always right, we also know that all who do what is right are his children.*

**Y**ou will be known by your fruit (Matthew 12:33, NLT). You cannot fail to abide by the rules and by the book and still expect God's support. You are entitled to certain opinions and preferences. However, when you have been placed in a role of leadership, it is more important that you stick with what is written than what you think or feel. You can't serve two masters (Matthew 6:24, NLT).

I am harder on myself than I am on any employee of the ministry. I can't require something of our church members and employees, and then violate the policy by doing what I want to do because I am the senior pastor. There are certain rights and privileges conferred upon me by the board of directors that are not contrary to God's laws for me. Yet I never exercise those rights, because doing so could be confusing to others.

**...when you have been placed in a role of leadership, it is more important that you stick with what is written than what you think or feel.**

*I have the right not to exercise my rights!* Requiring the same basic things from everyone eliminates my being viewed as a respecter of persons. However, if God speaks to me to do something for someone, I obey, but I prefer to remain anonymous. I try to never use my position, gift, or call to take advantage of others or to exclude those who may not be my favorites. My Father is always right. In order to be identified with Him, I must always work at being right. So when Jesus appears, I will not have to shrink back in shame (1 John 2:28). Live by the Bible and you'll stay out of trouble—and you'll give the devil all kinds of grief.

## **‘Casting Away’ Prevents You From Being a Castaway**

1 Corinthians 9:27 (TM)—*No sloppy living for me! I’m staying alert and in top condition. I’m not going to get caught napping, telling everyone else all about it and then missing out myself.*

**T**here are many things, especially in the New Testament, which teach us what and what not to cast away. We are to cast away, or cast off, the works of darkness (Romans 13:12), while at the same time we are to cast not away our confidence (Hebrews 10:35).

Paul is attempting to get us to see what displeases God and what brings Him pleasure. The question was asked, “Has God cast away His people?” The answer came, “God hath *not* cast away His people” (see Romans 11:1 and 2).

Never let anyone tell you that God has abandoned you. Since He had been involved with Israel for so long and had too much invested in them to simply wash His hands of them, how much more can we, His Son’s body, expect to obtain support from Him.

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Even so, Paul, who was both an Israelite and a Christian, said, “I do not want to be found unapproved, disrespected, worthless, a reprobate, a castaway.” Paul encouraged both a casting away (of sin) and a *not* casting away (of confidence in God), lest we run our spiritual race in vain.

## Strength Comes from Food— Power Comes From the Lord

Acts 9:19 (NLT)—*Afterward he ate some food and was strengthened.*

**I**t was the power of the Holy Ghost that restored Paul's sight, but the food strengthened his body. As we are maturing in the Lord, we should exercise some discipline when it comes to our meal intake. However, no restraint is necessary when it comes to how much we should feed on the Word of God. You and I know what happens when we either neglect to eat or over-indulge concerning our intake of food. Both have a negative effect on us, which could be manifested in many ways.

Scripture tells us to meditate on the Word "day and night" (Joshua 1:8). In other words, don't let the Word of God depart from you; let it be the light of your life. It may be time to let go of a few meals and recognize that it's not your

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strength that will get the job done. It is God's power that will enable you to perform and complete His plan for your life. You can "feed" your way into experiencing a more powerful spiritual life, but it will have to be on the Word of God, not on natural food.

Never confuse strength with power. *Strength* comes from what you eat, and *power* results from what you feed on to derive true life. Your flesh needs one kind of food—your spirit needs another. One increases *you*; the other increases *God*.

## The Director of Affairs

1 Samuel 16:13 (NLT)—*So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the olive oil he had brought and poured it on David's head. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily on him from that day on....*

**I**t was not Samuel who selected David to be king; it was the Lord. Samuel was distraught over Saul's rejection by God (1 Samuel 16:1). God had to jerk the slack out of Samuel and remind him that He never wanted a king for Israel in the first place. But once God agreed to it, He was not going to ignore the king's responsibility to obey Him. God then required Samuel to get involved in the selection of Saul's replacement. Samuel had to align himself with God, the One to whom Samuel had sworn his loyalty.

Too often, we allow ourselves to become so attached to people, places, or things that we assume that God is not going to mind it if we show our loyalty to others. God is only interested in our loyalty to Him.

Don't ever assume that you know God's reason for the change of a season in your life. Only He knows both the truth and the facts. We usually base our choices on limited facts. But

**The director of affairs is the Lord. Accept His choices, because His selection will always be for the good of the whole.**

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if we knew the truth, we might have a completely different reaction to change.

I have learned to keep my trust in the Lord and to "have no confidence in the flesh" (Philippians 3:3). When you are told, "All is well," a further look behind the scenes may reveal that all is *not* well. Never forget to "expect, then inspect." The director of affairs is the Lord. Accept His choices, because His selection will always be for the good of the whole. And remember that His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). He and He alone knows all about that which concerns you. Trust Him to direct your affairs. Others will often hide truth from you, but the Holy Spirit will bring everything to light that you need to know.



## 'This Is The One— Anoint Him'

1 Samuel 16:12 (NLT)—*So Jesse sent for him. He was ruddy and handsome with pleasant eyes. And the Lord said 'This is the one, anoint him.'*

**W**hen God makes selections, we can look for the unusual and the non-traditional to occur. Jesse obviously had a family of good-looking sons (1 Samuel 16:6). Human selection often dictates that the oldest, the tallest, or the most ideal public-relations candidate be chosen to represent the family.

When Samuel realized that God had rejected the seven sons of Jesse, he asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" Why did Samuel do that? He knew that God had him on a mission; therefore, there had to be another son. After all, God had told him to go to Bethlehem and look for a man named Jesse, because God had chosen a new king from among Jesse's sons. Samuel found the man. He had the anointing oil. So if God said no to the seven Samuel had seen, there had to be another.

You have heard me say many times that God never makes a mistake. He gives clear directions concerning His choices. So do you think you have been overlooked? Consider the fact that maybe you are not God's choice for the job or that you're His choice, but only at the right time. Perhaps you need some additional work in order to perform according to His standards. Believe me, when you are God's choice, only you can prevent it from happening. Of course, if you don't take your stand in faith, you won't have a leg to stand on (Isaiah 7:9, TM).

When God anoints you for a job, He may surround you with many, who are more capable than you, to make the product. But if God has made you the leader, stop trying to make the product, and focus on running the company instead. Lee Iacocca did not become CEO of Chrysler just because he knew how to make better cars. He knew how to run the company to provide the salary for the carmakers.

Do what *you* are anointed to do. Then you will be pleasing in God's eyes.

## I Find No Fault in Him

Luke 23:4 (NLT)—*Pilate turned to the leading priests and to the crowd and said, 'I find nothing wrong with this man!'*

**I** find nothing wrong with this Man." Each one of us can freely say that concerning our Savior! I was meditating on why it is so easy for me to serve the Lord. How can I love Someone so much, having never laid eyes on Him? Why do I trust Him so much that I not only revere Him, my desire is to obey whatever He tells me to do?

When you can find no fault in a person, and everything he does is for your good, you want to draw closer and be nearer to that person because he obviously makes all the right choices with you in mind.

**Jesus repeatedly demonstrates His love for us by providing for our protection, our health, our wealth, and peace that passes all understanding.**

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Jesus repeatedly demonstrates His love for us by providing for our protection, our health, our wealth, and peace that passes all understanding. He has restored us to a right relationship with God.

The covenant we have with the Father is sealed in His blood. That kind of contract can never be erased.

Regardless of how much we love our parents, siblings, spouse, or offspring, sooner or later, we will begin to see their feet of clay. Jesus has no clay feet—just the ones that were nailed to Calvary's tree so that we could walk free of sin, sickness, poverty, and spiritual death. Sin is all around us. Sickness knocks regularly at our door. We will cease to exist here in the earth some day, but having accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord, we will never experience spiritual death. Nothing can separate us from Christ's perfection and His love. Truly, there is no fault in Him.

## **Mud Pies and Mud Slides Occur When There Is No Rock**

**I** made the most interesting mud pies as a four year-old, complete with Mother's chocolate syrup and cherries on top! They were not edible, but they were certainly pretty. As I rode a train recently through several states, over the course of my travels, I observed the most beautiful rolling hills I had ever seen. As I pondered the difference between this particular state and the state where I live, the Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, "This land is all dirt, which is why they have great mudslides. You live where everything is built on rock. It's not as green, but it's also not likely to experience mudslides." I began to rejoice concerning where I lived.

"Pretty" is not always God's best for you. My pretty mud pies could have made a person sick if they had been eaten, because it was not the decorations that made the pies; rather, it was the main ingredient, the dirt. And it was the dirt, decorated with lush grass and trees, that made those rolling hills so breathtakingly beautiful. Yet a mudslide could occur that would cause all of that beauty to topple and be destroyed.

Similarly, if you are not building your life on the Rock Christ Jesus, the mudslides of life could cause what is beautiful to you to crumble and be destroyed. Our former home was built on a lake. There was a huge rock in the middle of this lake, which was part of our property. After living there for several years, I observed that the water and the elements had no effect on the rock. Likewise, when we build our life and our future on the Rock Christ Jesus, the course of the law of sin and death has no effect on us. We can walk unscathed among the sin and all the other negatives around us, because our Rock, Christ Jesus, made us exempt from the mud pies and the mud slides.

Never be fooled by the "pretty" that might not last. Instead, attach your vessel solidly to the Rock that is always able to anchor you and provide you with safe harbor.

## Love: The Tool or Weapon of Choice

**L**et me see what I am capable of without the Holy Spirit's first controlling and directing my life. It frightens me to understand that apart from daily contact with the Vine, Jesus Christ, that I could be reduced to such vile things. But because of Him and My union with Him, nothing is impossible to me.

**O**thers are permitted in my life both to hinder and to develop me. However, I do not have to yield to anything or anyone who operates contrary to God's Word or plan for me. I am all that He desires me to be, because I follow His voice and promptings. They are never wrong.

**V**ictory is mine in Christ Jesus. Defeat knocks regularly at my door, but I refuse to go out to play, because God has a better choice to offer that will benefit mankind and me. That brings glory to Him.

**E**ndurance has become my battle cry when I find myself overwhelmed by the mire of things sent to attract or to distract me. Once I settled that I do not have to have anything until the Father provides it as a gift—without the strings that the world attaches to what it offers—I began to see beyond my limited eyesight into a realm that most people ignore or disdain.

I have Jesus, who has made me complete in Him (Colossians 2:10). I have His character and nature of love, which allows me to wield it as a weapon against the adversary or to yield to it as a representative of the One I serve. The choice is mine. It's also yours. The devil has no say in these matters.



## Worry Will Make You Weary

*Psalm 55:22—Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee....*

**S**urely you must realize that if you could have fixed the thing that concerns you, you would never have allowed it to escalate to where it is today.

Why not act as if you are going fishing? Take the rod of faith and cast that thing as far away from you as possible. Think about it. You

don't even have to get into the water to cast a fishing rod. The same is true with the rod of faith that is used to rid you of excessive concerns. Stay safe and dry on the rock, Christ Jesus, and throw

**Stay safe and dry on the rock,  
Christ Jesus, and throw  
everything that tries to  
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from you as you can get it.**

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everything that tries to overwhelm you as far away from you as you can get it.

The Scripture says to cast your burden upon the Lord. Why? He is better equipped to handle it. He said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me...my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:29-30). You will never become weary from worry when you learn of Jesus. However, holding on to worry will contribute to your attempting to trust in yourself and lean to your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5). That can develop into idolatry. Anytime you start to think you can do anything better than the Lord, you step into sin.

It is only when I think I have a better plan, idea, or way that worry becomes the next step, followed by weariness. Weariness always puts you in the devil's territory. Learn to lean on God.

## Access to Perfection

Hebrews 9:12 (NKJV)—*Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

**T**echnology is such today that to gain access to certain restricted areas, people can either press their thumb or hand against a scanner or even allow the retina of their eye to be scanned. Dental records have been used for a long time to help identify individuals. In some instances, these have been substituted or replaced by more advanced means. Not so with the blood of Jesus.

Notice that before Jesus entered into the Holy of Holies, He had already obtained eternal redemption for us. He took it

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with Him to present it to His Father, who sealed this new covenant—which was the real thing and not a copy—with Jesus' own blood. The Law of Moses offered a copy and was considered the first covenant, which

was administered by men; responsibility was assigned to the high priest. Atonement was performed annually and became a reminder of the people's sins. However, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb, but rose from the dead as the eternal High Priest, ever making intercession to God for His people.

Think about that. Picture Jesus Christ always in God's presence concerning you and me. It was His one-of-a-kind blood that gave Him access to the Perfect One, and to those things that were perfect, on our behalf. No one else could do it, nor would anyone else want to do it. But Jesus understood what the Father had planned for us. Therefore, He considered it a joy to do what was pleasing to the Father.

## Truth Can Never Be Destroyed— Lies Must Be

Acts 19:27 (NLT)—*‘Of course, I’m not just talking about the loss of public respect for our business. I’m also concerned that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will lose its influence and that Artemis—this magnificent goddess worshiped throughout the province of Asia and all around the world—will be robbed of her prestige!’*

**I**f Artemis was so great, magnificent, and influential, how could she be robbed of her prestige? However, Paul’s goal was not to discredit Artemis, but to preach Jesus. Artemis was not central; Jesus was, is, and always will be. Jesus is Truth. Truth can never be destroyed, which is why even death could not keep Him in the grave. Artemis was a false goddess, and all lies must be destroyed.

The only thing that destroys lies is truth. Like so many people today who are making a lot of money, the people there in Ephesus pretended that they were promoting a worthy cause, when, in fact, they were out to protect their source of wealth (see Acts 19:25).

**Never concern yourself  
with lies that are spread.**

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If Artemis was the “real deal,” Paul would never have been able to persuade so many people that hand-made gods are no gods at all (verse 26).

In exposing lies, we often insult the God-given intelligence of His creation, mankind, and we also fail to understand the power of His Holy Spirit. It does not take a genius to figure out, *If I can make it myself, why would I want to worship it?* No, we worship only Him who is superior to us in everything.

God made us in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). He made us a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8:5). Yet there is nothing He created that He considers greater than His creation, man, and we are not allowed to worship ourselves. He and He alone is to be worshipped. Never concern yourself with lies that are spread. Just learn and then speak the truth. The Holy Spirit will take it from there. Truth remains; lies always die.

## Wisdom Prevailing Prevents Riots

Acts 9:40-41 (NKJV)—*‘For we are in danger of being called in question for today’s uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.’ And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.*

**T**he assembly was so confused, they had forgotten why they had gathered (verse 32). Because the group recognized Alexander to be a Jew, with one voice, for two hours, they yelled, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” What commitment, albeit frenzied. In some churches today, Jesus’ Name is barely mentioned once in a two-hour service. Getting everyone in one accord is almost more than we can hope for.

Although the city clerk was not a believer, he allowed wisdom to speak through him. After quieting the crowd, he explained the correct way to charge someone with what you

believe to be a legitimate concern (verses 38-39).

**When you allow  
God’s wisdom to prevail,  
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will be favorable.**

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When I observe so-called men and women of the cloth instigating and heading up protests about what could be legitimate concerns, I think about Jesus and what He would

do. Often these men and women have a following of uninformed people who do not think for themselves. Don’t allow ambitious people to use you for their personal gain, especially if you are a believer being encouraged to act more like an animal than a Christian.

Dr. Martin Luther King led thousands of people from all walks of life in peaceful protest, highlighting the many ills of our society. He was not sent to make a name for himself. He just wanted to right the wrongs of this country. When you allow God’s wisdom to prevail, ultimately the results will be favorable. Mob rule will cause would-be supporters to avoid you. Get quiet and listen for God’s lead.

## God Almighty Is Our Fortress

*Psalm 124:1-8 (NCTV)—What if the Lord had not been on our side? (Let Israel repeat this.) What if the Lord had not been on our side when we were attacked? When they were angry with us, they would have swallowed us alive. They would have been like a flood drowning us. They would have poured over us like a river. They would have swept us away like a mighty stream. Praise the Lord who did not let them chew us up. We escaped like a bird from the hunter's trap. The trap broke, and we escaped. Our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.*

**G**od has always been our defense and He always will be. Just as a parent will go to the aid of his or her child, God is forever watching over us, not just to observe what we do, but to protect us when we need Him. There is a difference between wanting Him and needing Him. We should always want Him not only because of who He is, but also because there is no one like Him. There are moments when no one else but God will do. We need Him. Knowing this, we should never hesitate to call on Him and expect Him to respond to us.

**...we should never hesitate  
to call on God and expect  
Him to respond to us.**

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God doesn't just barge into our lives uninvited. He has equipped us by His grace to handle most situations. That equipping is unmerited favor. Occasionally, we may find ourselves in the dark as to the way of escape, and His help is needed "now." Just acknowledge that you know He has provided the way of escape, and admit that you are having difficulty locating it. His radar can locate you wherever we are, because you are never too far from His signal.

## I Live According to His New Law

Romans 8:2 (NKJV)—*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

God's law can never be done away with even if it is violated. The Law of Moses was often violated, yet the sin of the people could not eradicate that Law. Even manmade laws are broken all the time, yet the infraction does not negate those laws. Also, there are natural laws that are constantly in force, such as the law of gravity. The law of gravity works all the time, even when another law is engaged that appears to alter it. Thrust and lift are a law that appears to do away with the law of gravity, but does it? When you shut down the law, or force, of thrust and lift, gravity is still at work.

Seedtime and harvest are God's law, and will always work as long as the earth remains (Genesis 8:22). Sin and death are a law that is at constantly work against those who are not aware of or who are not operating according to the law that is superior to it. That superior law is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:2). How do you employ that law? By the illumination, revelation, and inspiration that comes from knowing and operating in God's Word.

I never concern myself with sickness, disease, or poverty. Why? I ask for the Lord's help daily in creating within me a clear heart, that I may not sin against Him. The sin against Him is to claim to be His child, yet fail to be led by His Spirit. Since I learned that the Word says I'm redeemed from the curse of the Law so that the blessing of Abraham might come on me (Galatians 3:12), I began to study and learn about what God promised Abraham. Then I refused to involve myself in things that would negate those blessings.

Yes, I live according to the law, but it's the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. That law will always require the fruit of the Spirit in order to engage it. The fruit of the Spirit will also keep it or engaged, or employed, resulting in the blessing of Abraham freely operating in my life. I am living according to His new law.



## Fervent Prayer and Bold Testimony: Killers of Ungodliness

2 Corinthians 10:3—*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.*

**W**e are in a military campaign in the spirit realm and cannot afford the luxury of contending with carnal inclinations, which is where our flesh, or carnal nature, would have us waging war. Too often as believers, we are duped into acting as though we are soldiers in the natural. Yes, we are soldiers, but we are *spiritual* soldiers. The weapons provided for us are not made by men; rather, they are given to us by the Lord Himself to demolish and destroy the strongholds of satan in the earth.

We are God's demolition crew. The way we perform our job is to pull aside with the Lord in fervent, secret prayer, and then to come out of our "prayer closet" with a bold testimony. God wants the world to know that we have been equipped and re-equipped to pull down every stronghold of the enemy.

Prayer and a bold testimony are the only forces I know to combat satan and his lies. There is no question about it, the enemy spreads his arsenal of lies anywhere he can. Too often, he does it in churches where neither the leadership nor the member is sensitive enough to understand the "perilous times" in which we live (2 Timothy 3:1).

The purpose of fervent prayer and bold testimony is that God has chosen this method to win every war and not wear us out. He energizes our prayers with power that no force of darkness can defeat. Fervent prayer and a bold proclamation of God's Word are the weapons we must use, because they are mighty through God. All other weapons merely sting satan. We are to carry out completely Jesus' purpose for coming: *to destroy the works of the devil* (1 John 3:8).

## Never Relax Your Grip on God's Counsel

Psalm 119:87—*They had almost consumed me upon the earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.*

**B**ring your body in line with God's promises, because the body parts grow weary of waiting for what He has said to come to pass (verse 81). At times we ask, "How long, Lord?" The things we put up with appear to be endless. We know every word He utters is truth. Still, we must resist the lies of the devil. Our enemy never lets up, so we can't, either.

*The more the enemy surfaces to try to prevent my walk with You, God, the more determined I become. I dig my heels in and act like a bulldog with a bone when someone is trying to take it from him. Whatever You say will outlast heaven and earth, for they will one day pass away, but not Your Word.*

*Truth is always the fashion of the day, so I determine to wear it well. Your Word is truth and is more reliable than anything that exists. There have been moments in which, had I not known and understood Your Word, I would have thrown in the kitchen sink along with the towel. Hard times come, but Your Word becomes the shield that helps ward off the attacks.*

*You have never misled me. What was both written and spoken has sustained my life. I search everywhere, in everything, for Your wisdom, and I find it. I know that I am a target for the wicked one, but I am only interested in what You have planned for me. Human limitations are revealed to me, but the farthest horizon cannot contain what You have spoken and continue to say to me personally. With Your help, I will not relax my grip on Your commands. They are a sure thing.*

## No Respect for Age or Wisdom

Proverbs 29:9 (TM)—*A sage trying to work things out with a fool gets only scorn and sarcasm for his trouble.*

**T**he Scripture teaches us to live at peace with others as much as we can (Romans 12:18), because there are times when others fail to cooperate. When I find it difficult to acquire peace with others, I adjust and ask God to provide peace for me without them. No one has a right to ruin my day. "This is the day the Lord has made," and until another provides for me a day like the one He has provided, I refuse to allow that person to rob me of my joy and gladness.

A sage is a person of wisdom and will not be drawn into the foolishness of the spiritually immature. Proverbs 29:11 (TM) reads "A fool lets it all hang out; a sage quietly mulls it over." Verse 20 says, "Observe the people who always talk before they think—even simpletons are better off than they are." When you are too quick to speak and never listen to what others are saying, you will cease to grow.

Do you stop to hear what another is saying, or do you chatter all the time? When you are fortunate enough to be

**Do you stop to hear what another is saying, or do you chatter all the time?**

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exposed to godly, seasoned citizens, it pays to take heed to their words. God gave them extended years and wisdom to pass on to us who are called according to His will and purpose. This window of opportunity will close one day, and we don't want to have any regrets about what we did with the opportunity. To this day, I love to visit in person or on the phone with the "golden" saints. Each visit is a window God has given me, for which I am grateful.

Many Asian cultures treat their sages as treasures. Too often, we treat ours as burdens. If you've been quick to speak and slow to listen, repent and begin to thank God for His sages that cross your path. Then "listen up," for they have much to say. Their words are not just utterances; they give out wisdom, of which we can never have enough.

## Running Away Could Result in Your Being Replaced

1 Kings 19:16 (NLT)—*Then anoint Jehu son of Nimshi to be king of Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abelmeholah to replace you as my prophet.*

**T**here is always a responsibility that accompanies our call to the ministry. This prophet of God, Elijah, performed some of the greatest miracles ever seen up to that point. He raised a dead child, stopped rain from falling for over three years, and killed 450 prophets of Baal. Yet because Jezebel, a mere human, threatened to kill him, Elijah ran and hid, begging God to die. The next thing God said was, “Why are you here?” Following Elijah’s explanation about his concern for his life, God told him to go anoint two kings as well as Elijah’s personal replacement (1 Kings 19:15-16).

It would appear that God could no longer depend on Elijah, because he was demonstrating concern for himself

### **Perhaps it’s time for a reality check as to our commitment and call.**

when God had already proven that He was more than enough for Elijah.

Jesus said there was no prophet born among women greater than Elijah. God even sent a chariot to take him away rather than allow him to die a natural death. However, Elijah distorted his office as a proven prophet of God.

Fear is not to be found in men and women of God if they are to continue to be effective for the Kingdom. Where does that leave you and me today? Perhaps it’s time for a reality check as to our commitment and call. Are we bold in the things of God only when the Lord is performing the supernatural through us? Or are we able to continue in our covenant when disaster is evident and imminent? It’s not sufficient to act like a tiger in the pulpit, and then to cower like a kitten in our living room. We need to settle it once and for all, letting our words of faith work with or without the accompanying anointing. The principle of faith works, regardless.

## Kisser or Clinger?

Ruth 1:14 (NKJV)—*Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.*

**T**hese two young women came from the same area. They married two brothers. They were good wives and had a good relationship with their mother-in-law (verse 8). After the passing of both brothers, the two women both started out with their mother-in-law to return with her to her home country (verse 10). But one was easily discouraged, because she became focused on the conditions and circumstances. Naomi did not paint a rosy picture for them, but Ruth was committed. She had no idea that this picture of doom and despair would result in the brightest future she could have hoped for. Orpah kissed Naomi and probably wished her well. But Ruth was willing to cleave to Naomi regardless of what appeared to be.

Watch people who are always wanting to “kiss” you. Where are they now? They are hirelings that run

**Keep your eyes on Jesus and your faith in God. People change their minds all the time; He never does.**

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when changes occur that seem unpleasant or when they think they can do better without you. God watches everything you do as well as what those whom He assigned to assist you choose to do. Never fret, because when the Lord calls you, He will rid you of those who cause your grief. And He will bring forth and accelerate those who were once among you. Just know that you are called according to His purpose and then allow Him the right and privilege to work everything together for your good.

The “kissers” usually don’t last, nor can they be depended on except to gain personal support! But the “clingers,” like Ruth, will go all the way with you and will be willing to work for the good of you both. Keep your eyes on Jesus and your faith in God. People change their minds all the time; He never does.

## Should Someone Else's Sickness Affect You?

2 Timothy 4:20 (NLT)—*Erastus stayed at Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick at Miletum.*

**H**ow could this be! You mean, the great apostle Paul—by whose hands God wrought special miracles (Acts 19:11)—left one of his closest friends and co-workers behind to proceed with spreading the gospel of Christ? Yes, he did. Paul didn't get every sick person healed that he encountered. If he had, surely he would have healed Trophimus. Yet how could Paul just walk away from his sick friend?

Paul was on assignment from the Lord. When Jesus called him and anointed him for His service, no one else with Paul that day was included in the commission to go. Paul recognized that Trophimus' sickness was both a lie and an attack to see if he was going to continue to be obedient to the heavenly calling. Paul knew his friend understood the Word as well as he did, and it was up to Trophimus to deal with this sickness. Paul taught it; his friend had to act on it and appropriate it for

himself. In the meantime, Paul had an assignment to fulfill.

**Every day I am believing  
God to help me continue  
to pass the test.  
How about you?**

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Too many have failed the test of going on with Jesus regardless of what is happening with loved ones. When my grown sons were small, I had to leave them to go to

work. I made a choice to leave my husband under attack at home to go preach the Word. Was it easy? Decidedly not! It hurt, and many times I was still drying my eyes prior to entering the pulpit. But I was called to preach and teach, and I had to let the devil know that nothing was going to prevent it, because I was going to be judged one day for how I answered the call.

Every day I am believing God to help me continue to pass the test. How about you?



## Reconciled by His Death— Saved by His Life

*Romans 5:10—For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Calvary provided much for us. The broken body and shed blood of Jesus reconciled our differences. He took our sins and we took on His righteousness. That restored us to a relationship with the Father. But that was not all. We needed much more. His death got us in the door and in the family. It is His life that has delivers us, protects us, heals us, and preserves us. Because of His life, we do well and are made whole.

I am grateful for the death of Jesus, and I certainly do not make light of the kind of love that was expressed in that crucial act. And because of the way He lived here as a man, I have an example to follow. The record of what Jesus is doing at the right hand of the Father is not as vivid in my spirit as what He did before His death. I know He is always interceding for us (Hebrews 7:25). I know He has prepared a mansion for us (John 14:2), and He tells the Holy Spirit how to lead and guide us to enable us to walk in ultimate victory in every area (John 16:13). All of this is being done in Jesus' divinity.

**The things afforded me now because Jesus rose from the dead are great, profitable, and exciting.**

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The things afforded me now because Jesus rose from the dead are great, profitable, and exciting. Knowing that He has empowered me to live as He lived is very challenging and rewarding. Thank God for the Bible which reveals all of this to me. But when I meditate on His dying for me when I was yet His enemy, I am overwhelmed. Jesus restored me to a right relationship with the Father, and provided me with so much more. I am awed in the presence of that kind of love. There is nothing like it.

## Always Heed the Voice

John 10:27—*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

**T**o recognize the voice of someone usually suggests intimacy. Intimacy does not always mean being involved physically. It is more important to learn the intonation in the voice of someone calling your name than it is to see the one calling. That has never been more true than in the case of Rebekah and Jacob conspiring to deceive Isaac (Genesis 27:6-17). They would not have been successful had Isaac listened to the voice spoken to him and not relied on the hands he touched. The voice was Jacob's, but the hands felt like Esau. You can disguise your skin but not your voice.

Mary was blinded by the light surrounding the angels and did not recognize Jesus until He called her by name (John 20:16). When He spoke to her, she recognized the voice as belonging to her Lord.

**We don't hear Jesus with  
our ears; we hear Him with  
our *kardia* (our heart),  
which is our spirit.**

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Years ago, Clinton and I arrived in a foreign country at two o'clock in the morning one day after traveling since five in the morning on the previous day. The last thing I wanted was for a bellman to recognize our voices as we checked into

the hotel. But we were on the radio in that country, and he was a regular listener.

The word *voice* means "an articulate tone with a purpose." Jesus today has a unique voice to each of His followers. It has no sound as we have, yet each of us, His sheep, knows what He is saying. Why? Because we have trained ourselves to hear His voice by tuning out the many other voices around us. We don't hear Him with our ears; we hear Him with our *kardia* (our heart), which is our spirit.

Always remember to heed His voice. It has a very distinct message with a purpose for each of us. And your purpose is one that no one else can obey.

## What Makes You a Queen?

**T**he New Testament does not mention the word *queen* except to discuss Old Testament events and persons. At times I hear women share that their spouse treats them as a queen in spite of what they say or do. Something about that “rubs” me. As I was meditating on that one day, the Holy Ghost said, “I’d rather you act like a queen than to be treated like one.”

The word *queen* simply means “the feminine of king.” When a woman is said to be treated like a queen, it suggests to me that someone might be allowing her to be happy and accepted regardless

of her behavior and attitude toward him or anyone else.

When a woman asks to be treated like a queen in this manner, it means she is saying, in effect, “Don’t require me to face who I really am, and *never* criticize me, correct me, or require me to do anything that makes me uncomfortable.” A reality check is needed here, because no one who is right-minded will permit that fantasy world to exist for another.

Are you being treated like a queen because you deserve it, or is it a way to keep you in their bondage? Queen Vashti, who was written about in the book of Esther, was born into royalty; she did not simply marry into it. But when she chose to act “royal” because of who she was from birth, the king and his cronies attempted to reduce her status. Her attitude and behavior was, *You may be able to take away my title, but because I am royal, you can’t take that from me.* She for all intents and purposes said, “I’ll give up the pleasures of the palace before I’ll give up who I am. You didn’t make me, and I will not let you break me.” Vashti acted like a queen even though they did not treat her as one. She left personal pleasure behind to walk away with integrity and dignity.

**Are you being treated like a queen because you deserve it, or is it a way to keep you in their bondage?**

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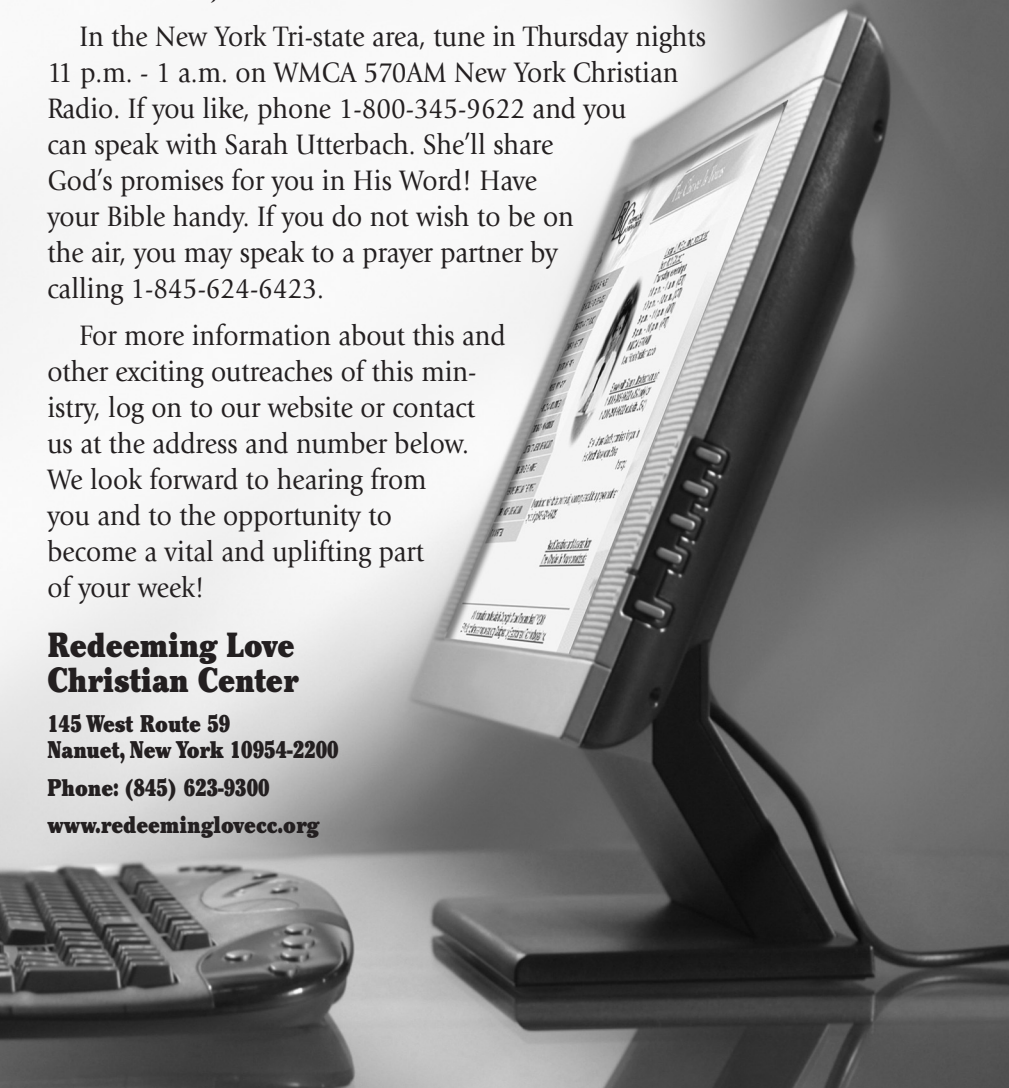
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## Why Die When You Can Live? Part 1

1 John 2:17 (NLT)—*And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves. But if you do the will of God, you will live forever.*

**I**t both amazes and saddens me to see so many people struggling and striving for the things of this world. Didn't anyone ever tell you that the world and the things you lust after in it are both fading away? They are temporal, growing strangely dim in the light of His glory that we are able to see more and more. However, the excitement for me is discovering that if I do His will in word and deed, the spirit of Sarah Utterbach will live forever.

None of us is able to grasp what or how long eternity is, because there is nothing to compare it with. Hebrews 11:3 says, "By faith we *understand...*" That's as close as we're going to get in our attempt to understand eternity. What

First John 2:17 is saying is that "eternity" is how long we can live just by doing His will.

You and I cannot do His will apart from a relationship that allows for us to stay in constant fellowship with the Lord. The born again experience provides for the relationship, but a choice to obey Him in every area allows for the fellowship.

Why waste your time pursuing things that are fading away even as you read this? The world will never give you what you need to live eternally. Only Jesus does that.

**... the excitement for me is discovering that if I do His will in word and deed, the spirit of Sarah Utterbach will live forever.**

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## Why Die When You Can Live? Part 2

1 John 2:17 (TM)—*The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity.*

**S**top loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love the world, you show that you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These things do not come from the Father; they are from this evil world (1 John 2:15-16).

**The choice is yours.  
Make the choice for Jesus  
today. Everything else is  
disappearing. Can't you see that  
the luster is already gone?**

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I am believing God to teach and train a group of people as to what really matters in life and death. You can't have eternity without death.

Everyone is promised eternity. However, the

choice we make concerning Jesus will determine where and how we'll spend eternity. With only two choices, heaven or hell, you don't have to be an "Einstein" to figure that one out!

Hell is a real place. It was not originally created for mankind, but for the devil and his troops (Matthew 25:41). I am so glad that the Spirit of God pursued me until I was able to get on the right side of Jesus, because those on His left are headed for eternal destruction. Those who on His right are destined for eternal life.

Why die when you can live? The choice is yours. Make the choice for Jesus today. Everything else is disappearing. Can't you see that the luster is already gone?



## Results Come from Believing and Saying

Jesus often spoke to those looking to Him for healing, "Be it unto you according to your faith." He did not pray or lay hands on everyone who received from Him. There were times when what was needed was for the individual to make the petition. At other times, people came on behalf of others. But each time they obeyed Jesus, positive results occurred. How did this work? The person making the request was then given the *responsibility* to say what he believed.

In order to have faith for something, you must first believe that it is possible. When you believe that something is possible, you must utter it with your mouth. This is a law that works for everyone. Faith is an indication of what is in your heart. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. This law or principle works for good or for evil.

**In order to have faith for something, you must first believe that it is possible. When you believe that something is possible, you must utter it with your mouth.**

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Listen to what a person is saying. What people say reveals their heart. They may not even want what is in their heart, but the heart has retained words they have spoken. Suddenly, they *spill their guts*, meaning that what they entertained was stored in their heart, and it came spilling out in words that reflected the heart's contents.

Do you want different results? Change your words, change what you've been saying. "Be it unto you according to your faith" is a way of saying, "What you have deposited in your heart is not only what you will say but also what you will eventually have."

## ‘According to Thy Word’

Luke 1:38—...*be it unto me according to thy word....*

**A**t times, we all find ourselves with an opportunity to take God at His Word against all natural odds. There are times He speaks a specific thing to us. At other times, He has already promised us things that are written in the Bible. Both have to be believed as said.

***“Be it unto me according to Thy Word” means that we must be saying what God is saying or has already said.***

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I cannot guarantee that you or I will always get what we say, unless what we say is inspired by the Spirit of God. He always supports what He says to us or what He expects us

to say based on the divine inspiration of His Spirit. All other words are idle and unproductive and will not produce positively on our behalf. *“Be it unto me according to Thy Word”* means that we must be saying what God is saying or has already said. Otherwise, what we’re confessing is merely our lusts or selfishness.

God knows that we are not ready for some things we want. Being the Father and protector that He is, He gives us a chance to make some corrections in our beliefs and confessions.

Mary certainly did not originate or conjure up the idea that she would one day be considered the mother of God. Likewise, many of us are doing things today that never occurred to us until God spoke them to us. In fact, the first time the thought came, we laughed at it. But like Mary, we said, *“Be it unto me according to Your Word.”* It was not merely her faith that said this, as if she were initiating some big plan. She simply took God’s own word to her and declared it.

## The Decree of the King Cannot Be Broken

Daniel 6:15 (NLT)—*In the evening the men went together to the king and said, 'Your Majesty knows that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed.'*

**T**he good news is that no word that the Almighty has spoken can be changed, either. We are commanded to obey the laws of the land and the authorities in office. However, we were never told to put our trust in them. Those who trust in God shall never be ashamed (Romans 9:33).

Our respect for man-made laws and decrees has diminished, because the very people responsible for making them often violate and change those laws to suit themselves or their largest supporter. Not so with God. He upholds every word that He speaks, be it inspired writing or personal prophesy to us.

Daniel never changed in his obedience to what God required of him; therefore, God would not change what was then required of Himself. Although the king who sentenced Daniel had many regrets, he had no choice but to put Daniel into the den of lions. But he had no ruling that said Daniel's God could not enter in with Daniel.

Where are you today? Man may sentence you, even to death, but there is nothing in any court order that restricts your God, the Almighty One, from comforting you or delivering you in His season. In light of the law, the king had no choice but to sentence Daniel. But there was no law recorded to prevent him from removing Daniel once Daniel was found alive. That law was written to support death. God's laws are recorded to provide life to all who trust in Him.

Locate where you are today; acknowledge your guilt so that God can declare you innocent in His court.

**God's laws are recorded  
to provide life to all  
who trust in Him.**

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## Will Your Words Testify of Your Work or God's?

Daniel 6:20 (NCV)—*And when he came to the den, he cried out, 'Daniel, servant of the living God! Has your God that you always worship been able to save you from the lions?'*

**W**ithout realizing it, the king both proclaimed and decreed who Daniel was, and then asked him a question. Will our lives testify of who we are before we attempt to first tell it ourselves? What a witness to others when they know of your loyalty to God before they discover His loyalty to you.

No one had ever survived the lions den before, so the king's question was an unusual one. The mere fact that Daniel responded was the only answer the king needed. Notice that the king asked Daniel, "*Was your God that you always worship able to save you?*"

**We should give our service  
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Daniel didn't just *serve* God continually; he *worshipped* Him also. Many people think that what they do in serving the church or others will impress God. We should give our service to the church and to people, but not to the neglect of worshipping the Lord.

How did Daniel serve God, anyway? By ignoring a man-made rule that would prevent him from honoring his God. Anything or anyone that is able to prevent you from serving or worshipping your God has become your master. Unless and until you are willing to give up your life to honor your Lord, come what may, you are not worthy of His protection.

We should live so that everyone understands that we stand for Jesus. The best way to proclaim Him to others is to tell what He has done on our behalf. It's good to tell others about your Savior, but they'll listen a lot more when they can see what He does on your behalf. Worship Him *always*.

## Because God Sees

1 Corinthians 10:31—*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

I love the change of seasons, especially the fall of the year. A Burning Bush (*euonymus alatus*) that has been green all summer suddenly bursts forth with a beautiful coat of red. I marvel at this, since no one has done a thing to effect this occurrence. No one tells the bush that it is October or April. When God made its seed, He placed everything within it to cause it to do forever what He intended.

Occasionally, I've walked in the woods or I've been on a ship docked near a mountain and observed some of the most beautiful wildflowers one could imagine. They don't decide to bloom because they are expecting to be seen or appreciated by anyone. They do it because God sees, and they are fulfilling their purpose for His glory.

We are commanded to do all to the glory of God. What is our motivation in what we do? Do we have to get strokes or pats on the

back to continue doing our best in everything? When we find ourselves involved in anything worthwhile, why not give it our all just because we have been given the ability to do it? I like to call it *pride of authorship*.

I recently read a fictional work by one of my favorite Christian authors. It shared much truth, but the end, which spoke about God's grace and mercy, left me wondering how many people reading it may not take God seriously enough and fail to seriously pursue a life of holiness. I don't write fiction, because I am concerned that I might be responsible for misleading someone. We are commanded to live and to function for His glory because God sees.

**No one tells the bush that it is October or April. When God made its seed, He placed everything within it to cause it to do forever what He intended.**

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## **Peddling Doubt Is Equal to Peddling Dope!**

*John 10:24—Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.*

**D**oubt is a choice you make; so is believing. Do you imagine that after 400 years of silence with God, the first thing He revealed—His Son to come—was done to cause doubt in the people He was sending Him to save? I don't think so. Jesus came to erase all doubt by revealing Himself as well as His Father (John 10:25). Jesus went on to tell them

the reason they were in doubt was, they were not part of His flock (verse 26).

### **Jesus came to erase all doubt by revealing Himself as well as His Father.**

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What I hear proceeding from the mouths of some preachers, as well as laypersons, tells me they either don't know Jesus or that they have been erroneously taught. Erroneous teaching can certainly hinder you for awhile, but real hunger for His truth will attract the Person of the Holy Spirit on your behalf every time. He is the Spirit of truth! I believe you should only read Christian fiction when you have read and been taught so much truth that you are able to properly discern truth from error.

Paul, in his concern for the church at Galatia, began to doubt the Galatians because they were not walking in the truth he had shared with them; they were being tempted with false teaching. Why would Jesus or Paul want to peddle doubt? They each paid a high price to provide us with freedom. False teachers are "dope pushers" trying to get you to accept counterfeits. You will not experience freedom if you accept their teaching. Never doubt Christ and His plan for your life.



## May They Be Forgiven Part I

2 Timothy 4:9-10 (NKJV)—*Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and departed for Thessalonica....*

**T**he Message Bible says that Demas was chasing gods. I have learned much from the apostle Paul and it's all been good. It is statements like this one that keep me in the race when my flesh says quit, retire, and live out the rest of your days without concern for others.

Demas was not the only one to abandon Paul. Crescens, as well as Titus, whom Paul referred to and recognized as one of his sons, left, too. Looking through my desk drawer recently, I came across a couple of letters from two people I once called my daughters in the Lord. They were applauding me to the highest. It was nice to remember our good times together. Later, they became offended, left, and talked about my late husband and me as if we were their enemies. One of them even tried to entice others to leave the ministry.

**Jesus was abandoned by those  
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Paul experienced the same,  
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When I read Paul's writings I am encouraged. Paul wrote in Second Timothy 4:17, "But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear..." (NKJV). I feel that I am in good company. Jesus was abandoned by those having professed their love. Paul experienced the same, and so will you when you dare to impart truth without compromise. Often people do not want *correction from* their leaders; they want *to control* their leaders. Pray for them.

## May They Be Forgiven Part 2

2 Timothy 4:10 (NLT)—*Demas has deserted me because he loves the thing of this life and has gone to Thessalonica....*

**P**astor, you cannot hold on to anyone who loves the things of this life, unless you are prepared to compromise to keep that person. Luke remained. Work with those who know what God has given them to do concerning you.

Paul stated that the first time he was brought before the judge, no one was with him. Everyone had abandoned him. But because he remained focused on Christ, he never felt

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Choose to bless . . .**

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alone. There is a difference in being alone and being lonely. Children of God, recognizing who He is and what He has for them to do, are never lonely. In fact, they often find being alone a blessing that allows them the liberty to obey the prompting of the Lord

without needing agreement, approval, or permission. When God speaks, they don't have to look over their shoulder to see who's following along with them.

Paul said he hoped that those who abandoned him would not have their deed counted against them (2 Timothy 4:16). I feel the same way. Why do people go? Often because it's the season in which they will not endure sound doctrine, but want to hear only what they desire to hear.

Whether you are a pastor or a parent, you can use your words to curse or bless those under your care who leave you. Remember, if they do not honor you as a pastor or parent, even a spiritual parent, they are in for quite a roller-coaster experience. If God planted them with you and they transplant themselves, time and their fruit will reveal their error. Choose to bless, but let them go until they "come to themselves."

## Avoid Exposure by Confessing Your Sins

1 John 1:8 (NLT)—*If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth.*

Again and again, the headlines of secular papers report that some prominent Christian leader admits his error and is consequently touted as a deceiver and liar. How sad it is that we often have to be exposed before we will confess our sins, faults, and shortcomings. First John 1:9 was put in the Bible because God knew that His children would at times need it: "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong" (NLT). Verse 10 says, "If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts."

God loves His children so much that He will not allow us to continually call Him a liar, especially when He has provided an avenue of escape for us. I am beginning to conclude that the devil locates those of us with unconfessed weaknesses, allows us to reach the top of the so-called Christian ladder, and then kicks the ladder from underneath us so that the fall appears greater.

**Every one of us is vulnerable to sin. However, help is on our side.**

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I thank God for a Billy Graham who examines himself daily and does not permit success to influence him negatively. He works at "keeping it real" because he understands both the pitfalls of high-profiled success and his responsibility to God and Jesus first. Then Rev. Graham utilizes the person of the Holy Spirit within him to help him with any struggles or challenges that come his way.

Every one of us is vulnerable to sin. However, help is on our side. But if we fail to take advantage of the help He proffers, the Father has no choice but to permit our exposure. We represent Him, and He is truth.

## The Day of the Lord Is Coming

2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)—*The Lord isn't really slow about his promise to return, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to perish, so he is giving more time for everyone to repent.*

God is giving us time to “get it together,” not to continue in what our flesh has been doing. God is for people, not against them. He does not want anyone to perish, especially any who have confessed His Son as Savior. *Confessing*

*His Son and accepting His Son* are not the same things. You and I can quote or mimic words all we want with no results. On the other hand, accepting Christ as Savior involves sincerity of heart.

We are recognized as Christians by our fruit and our lifestyle, or manner of living. When we say we are

**When we say we are Christians, we no longer represent ourselves. The world is looking for what is different in us because of who we say we are.**

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Christians, we no longer represent ourselves. The world looks to see what is different in us because of who we say we are.

God said, “Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth—so wonderful that no one will even think about the old ones anymore” (Isaiah 65:17, NLT). I personally believe that our training for that great event can and should begin when we are born again. I also believe preachers ought to teach that, so that the new believer can begin his quest for it. Increase, prosperity, and abundance are ours because of where we are—positioned with Christ (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6). However, I believe that preaching Christ first and then holiness will position us to attract those benefits and others besides.

Increase, prosperity, and abundance do not in themselves result in holiness, but holiness can result in the former. Remember, without a life of holiness, you will not see God (Hebrews 12:14).

## You Have Already Come to Jesus

Hebrews 12:24 (NLT)—*You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which graciously forgives instead of crying out for vengeance as the blood of Abel did.*

**A**ll who purify themselves can look for Jesus' appearing one day (1 John 3:3). That is our hope, our expectation. But this day, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as God's Son and your Savior, you have a new contract with God that cannot be eliminated, or erased, because it is sealed with the blood of Jesus. His blood graciously forgives upon request when we repent and ask for it. That, my friend, is called grace.

Under the Old Covenant, Abel's blood cried out for vengeance. Under our New Covenant, Jesus' blood cries out for mercy. Yet it is imperative that we obey the Word that God speaks. The people of Israel were not spared, nor did they escape when they refused to listen to Moses, even though they had a covenant with God. How terrible our danger if we turn away from and reject the One who is from heaven. Moses spoke from the earth as God's messenger. Jesus, the true Messenger, speaks from heaven to our hearts to cause us to receive a kingdom that cannot be destroyed.

Let us live thankful, worshipful, and holy lives, remaining in awe of the Person of God. We have already come to Mount Zion and into His holy presence. A whole lot of shaking is about to take place! But have no fear. We have come to Jesus, who cannot be shaken.

**A whole lot of shaking  
is about to take place!  
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## Equipped to Produce Pleasure for God

Hebrews 13:20 (NLT)—...now, may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, equip you with all you need for doing His will.

**L**istening to some preachers, we could be led to think that this Christian life is for our pleasure. God has one thing in mind for us and that is to bring us to Himself. Scripture reads, “May He produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, all that is pleasing to him...” (Hebrews 13:21, NLT).

God understood that without a spiritual mediator, man could never be pleasing to Him. Before sin, Adam could have pleased God, but the Fall set in motion a deterioration in the

mind and heart of man. We began to think that God created us for *our* pleasure instead of for *His* pleasure.

Today we are so into what we want, that we forget our origi-

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nal purpose. Thank God that the second Adam, the Man Jesus Christ, has come to live in us, to reawaken us as to why God created man in the first place. Without Jesus, God cannot be revealed to us.

You do not have to struggle in your Christian walk. You simply have to yield and submit to the Spirit of Christ in you. It's sort of like floating on water. I never learned to swim, but I did learn to float. Learning to float has brought me safely to shore many a day when others became weary from swimming. A tired swimmer can drown. A floater who trusts God knows he can't swim—that's why he became good at floating. Become good at trusting God.

## Willing Givers Always Have Plenty and More to Spare

2 Chronicles 31:10 (NLT)—*And Azariah the high priest from the family of Zadok, replied, 'Since the people began bringing their gifts to the Lord's Temple, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, for the Lord has blessed his people.'*

**A**fter Hezekiah restored the celebration of the Passover in Judah and the people praised and sacrificed to God for a total of 14 days, King Hezekiah inquired as to where these huge piles of gifts came from. Once the people began to tithe in the spring, the corn and other commodities began to grow until early autumn (2 Chronicles 31:7).

God loves a cheerful, joyous, prompt-to-do-it giver whose heart is in his giving (2 Corinthians 9:7, AMP). Everything we give to God, He

doesn't just add to it — He multiplies it. Three plus three is six, but three *times* three is nine!

Our currency is

only money until we plant it. When we plant our financial seed, a supernatural thing happens. God's part increases and our part never seems to decrease. We always seem to have enough and some to spare. Our barrel of meal and jar of oil have no end (*see* First Kings 17:16).

When you plant your seed in God's field, stop looking for your harvest and just expect your increase. Farmers don't check daily for their harvest; they just know they planted good seed into good soil and that in due season, that seed will produce. Why? Because God always blesses His people.

It's true. You really can't beat God's plan for giving.

**When you plant your seed in God's field, stop looking for your harvest and just expect your increase.**

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## Faith In God Is the Only Leg We Have To Stand On

Isaiah 7:9 (NKJV)—...*If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.*

God was saying to the king, in effect, “You do not believe Me. If you want Me to protect you, learn to believe what I say.” Faith in God is an acquired characteristic in that it starts with a choice. It also helps to surround yourself with people that believe. Listening to and observing them will inspire you to be like-minded and to guide your own conversation and lifestyle in line with the Word of God.

A fish does not take swimming lessons, but if you never put it in water, not only will the fish not swim, it will die. We were born to trust God. Why then are we so challenged in that area? We spend too much time in the company of murmurers, complainers, and people seemingly void of any faith in God.

**Once I begin to confess what I believe, the more what I believe becomes established in my life—regardless of what I feel or see . . .**

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Instead, we should find people who are happy in whatsoever state or condition they're in. Those people have discovered that it is not the external things in

life that make you joyful, but the Person on the inside who never changes. The Greater One has no need to change; He can't get any better. But submitting to Him can make you better, and can make you *feel* better.

Although adverse circumstances in my life at times appear to remain the same over time, the more I fellowship with the Lord, my outlook concerning them greatly improves. Once I begin to confess what I believe, the more what I believe becomes established in my life—regardless of what I feel or see—which is why I guard my heart and my mouth.

## Don't Think Too Highly of Yourself

2 Samuel 5:2 (NKJV)—*Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out, and brought them in; and the Lord said to you 'You shall shepherd My people Israel and be ruler over Israel.'*

God would have allowed Saul to retain his kingdom forever had he not operated in fear and disobedience, allowing himself to mistrust God by making sacrifices to God instead of waiting for Samuel to arrive (1 Samuel 13:13). God sought after a man after His own heart. He personally chose David, because He knew Saul would blow it (verse 14). David's success is often compared with and showcased against the backdrop of Saul's failure.

Too often, people look at the external and judge what they see, while God always looks at the heart and decides. David and Saul had equal chances to please God. Saul often became angry (1 Samuel 11:6-7). He was not a humble person at all. He even tried at times to kill David as well as his own son Jonathan.

God expressed regret, for having made Saul king (1 Samuel 15:11, 35). Finally, God's Spirit departed from

Saul (1 Samuel 16:14). Repeated disobedience cost Saul his throne. David was not perfect. He committed adultery, had a man killed, and counted, or numbered, the Israelites against God's orders. But he always sincerely repented and took responsibility for his actions.

**Only God can take the lid off our limitations.**

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Only God can take the lid off our limitations. David did not become a successful leader just because of what God did for him, but, rather, based on his own humility and his willingness to receive correction from God. Saul made choices without consulting with God. David stayed in God's face about everything except Bathsheba, but when he repented, he was blessed. So shall it be with you!

## Imitate the Faithful

Hebrews 6:12 (NKJV)—*That you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

**W**hatever you do, rid yourself of the company of people who know the promises of God, but refuse to take hold of them because they are waiting to feel something first. God's promises are not based on what you "feel like." He says what He means and means what He says. Why not ask God to bring people into your life that operate in faith and then patiently wait to inherit what He promised them. (Those are the people *I* want to imitate.) If no human enters your life right away, imitate the person Jesus Christ, who did everything in faith.

**I get insulted when people  
fail to trust my word.  
How much more must  
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we neglect to trust Him?**

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In my own life, if I waited to feel something before I believed God's Word and confessed it, it I'd be so far behind just getting up to *zero* would be progress for me! But I've learned to take God at His Word and to depend more on what He said than upon my

ability to believe. Once I discovered the power that backs His promises, I began to believe Him for His grace to simply trust Him to do all that He said He would do and *on time*.

Seldom do I ask God for specifics. Why? Because I'm running to keep up with what He has already said. There are times that I receive an inspired word from the Lord to act on, and that's good. However, I can turn to His written Word and know that there is always His answer to all of my questions.

I get insulted when people fail to trust my word. How much more must God grieve when we neglect to trust Him? He does not give me everything I want. He gives me what He knows that I can manage. Whatever I get from the Lord makes me want to spend more time with Him, not less.

## Death Rendered Entirely Idle

2 Timothy 1:10—*But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

God had a plan from the beginning and has now made it plain to those who follow His lead. Every human will cease to exist at some point. The Scripture says that our Savior Jesus Christ has abolished death. What does that mean to me as a believer?

The Greek word here for “abolished” says that Jesus has rendered idle, *inactive, inoperative, ineffective, without influence, and powerless* death’s hold over you and me. Many people make choices they would not otherwise make, because they fear that a certain decision would cost them their lives.

When we understand what happened at Calvary, we learn that Jesus’ coming

in the flesh broke the power of death and showed us the way to everlasting life through the Good News.

Often we have the opportunity to feast on the Word of God and, instead, we allow playtime and even rest to interfere with God teaching us. But why would we want to engage in frivolity if it means not engaging His presence and spending time with Him? The power of death is destroyed as it relates to me as a believer. To me, that’s Good News!

**When we understand what happened at Calvary, we learn that Jesus’ coming in the flesh broke the power of death and showed us the way to everlasting life through the Good News.**

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## Healing Occurs Where Teaching and Preaching the Word Occurs

*Matthew 4:23—And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.*

Once people grasp the truth that they have a redemptive covenant with the Creator, they do not have to wait for a “Super Saint” to show up so they can receive something from God. *They* are the super saints! However, they do have to go where the teaching and preaching of the Word is taking place. You can’t always stay home, miss teaching and preaching concerning that which concerns you, and expect to have faith

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to receive what you need, because faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

In Jesus’ earthly ministry, He taught before He healed. When the people had experienced teaching and preaching, healing took place.

Those to whom Jesus ministered were covenant children of God, the lineage of those He had brought out of Egypt with not one sick or feeble person among them (Psalm 105:37). After they were taught who they were and what their authority was, they were no doubt ashamed that they had allowed themselves to be reduced to bondage by something God did not give them, and they were ready to receive deliverance. They accepted their deliverance from a seemingly impossible place. But first they had to be taught.

## **Wanderers From the Truth Are at Risk— They Need Your Help!**

James 5:19-20 (NKJV)—*Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

**I**t's obvious these scriptures are speaking of one who was a believer. Non-believers are not among us, and they cannot wander from the truth, because they never knew truth. The *King James Version* uses the word "err" instead of "wander." To err means to roam from safety, truth, or virtue; to go astray; to deceive; to seduce; or to be out of the way.

If the erring one has attacked you, your flesh does not want to cooperate with restoring him. But unless you do—and do it properly—you are at risk of being tempted in the same way (Galatians 6:1-2). The love of Christ in you looks past the discomfort to the truth that tells you if you fail to help bring him back, he could die in the error of his own way, and his sin could be exposed to others who don't have a need to know.

Restoring others with a spirit of meekness begins with prayer. Pray for yourself first to be able to pull it off, and then for them to be enlightened. Someone once said, "Christians are the only army that kills their wounded."

God is watching to see how we handle an erring sister or brother. With sincere prayer, we can turn someone back to the truth. I don't want to give an account as to why I focused more on my discomfort than I did on attempting to get someone turned from the error of his ways.

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## He Can Wait

Hebrews 10:12-13—*But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

If we are really looking for Jesus to return, we need to be about the business of making His enemy His footstool. He will not come until the Church is walking in its victorious position. Jesus said, "The gates of hell will not prevail against the Church" (Matthew 16:18). He was saying that the Church would be established upon the revelation that no flesh and blood can provide.

Christ is not coming for a battered, bedraggled, broken-down Bride. His plan is to present us triumphant and glorious to His Father, and we know that no one ever brought defective gifts to the High Priest. Do you know anyone higher than the

Creator of the universe?

Concerning His return, Jesus can wait—but *what about us?* How much more will we endure until

**We must purpose to understand in our hearts that heaven is our home and that performing to please men of the earth will hinder our collective home going.**

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we say "enough and no more"? We must launch forward from a position of prayer. We must purpose to understand in our hearts that heaven is our home and that performing to please men of the earth will hinder our collective home going. I don't know about you, but I'm homesick. I want to be with Jesus and experience the triumphant entry that is afforded conquering heroes.

He can wait, but why should He? Let's get on with the work of making satan and company the Lord's footstool.



## Dust, Empowered

Psalm 90:12 (NKJV)—*So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

**I**n some circles, the focus seems to be on numbering the people and not the days they have on this earth to gain wisdom. Some act as though they are invincible and beyond an allotted time here. All of us are made of the dust of the earth, and there is a time-frame for us to perform that which we are assigned to do.

**All of us are made of the dust of the earth, and there is a time-frame for us to perform that which we are assigned to do.**

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Our IQ matters not. Wisdom is gained only by recognizing that we are, in the natural, frail and limited. But we who have accepted Jesus are not just dust to be eliminated with the swipe of a cloth-covered hand. We are dust, empowered to do a task in a limited timeframe.

We are not to concern ourselves with how much dust is among us, but with the importance of God's wisdom. Scripture says, "It's the principal thing" (Proverbs 4:7). Learn to see yourself as dust that has been empowered with the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, and without the limitations of mere men.

The purpose of being taught to number our days is that we might gain a heart of wisdom. We are to cultivate godly wisdom in order to impact the lives of others so that they can fulfill their assigned tasks before it's too late.

## How Long Have You Been Waiting?

Isaiah 7:13—*Then he said, 'Hear now, O house of David! It is a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also?'*

**F**ollowing this question to King Ahaz, the prophecy came forth, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (verse 14).

For most of our lives, many of us have heard the story of the birth of Immanuel, His name meaning *God with us*. We understand the significance of the promise as foretold by the prophet Isaiah. But did you ever stop to really meditate on the power of the promise itself?

Hebrews 11:11 said that Sarah, Abraham's wife, received strength to conceive seed because she judged God faithful who had promised. Although she was quite old and past the season for childbearing, Sarah and Abraham received the fulfillment of the promise.

Yet still it took 25 years to become a reality, and Abraham had to get involved for the promise to be fulfilled. But the conception of Jesus did not require Joseph to be active with Mary at all. It took 750 years before the promised birth occurred, but Jesus was to carry a larger responsibility than Abraham and Sarah's beloved Isaac.

Isaac was only the head of a tribe. Jesus was to take on the headship of all future generations. Although it took 750 years, the Holy Ghost was busy lining everything up to cause it to be so. Neither Mary nor her parents had been born when this prophecy was first spoken.

So you have yet to receive what has been spoken to you? An old woman becoming pregnant is one thing. A virgin becoming pregnant is even more miraculous. It mattered not to the Holy Spirit. It had been promised; therefore, He had a job to do. He has not forgotten your promise either.

## Mediocre Commitment

### Part I

*James 2:23—And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the Friend of God.*

God is not looking for casual acquaintances. He is looking for disciples, people who are committed to become His pupils—learners and those who are committed to doing things God's way even when they do not understand why. Abraham was called *the* friend of God, not just *a* friend of God. That friendship meant that Abraham was committed and determined to follow God, to obey Him, and to serve Him with his whole heart.

Divided hearts offer mediocrity at best. I know a number of people and I love them all. However, among the few I call my "friends," the following qualities are exhibited in our relationship: We

esteem and cherish the other as close, personal friends and associates; we know each other well and work to ensure that we never violate each other's trust; and we are companions—true comrades—in Christ.

**My friends are not people I selected to be my friends. They are God's choice for me. He knows who will help me reach His goal and master plan for my life and vice versa.**

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My friends are not people I selected to be my friends. They are God's choice for me. He knows who will help me reach His goal and master plan for my life and vice versa. Two years ago, God spoke to me to back away from an individual who wanted to be close to me. I later discovered and understood His reason. Father really does know best. I'm glad I listened.

## Mediocre Commitment

### Part 2

Job 31:24-28 (NLT)—*Have I put my trust in money or felt secure because of my gold? Does my happiness depend on my wealth and all that I own? Have I looked at the sun shining in the skies, or the moon walking down its silver pathway, and been secretly enticed in my heart to worship them? If so, I should be punished by the judges, for it would mean I had denied the God of heaven.*

I do not take lightly my friendship with God. When I awake each day, the one thing on my mind is, “How can I be pleasing to God?” When I please God and put my total trust in Him, He then steps in with the necessary resources to perform all of my assigned tasks. He does not automatically give me wisdom. I have to ask for it daily. But because I’m willing to acknowledge how like a child I am, often clueless as to what

I must do because of the position He has placed me in, He gives wisdom liberally, and then

**God does not automatically give me wisdom. I have to ask for it daily.**

adds to it riches and long life.

Lest you think I’m just a special “Daddy’s girl,” this wealth and long life are conditional. God said if we follow and obey Him, He will reward us, providing we mix faith with His promises.

We spend a great deal of time and money looking for alternative means of acquiring what God has already promised. When will we see that even with the best treatments, a sick, or less than optimally healthy, body is the alternative to the divinely healed one God has promised and provided?

Why settle for alternatives when the real thing is already mine? Alternatives are always temporary, but the Word of God’s promises never changes. With God, we must have a single heart and mind to experience His benefits. “Heal me, fix me, and cure me” is not the language of a person in faith. Double mindedness is not the foundation for friendship with God. Only faith and trust will do.

## God Is My Co-Pilot

Hebrews 13:5-6 (TM)—*Don't be obsessed with getting more material things. Be relaxed with what you have. Since God assured us 'I'll never let you down, never walk off and leave you,' we can boldly quote, 'God is there, ready to help; I'm fearless no matter what. Who or what can get to me'*

**O**n a recent trip, I drove alone to Jonesboro, Louisiana, to Tyler, Texas, and then on to Dallas and Tulsa before returning home. I can't count the number of questions and concerns from good, sincere people as to my safety while traveling alone. I even had offers from some to fly to New York and drive for me so that I wouldn't be lonely.

I appreciated their inquiries, but if I shared their concern, where would that put the Holy Spirit and my ministering angels? All I can say is, if you have never experienced 24 hours on the road with two ipods full of the Bible and anointed music, and with time to pray in the Spirit going and coming, you may have never experienced operating in the presence of God!

**When you have made God  
your co-pilot, how can you  
be unsafe or lonely?**

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"Better Than Best" and "His Buddy" are two stuffed puppies that were given to me. They made the trip with me because they require no maintenance. The best of friends require low maintenance. Truly happy people are those who carefully study God's perfect law (love) that makes people feel free, and they continue to study it. They do not forget what they heard, but they obey what God's teaching says. Those who do this will be happy (James 1:25).

When you have made God your co-pilot, how can you be unsafe or lonely? People are a blessing, but the privilege to travel alone with God is divine!

## God's Word Spoken with Confidence Always Gets Results

Genesis 11:5-6 (CEV)—*But when the Lord came down to look at the city and tower, He said: These people are working together, because they all speak the same language. This is just the beginning. Soon they will be able to do anything they want.*

**G**od is the ultimate great Observer and Listener. He is aware of all we say and do—not just *some* things, but *all* things. He knows those who are simply uttering words as well as those who are speaking by His authority.

**In order to speak the same language, people must have the same heart and mind.**

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In order to speak the same language, people must have the same heart and mind. In other words, the same heart and the same mind will result in the same language or

words being spoken. In order to speak God's words as He said them, you must be single-minded in your heart and in your mind.

When we speak the language of God with His authority and His power, we get the same results that He does. The Scripture says that when those who are of the same heart and the same mind continue speaking the same language, nothing will be withheld from them; they will be able to do anything we want. Since that is a law that works in the natural, how much more can we expect the Body of Christ to do when we are in harmony with God?

God's plans include the unity of the saints—not denominations getting together, but the spirits of just men made perfect (Hebrews 12:23). The spirit of our hearts and minds, and the spirit of our words will impact lives and cause a change. The unity of our denomination will not get us into heaven. But the unity of our hearts and minds with His words will.

## The Pleasure of Adultery Lasts Seconds— The Cost Is for a Lifetime

Proverbs 6:26 (CEV)—...*But making love to another man's wife will cost you everything.*

Scripture says that if you go to bed with another man's wife, you pay the price (Proverbs 6:29). I suspect that this is true concerning the sisters also: Making love, or having sex, with another woman's husband is just too costly.

What is the price for adultery? We learned that the price is everything. While there are manmade laws protecting the guilty from abuse and cruelty, nothing protects you from guilt, except innocence. Proverbs 6:32-35 (CEV) reads, "But if you go to bed with another man's wife, you will destroy yourself by your stupidity. You will be beaten and forever disgraced, because a jealous husband can be furious and merciless when he takes revenge. He won't

let you pay him off, no matter what you offer."

The laws of man say that consensual sex is okay; no one is guilty of any

crime. However, the place of my citizenship (heaven) handles adultery by a different set of rules, and that place is where I will spend eternity.

The redemptive plan of God has erased the sins of my past. When I became a new creature in Christ, any sins I committed beforehand were erased (2 Corinthians 5:17), as well as any sins I commit as a new creature, if I confess and forsake them (1 John 1:9). However, continual and habitual sins are not excused or overlooked.

Never think that because God is using you in some way for His purpose that you will not have to give an account for continual wrongdoing. The price of sin is costly.

**Never think that because God is using you in some way for His purpose that you will not have to give an account for continual wrongdoing.**



## Confused and Helpless? Where Is Your Shepherd?

Matthew 9:36 (CEV)—*When he saw the crowds, he felt sorry for them. They were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Countless people call my weekly broadcast wanting something from the Lord. Often I am impressed to ask them if they have a pastor? The answers vary from, "I used to go to church" to "I listen to so-and-so regularly on TV or radio." Seldom is the answer, "Yes, I do and I attend a Bible believing church."

The Holy Spirit often leads me to ask the question, because most people in a Bible believing church with a sound shepherd call only with praise reports of how they overcame a problem with the Word of God they were taught. There are people at RLCC where I know what's being taught, that are still in a state of confusion and helplessness as though they have no shepherd because they refuse to apply what I and the others teach according to the Word of God. Like Jesus, I can only feel sorry for them. There is nothing anyone can do to get the Word working in and for them.

When Jesus healed the two blind men and their eyesight was restored, He told them to not tell anyone (Matthew 9:30).

### What is Jesus requiring of you?

Verse 31 (CEV) says "But they left and talked about him to everyone in that part of

the country." Because they did not obey Jesus' directive to them, they could have lost their healing.

What is He requiring of you? One of the things Jesus wants for all of us is that we let go of traditions and familiarities and follow the Holy Spirit, who will always lead us to the Shepherd, and He will never leave us helpless or confused.

## I Will

Genesis 17:7-8 (CEV)—*I will always keep the promise I have made to you and your descendants, because I am your God and their God. I will give you and them the land in which you are now a foreigner. I will give the whole land of Canaan to your family forever, and I will be their God.*

God was very precise and to the point concerning what He was going to do. However, He required Abram, his family, and all the males in his household to do something as a sign that they believed His promise. That promise was so strong that no one refused to be circumcised. Today, we want to enjoy all the promises of God, but without enduring any suffering before we experience them. Thank God Jesus' death took care of the suffering and of the shedding of blood needed to ratify the new covenant with God. Other than for sanitary reasons, circumcision is no longer required of males.

We can have all of the blessings of Abraham through Jesus' sacrifice at Calvary. Although none of

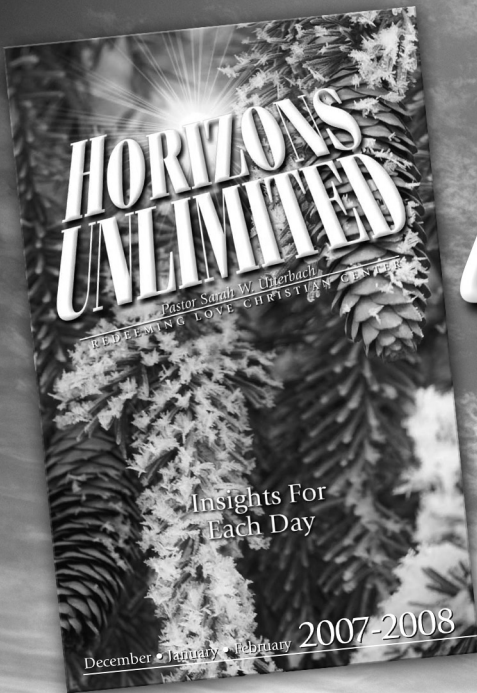
us can gain heaven through our works, it is by our works that our faith is measured. James 2:20 says that "... faith without works is dead."

**Faith without works  
is dead, and works  
without faith is flesh.**

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Faith without works is *dead*, and works without faith is *flesh*. Paul said there is not one good thing in our flesh (Romans 7:18). The "*I will*" of our covenant, spoken by Jehovah, is the "*I AM*" to perform it for every submitted vessel who honors and reverences Him.

Look where He has brought you from! That is only the beginning compared to where He wants to take you. You and I simply have to do something as a sign to Him that we want to make the trip. What is that sign? Give up all the old fleshly habits and traditions that once bound us. Give up your will for His, and God will always keep His promise to you.



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## He Gives Gifts to His Creation, But His Inheritance to His Offspring

*Genesis 25:5-6 (CEV)—While Abraham was still alive, he gave gifts to the sons of Hagar and Keturah. He also sent their sons to live in the east far from his son Isaac, and when Abraham died, he left everything to Isaac.*

**H**ave you ever wondered why there appears to be such talent and gifts among the unsaved? I have. This verse answered my question and settled it for me. These talents and gifts usually entertain and excite the flesh, but offer no permanent change in another's life. But listen to or look at the talent and work of a child of God. Without ever meeting the person, you know that he or she has had a personal encounter with the Lord.

It has been said that for the unsaved, earth is the only heaven they have, and for the believer, earth is the only hell they will ever know.

Don't begrudge or envy the sinner's gifts and talents—it's all he has going for him. But as a believing child of God, you and I don't have to

**Begin to praise God for all the possibilities lying dormant in you now in Jesus' name, and watch them come alive in you.**

settle for just gifts and talents. We are joint-heirs with Jesus. He is the One to whom all the inheritance belongs. Therefore it is ours, too, both in this world and in the world to come. Don't even think about quitting or giving up.

Smith Wigglesworth once said, "Possibility is the greatest thing of your life." You and I have more going for us than we ever imagined. Begin to praise God for all the possibilities lying dormant in you now in Jesus' name, and watch them come alive in you.

## The Fight Was On

Genesis 25:22-23 (CEV)—*Before Rebekah gave birth, she knew she was going to have twins, because she could feel them inside her, fighting each other. She thought, 'Why is this happening to me?' Finally, she asked the Lord why her twins were fighting, and he told her: Your two sons will become two separate nations. The younger of the two will be stronger, and the older son will be his servant.*

Besides telling Rebekah the gender of her two babies, the Holy Spirit showed her that while their flesh was infantile, their spirits were as they would always be. Spirits neither grow nor diminish. The struggle today between Israel and the surrounding Arab countries began in the womb of Rebekah, and the conflict continues because the older will not accept his God-promised position as the servant of his brother.

It certainly did not help the two brothers to have their parents, who were for 20 years in one accord, suddenly take sides and widen the gap between the boys. This division

**When we allow envy, jealousy,  
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and destroy (John 10:10).**

caused both sons never again to see their mother, who died while Jacob was with her brother Laban, and Esau had gone away in anger and discouragement.

When we fail to accept God's promise for our lives, all those around us are affected. Isaac and Rebekah were affected. The boys were also affected and did not until years later greet each other as siblings. When we allow envy, jealousy, and division into our lives, we are robbed by the devil, who always comes to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). It is profitable to accept God's plan and promise for us.

## Your Word Is Your Bond

Genesis 25:33 (CEV)—*But Jacob said, 'Promise me your birthrights, here and now! And that's what Esau did.*

A person's word was so respected at one time it was as though it was a written contract. Esau, like so many of us, allowed his flesh to cause him to disregard his God-given rights. Although God was in this arrangement to accomplish His purpose, I believe He would have honored Esau's rights if Esau had honored them.

How many times has our tongue allowed us to respond to our flesh's desires, which resulted in our loss of what was rightfully and divinely ours? Death and life are in the power of our tongue (Proverbs 18:21), which is why I preach, "Before you make choices in the way you speak, listen on the inside for the correct answer, because one thing you and I cannot do is manipulate the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost only says what He hears the Father say (John 16:13). He does not speak of Himself. His job, though, is to speak for the Father, which He always does.

Never allow your mouth to utter anything you don't want to live with. Although the world today says, "If it's

not in writing, it doesn't exist," that simply is not accurate. The world operates on that premise; however, the spirit world still operates on the basis of our words being our bond. We may be able to alter a contract, but we can't alter our spoken words. We will give an account for them someday.

Make sure you say what you mean, and mean what you say. Your word is your bond. Don't let it become worthless.

**Never allow your mouth  
to utter anything you  
don't want to live with.**

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## What Are You Teaching Your Children?

Genesis 26:1 (CEV)—*Once during Abraham's lifetime, the fields had not produced enough grain, and now the same thing happened. So Isaac went to King Abimelech of the Philistines in the land of Gerar.*

**W**e tend to think we can protect our children from things we've experienced, but we can't. When we train our children in the Word of God as to how we came out on the victory side of every challenge, they are then equipped to handle life's little darts. We cannot protect them *from*, but we can prepare them *for*. Even then, their faith will be tested. Although God appeared to Isaac and made promises to him, there was a doubtful moment when he asked Rebekah to say she was his sister in order to spare his life (Genesis 26:9).

How could Isaac think someone would kill him when God did not allow his father Abraham to kill him as a lad on the altar? Like too many of us, Isaac said, "I *thought*" (Genesis

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26:9). When are we going to learn to stop thinking and start believing? Don't consider potential defeat when God has already promised victory (Proverbs 3:5)?

Parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, the world is

bombarding your youth with the "*what could's*" of the world. When are we going to boldly share with them the "*what did's*" of our walk with the Lord? God has not given us repeated victories so that we would just remain silent. The same thing He brought us through is the same thing our youth must experience in order to develop the same strength of character we have cultivated.

What are you teaching your children?



## I Feel Like Celebrating

Psalm 13:5-6 (CEV)—*I trust your love, and I feel like celebrating because you rescued me. You have been good to me, Lord, and I will sing about you.*

**R**ecently, I shared with the co-pastors of RLCC that I was so happy in the Lord and excited each day about going to our church even when there was no service being held. I can hardly wait for each night to end so I rise and dress once more to go to RLCC. Another day in the house of the Lord gives me another opportunity to impact the lives of others.

Prior to writing this, I received a call informing me that a younger relative whose diapers I once changed “fell asleep”—I *hope*, in Jesus. I am not sad, except for the pain it is causing the parents and siblings, because I love them also. This relative made some poor choices in life that possibly contributed to the devil doing what Jesus said he would do, and that is to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10).

**I still trust God's love and feel like celebrating. Why? Because He rescued me and has been—and still is—good to me.**

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After that phone call came, I discovered that I still trust God's love and feel like celebrating. Why? Because He rescued me and has been—*and still is*—good to me. “But for the grace of God, that could be me.” The reason I want to celebrate and sing about it is, one day, I was allowed to count the cost and make a choice, and I agreed to pay the price.

What's your testimony today? If you're a Christian, you have reason to celebrate.

## It Was Either Him or Us

*Matthew 16:22 (CEV)—Peter took Jesus aside and told him to stop talking like that. He said, 'God would never let this happen to you, Lord!'*

**I** am so glad that Jesus did not listen to well-meaning Peter. Jesus had begun to share with His disciples what must happen to Him (Matthew 16:21). Peter had his preconceived idea about what God's plan was for Jesus' life. But Jesus knew what God had in store, and we should know His plan for our lives too. When we stay attached to Him and regularly confer with Him, nothing need take us by surprise, either.

**... Jesus was willing to die  
a shameful death on the cross  
because of the joy He knew  
would be His afterward.**

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The day Saddam Hussein was executed and I saw people rejoicing, my heart was grieved. But what the Holy Spirit said to me changed my thinking

forever: *"If they are going to rejoice over anyone's execution, let it be Mine."*

I almost lost my breath and nearly slipped off the chair I where I was seated. As I meditated on what I'd heard, I found myself for the first time really understanding Hebrews 12:2 where it says Jesus was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy He knew would be His afterward.

Friend, it was either Him or us. What I further heard was, *"Jesus was the only one prepared to be executed,"* because God knew His power would raise Him from the dead. Don't allow movies or anything else to make you feel guilty about Jesus' death. His death had purpose. Yours and mine do not.

## Will God Take It Back?

Matthew 18:35 (CEV)—*That is how my Father in heaven will treat you, if you don't forgive each of my followers with all your heart.*

I knew that God was in Christ reconciling and restoring the world to favor with Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19). God is no longer promising us salvation; He has already provided it. I merely have to receive and accept it, but when I do, is not part of the deal that I treat others as He has treated me?

The king who had forgiven one of his officials a tremendous debt took it back when this same official failed to forgive someone else a much smaller debt (Matthew 18:21-35). Jesus said, "That is how My Father in heaven will treat you if you don't forgive each of His followers with all of your heart." Do you want to take that kind of chance? I don't. I know we're under grace and not the Law, but will failing to act like Jesus not frustrate the grace of God in your life (Galatians 2:21)? How will I treat what God has done for me? Will I treat it with contempt by mistreating others, or will I have a magnanimous attitude toward people, whom He loves?

**Forgiveness is free;  
why not dispense it  
the same as we received it?**

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After Isaac blessed Jacob thinking Jacob was really Esau, Isaac told Esau he could not take the blessing back (Genesis 27:33). In the Old Testament, pronouncing a blessing on someone was a permanent thing, and much like the law of the Medes and Persians (see Daniel 6:15), it could not be changed. Jesus often spoke of the results of failing to forgive others (Mark 11:26). I don't know about you, but I don't want to chance not forgiving anyone. The price is too costly. Forgiveness is free; why not dispense it the same as we received it?

## Why Couldn't We Force Out the Demon?

Matthew 17:20—*Jesus replied: It is because you don't have enough faith....*

**H**ow do you get more faith? Hear the uncompromising Word of God with a heart to apply it to any and all situations in your life.

Your faith may be ever so small, but it can grow if you will feed it God's Word and choose to believe and act upon what is said. We must give God something to work with. He gave us

**Besides spending personal time  
in the presence of God, and time  
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faith for salvation (Ephesians 2:8). The next move is ours. We all want God's power, yet we set aside no time for being in His presence. Jesus, although He was the Son of God, recognized His need as

a man to pray and spend time with His Father. Angels have no need to pray. Their power is divine, but they were never required to live in the earth.

Believe me, trying to live a prayer-less life in this world will give you about as much power as a man unable to find his way out of a wet paper bag with holes in it. In addition to spending personal time in the presence of God, and time studying His Word and His promises, surround yourself with believing believers.

I want people around me speaking God's truth at all times, not just when I am up against something. Some listeners of *The Choice Is Yours* broadcast don't even know the books of the Bible, often forgetting where certain scriptures are found. When you are facing a bear, that's not the time to try and locate your missing gun. Stay ready and you won't have to get ready.

## I Will Pay the Price

1 Kings 18:41-44 (NRSV)—*Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of rushing rain.' So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; there he bowed himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees. He said to his servant, 'Go up now, look toward the sea.' He went up and looked, and said, 'There is nothing.' Then he said, 'Go again seven times.' At the seventh time he said, 'Look, a little cloud no bigger than a person's hand is rising out of the sea....'*

**A**bout a year and a half after Clinton fell asleep in Jesus, I found myself in a dry, dark place spiritually, in which I could not sense the presence of the Lord in any way. I was conscious that I was not crying, yet the water from my eyes flowed freely and in abundance as I emptied myself, finally telling the Lord that I could not see, hear, feel, or even sense Him in my life. I continued in confidence that He was with me because I had the assurance of His Word that He would never leave me nor forsake me (Hebrews 13:5): "So that we may boldly say, 'The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me'" (verse 6).

I had believed His Word, but I had not been speaking the sixth verse, so I began saying it over and over until His presence, "no bigger than a person's hand" (1 Kings 18:44), engulfed me. Sometime later, a full "rain" of His presence was again with me, and I vowed to do whatever was necessary not to experience that dryness and darkness again.

After that dry and dark season ended, I was prepared to walk away from everything and everyone necessary to avoid even one second of feeling void of His presence. Thank God, to this day I have resisted every opportunity that could result in that kind of experience. I have never valued the Lord's presence more. I relinquish anything that could jeopardize His presence in my life, and refuse to participate with others who don't have the same appreciation of Him. I have counted the cost and I am willing to pay the price to be engulfed by God's presence. Are you?

## Strange and New

Exodus 34:14—*For thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*

I have always perceived that the Holy Spirit was directing me differently than He was leading those around me. I don't mean that I knew it was the person of the Holy Spirit; that knowledge came much later. I just knew things without being able to prove how I knew them. This was so foreign to the way others around me operated, I began to be silent about what I knew for fear or concern that others would think I considered myself better or more spiritual than they. I didn't, but I knew that He was leading me differently or that I was sensing more so than they were concerning the direction in which He wanted me to go.

God is a jealous God and is unwilling to "play second fiddle" to anything or anyone. He is constantly training me for

**... I am very clear  
concerning His voice and  
the call He has for me.**

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what He has for me to do. To my flesh, it is strange and new. I don't believe that I am the only one He is dealing with like this, but that matters

not to me. I keep remembering that dry and dark season in my life, and how He has made my eyes to sparkle once again. You can't appreciate that if you have either never experienced it or have never lost it in the first place.

God wants me to acknowledge Him fully and completely in everything and in every way. What He is expecting and requiring of you may be different, but I am very clear concerning His voice and the call He has for me. I must follow Him.

## I Thought It was Just Me

Galatians 2:20 (CEV)—*I have died, but Christ lives in me. And I now live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave his life for me.*

Someone loaned me four CDs containing a fictional story about end time events. I was excited about the opportunity to listen to them because I had begun reading the book that led to their production. About two minutes into the first track, I heard the Holy Spirit say, *"You didn't ask if you could listen to those recordings."* I said, *"You're right. May I listen?"* The answer came: *"No!"* Briefly, I thought, *Oh, that's just me.* I asked a second and third time with the same response. I knew not to ask a fourth time. I then asked if I could finish the book, and the answer again was, *"No!"*

After putting the CDs back into their sleeves to be returned to the owner, I heard, *"Why should you settle for fiction when I can show you the real thing?"* I sat on the sofa in my den and wept. I wasn't weeping because I wasn't allowed to listen to the CDs or to read the book. I wept because I had neglected to inquire of the Holy Spirit as to what I could do, and had suddenly realized how interested He is in every aspect of my life.

**... I should not struggle ever again between the voice of God and my own voice, because I'm dead and He lives in me to lead and guide me into all truth ....**

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How much more I need to be trained in this area. When I thought it was "just me," the Holy Spirit said, *"How can it be you? You're dead."* I realized then that I should not struggle ever again between the voice of God and my own voice, because I'm dead and He lives in me to lead and guide me into all truth (John 16:13). Wow!

## 'You Didn't Trust Me Enough'

Proverbs 3:5 (CEV)—*With all your heart you must trust the Lord and not your own judgment.*

**R**ecently I flunked a spiritual test by not trusting God enough. I told Him I wanted a parking place on a certain block, as close to where I was going as possible. I drove through the block and there was not one available space to park my car. I heard, *"Go around the block."* I obeyed. As I returned to the block of my destination, there was a very tight space available where I could with some effort park my car. As I parked, I observed a driver about to leave in a vehicle several cars in front of me. I switched parking spaces because it was closer to where I was going. I just knew this was God's answer to my request.

As I approached my desired destination afoot, I noticed still another empty space just in front of the place where I was

**God wants us to trust Him  
to work out His perfect  
plan for us.**

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going. Although I was parked only a few car-lengths behind it, I had not seen this spot. The Holy Spirit said, *"You didn't trust Me enough. I told you to go around the block, because I needed*

*that time to speak to that person who was hindering Me from working all things together for your good."* But when I circled the block in obedience, my head got excited that any kind of space at all was available, and I settled.

God does not want His children to settle for less than they requested of Him. He wants us to trust Him to work out His *perfect* plan for us. How many times, because we didn't trust Him enough, do we have to take extra steps to get to where we want to go when He has already provided what we asked Him for?



## Followers With a Heart of Gratitude

Matthew 20:34 (CEV)—*Jesus felt sorry for them and touched their eyes. Right away they could see, and they became his followers.*

**T**hey appeared to have their priorities straight. Like the crippled man at the beautiful gate who went into the temple with Peter and John after he was healed (Acts 3:8), these two blind men chose to focus on Jesus from the instant they could see.

I believe we would see more manifestations of healing if the recipients had their minds clear as to the purpose for their healings. Jesus does not heal blind eyes for us to watch TV or read e-mails all day. Crippled and lame people are not made to walk to go golfing, fishing, hiking, or swimming when the rest of the assembly is gathered to worship Him.

**I believe we would see more manifestations of healing if the recipients had their minds clear as to the purpose for their healings.**

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Those blind men had Jesus' attention when they called Him "Son of David." Jesus knew that "Son of David" for a Jew meant *Messiah*. "Messiah" means we're in covenant, and covenant means the blessings of Abraham are available to anyone recognizing Jesus as the Messiah.

When I read Luke 7:36-47 concerning a sinner woman's love and appreciation for Jesus, I am able right away to identify. This has helped me understand why I want so much to follow Jesus: He has forgiven me of much. Following Him with all diligence is a small price to pay for what He has done in my life.

Those who feel they only need to be forgiven of little show forth little love. But much love toward the One who has forgiven you of much causes you to show much appreciation.

## Singleness Is A Gift to Be Accepted

Matthew 19:11-12 (CEV)—*Jesus told them, 'Only those people who have been given the gift of staying single can accept this teaching.... Others stay single for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Anyone who can accept this teaching should do so.'*

**F**ollowing His teaching on divorce, Jesus began telling those present the value of singleness. He made it quite clear that everyone could not accept this teaching because the ability to remain single is a gift. Salvation, healing, and peace are gifts, but some people are still going to hell. Some will never accept healing as a part of the "redemptive package." Then there are those who will specialize in worry and anxiety, as if it's some

badge of honor, forsaking the peace that has been provided.

Just because God provides gifts for His children does not mean they know how to receive them. I can buy you a present, show up at your party with it, and give it to

**... don't knock anyone  
who finds himself complete  
enough in Christ so as  
not to desire marriage.**

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you. But if you never choose to open it, although it has your name on it, I can do nothing more.

I have been married and divorced. I have been married and widowed. I am now, according to society, single. But society doesn't understand that I have been espoused to one Husband and His name is Jesus (2 Corinthians 11:2). Being single in the natural allows me the liberty of serving God better "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

A person who is "married" only to Jesus learns to appreciate the gift of singleness and accepts it. Until you acknowledge Jesus as your eternal Companion who sticks closer than a brother and whose fellowship is matchless and beyond compare, you will always be looking for external relationships. If you can't accept singleness as a gift, then get married. But don't knock anyone who finds himself complete enough in Christ so as not to desire marriage.

## Wealth Can Be Lost, Wisdom Lasts Forever

Proverbs 16:16 (CEV)—*It's much better to be wise and sensible than to be rich.*

**M**ost young people today are taught ways to become rich. Rarely, however, are they taught the value of wisdom. Consequently, when financial abundance overtakes them, they often don't know how to manage and *keep* it.

Anyone who sincerely studies the subject of wisdom will always have not only what he needs, but also an abundance to be able to bless others. Frankly, I think wisdom should be taught in the classroom. What a great start in life those students would be prepared for!

As I was growing up, wisdom was always shared in the home, the neighborhood, and almost everywhere you went.

Children were often said to be "old for their age." That was another way of saying they usually made sensible choices or had "common sense."

Common sense was not something that you held a degree in; it was what was expected of you, and you rose to the occasion.

**Common sense went by the wayside when consequences for wrong choices were "eliminated."**

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I have probably desired wisdom all my life but I began to pursue it at age 12. I was amazed by all the other things of value that appeared to accompany it.

No one seems to expect people to have common sense anymore, at least not among our youth, which is where it is most needed. Common sense went by the wayside when consequences for wrong choices were "eliminated." The attitude now is that if wrong choices are rewarded the same as right choices, *why choose what's right? Do what makes you feel good without concerning yourself about others.* Selfishness is the first step away from the path of wisdom.

# God Is Sovereign

Exodus 16:33 (CEV)—*Then Moses told Aaron, 'Put some manna in a jar and store it in the place of worship for future generations to see.'*

**T**he key to this was that it was a requirement of God and not a choice of man. God told Moses to tell this to the people (verse 32), because He was going to use it as a “show and tell” for the generations to come. They would have no excuse not to trust Him to supply whatever was needed, because God used the manna as evidence to those yet to be born so that they could not say it never happened.

As proof of His great power and commitment to His people, God used the very thing that He said would spoil and stink if

kept overnight. The difference was that this time, *He* told them to save it. Had they been able to do this contrary to what God had spoken to them, they would have made an

**God is looking for our obedience whenever He speaks to us, and the way we'll know it is God is in our spirits.**

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idol of the manna, when it was simply a provision of God—although spectacular—for a season and a for a reason.

Too often when God instructs us to do something one time, and He gave differing instructions at another time, we disobey and say it can't be God because He doesn't change His mind. I beg to disagree. God is looking for our obedience *whenever* He speaks to us, and the way we'll know it is God is by the witness in our spirits. Never think that because He instructed something to be handled one way at one time, He will never instruct in any other way. To Him, “obedience” is the operative word. Set your sails always to go the way His Spirit wind is blowing. God is sovereign.

## Stored Up Blessings

Psalm 31:19 (CEV)—*You are wonderful, and while everyone watches, you store up blessings for all who honor and trust you.*

**H**ow limited we have become when our view of God's blessings is based only on what is tangible. Often we think God suddenly causes something to come our way in a time of need. Certainly, I am not making light of God's benefits to us whenever He responds to prayer, but let us look a little further and a little deeper. Verse 20 (CEV) reads, "You are their shelter from harmful plots, and you are their protection from vicious gossip." This means that in addition to trusting Him for a roof over my head, I can trust the same God to thwart the plans of those motivated by satan to try and harm me physically or otherwise.

While being able to protect me from injury, accidents, and sickness, God is also at work to protect me not only from ordinary

negative comments, but from the vicious gossip murmured against me. Vicious gossip is usually the lies inspired by satan against one's reputation and character.

The devil specializes in character assassination. He knows that he can't hurt, harm, or kill my body. It's against the law for people to do that. But, oh, those vicious words that people speak, while thinking there is no real harm in saying them. But God knows both their hearts and mine, and He alone can protect us.

You can't stop vicious words. But you can and must be innocent of their accusations.

**... in addition to trusting Him for a roof over my head, I can trust the same God to thwart the plans of those motivated by satan to try and harm me physically or otherwise.**

## Blessings Follow Forgiveness

Psalm 32:1 (CEV)—*Our God, you bless everyone whose sins you forgive and wipe away.*

**B**ecause we often struggle with forgetting what others have done to us, we tend to measure God in the same way. Even when we obey God's Word and forgive others, we allow the offense to occupy space in our heads. Look closely at how God handles it. He not only forgives an offense, He wipes it away. It's difficult to form or reconstruct a picture of something you have erased.

Aside from that, failing to erase offenses by confessing them to God affects your bones and keeps you in pain all day long. In addition, God's hand weighs heavily on you, and your strength is faded as in the summer heat (Psalm 32:3-4). Psalm

32:5 (CEV) reads, "So I confessed my sins and told them all to you. I said, 'I'll tell the Lord each one of my sins.' Then you forgave me and took away my guilt."

**God not only forgives an offense, He wipes it away.  
It's difficult to form or reconstruct a picture of something you have erased.**

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Don't try to hold back anything that you need to confess. It will hinder your

joy and your worship of God. The joy of the Lord is your strength (Nehemiah 8:10). When you realize that you have sinned, confess it, pray, and prevent being swept away by a raging flood of guilt and condemnation. Always remember that where sin abounds, God's grace much more abounds (see Romans 5:20).

God's desire and promise to us is that He will point out the road that we should follow. He wants His Holy Spirit to teach us and watch over us (Psalm 32:8). I don't know about you, but I need this kind of blessing that can only come from God as I serve Him.

## Be Better, Not Bitter

Proverbs 3:11-12 (CEV)—*My child, don't turn away or become bitter when the Lord corrects you. The Lord corrects everyone He loves, just as parents correct their favorite child.*

God is attempting to make us better—better to represent Him by serving others. Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve. Since God is the ultimate parent, He knows there are times we could use some correction, and He loves us enough to do it whether we like it or not.

Parents who fail to correct their children either become frustrated and finally abuse them, or they make little gods or idols out of their children. I was not secure enough in God when I was a young mother to know how to correct my children with my God inspired words. I might be in jail today with the laws in place as they are today! I don't always agree that a child should not be paddled on his bottom, but I must admit that if I can get a child to obey by using words, I would be more representative of my Father God.

**Since God is the ultimate parent, He knows there are times we could use some correction, and He loves us enough to do it whether we like it or not.**

I was like my mother, who represented her mother. And I was not an easy child to rear. Had my mother been more concerned with the consequences of wrongdoing and insisted I pay the full price for disobeying her, perhaps she would never have had to discipline me as she did. With her method, I finally got better, after a moment or two of being bitter. Actually, God achieved more with me, and He never once hit me or put anything negative on me to teach me. I did not always like what God was saying to me, but all of it made me better, not bitter. His word is truly enough to inspire positive change.

## Wisdom Has Value

Proverbs 3:13 (CEV)—*God blesses everyone who has wisdom and common sense.*

**C**ommon sense is good and in today's society a rare thing to be had, especially by our young people. God does not share with us the reward and value of common sense, but He sure does concerning wisdom.

Common sense can help keep you out of trouble, but wisdom teaches you how to apply God's Word so that you're not

affected negatively by circumstances that may come your way.

**Common sense teaches you  
how to avoid a thing.  
Wisdom trains you how to best  
handle what you can't avoid.**

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Common sense teaches you how to avoid traps and mistakes. Wisdom trains you how to best handle what you

can't avoid. Wisdom's value exceeds silver, provides you greater wealth than gold, and does not have to be rated by your insurance company like your jewels do.

Jesus said, "I will do exceeding abundantly above what you can ask or think" (see Ephesians 3:20). So there is nothing you and I can desire that compares with wisdom (Proverbs 8:11). As a child, I honestly thought that moving from the ghetto and having a steady job that paid a lucrative salary would make me happy. Then one day, I found I had left the ghetto, was regularly employed with a benefit package paying more than I ever expected to earn, yet I was standing on a balcony of a high-rise apartment building about to plunge to my death. I had discovered that external things couldn't make me happy.

Only the person of Jesus Christ and His Spirit directing your life will make you truly happy. God is the source and the end of wisdom.



## Who Are You Watching and Who's Watching You?

Proverbs 3:31 (CEV)—*Don't be jealous of cruel people  
or follow their example.*

**J**esus Christ is our example to imitate. Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). That implies that if you observe me doing anything that is not God-like, you should quit following me.

It's sad to see Christians and their leaders doing what we know is contrary to the Word of God, yet we continue to honor and support them. That's not helping them be better. Why not attempt to talk *to* them instead of talking *about* them to others. To refuse to condone the wrongdoing of anyone is not judging him or her. Hopefully, it will help to make the person aware of his actions and the effect of his actions on others. Maybe he will repent and improve.

There are times when a new minister will surface and become the latest "shooting star" on the scene, and seemingly everyone flocks to

and adheres to every word he or she says. If I'm not cautious, I could get my eyes on the individual

**Remember, God is the One you  
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leaders should have their focus on.**

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and miss Jesus completely. I'm so glad I learned to obey the Lord when He said to put no confidence in any flesh—yours, mine, or anyone else's (Philippians 3:3).

I pray daily not to be an embarrassment or disappointment to anyone but especially to the Lord. I ask God to reveal to me everything I need to know about people, places, and things. Then I ask that He help me to not be a stumbling block to those who are watching me. Thank God, He trained me to point the focus of others on Jesus and not on me. Otherwise, I would not be a friend to the "Bridegroom."

Remember, He is the One you should watch, and He is the One every leader should focus on.

## **Don't Let Your Own Stupidity Destroy you**

Proverbs 6:32 (CEV)—*But if you go to bed with another man's wife, you will destroy yourself by your own stupidity.*

**T**his is a principle for women, too, concerning another woman's husband, and also for those who are married, yet sleeping with a single person. When you're married and sleeping with someone other than your spouse, you are stupid. When you are discovered, and you will be (God won't let you continue in that relationship), will you find that it was worth

severing the trust you had with your spouse? What about your children? Now, instead of seeing you as their hero or heroine, they will see you as a liar, as immoral, and as a cheat. Remember, you and I set the example for those God allowed us to partner with Him to train.

**Parents and spouses  
need to pray daily for the  
grace that is sufficient to  
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surrounding temptation.**

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Parents and spouses need to pray daily for the grace that is sufficient to sustain them in the midst of surrounding temptation. In the Old Testament, sleeping with someone else's husband or wife contributed to your being beaten and forever disgraced. Husbands were jealous, which resulted in fury, and they could be merciless when they took revenge. They wouldn't let the offender pay them off no matter what was offered (Proverbs 6:33-35). Today, even believers expect to get off the hook when their immorality is uncovered.

If you have behaved stupidly, God will forgive you and so might your spouse and children, but will they be able to forget the pain you caused them over a 60-second thrill? Don't be stupid and destroy all that God has blessed you with. Stupid is as stupid does.

## Biding His Time

Mark 11:11 (CEV)—*After Jesus had gone to Jerusalem, he went into the temple to look around at everything. But since it was already late in the day, he went back to Bethany with the twelve disciples.*

I cut my faith “eyeteeth” on Mark chapter 11. And every time I read it even today, I see more that I previously overlooked. It says here that Jesus looked at *everything*. How observant are we in the assembly, or do we get so caught up in worship that we forget the devil often attends church in and through people?

Jesus’ purpose was going to be better fulfilled another time because what He was sent there to do was not needed at that time. His mission was not lost; it was just not immediate, and He recognized that. But He did not dismiss the fact that He was there on purpose. The following day, He had an opportunity to curse the fig tree that was deceiving people with its appearance—by giving the expectation of a promise it could not fulfill. Had Jesus not gone to Bethany the night before, He may not have seen the tree the next day.

**Never question your steps that are ordered by God. He may have an additional assignment for you on that journey.**

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Never question your steps that are ordered by God. He may have an additional assignment for you on that journey. Jesus completed what He was unable to do on the previous day, but the task still was not over. On yet another day, His disciples could see the power of His spoken word when they saw the tree dried up.

In this we can learn a lesson: Anytime we encounter deception, we can speak to it and curse it also. Let’s not always be in a hurry for the conclusion of a matter. Continue to be led by the Spirit, and look for God in everything. You’ll know when the job is done. Bide your time.

## Will Your Actions Cause Others to Praise God?

*Luke 18:43—And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

**H**ave we become so jaded and blasé about receiving from the Lord that we've forgotten that the purpose of receiving from Him is to cause us and others to follow Him and to give thanks? Are those standing by observing us praise God for having received the promise?

One friend made a life transition, not having lived to a ripe old age, because each time he used his faith to obtain a

**Jesus does not heal us so that we can play games or shop. He wants us to make a choice to follow Him and to glorify God for what has taken place in our lives.**

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health victory, he then just wanted to play bridge or go shopping. Jesus does not heal us so that we can play games or shop. He wants us to make a

choice to follow Him and to glorify God for what has taken place in our lives. It will have a positive effect on those who know the journey we've been on. They will rejoice with us.

We once called the home of another person who was under attack. We were told, "He's sitting in front of the TV watching football." God allowed him to transition out of this world less than a month later.

Friend, receiving from God is about feeding on the Word, not satisfying your flesh. Give the Spirit something to work with in your life. As a result, you'll cause others to praise God.

## Quitter's Never Win and Winners Never Quit

Luke 18:1 (CEV)—*Jesus told his disciples a story about how they should keep on praying and never give up.*

One of the words for “pray” here is *interrogate*, which is derived from the word that means *speak* or *say*. Sadly, we often think prayer is only petitioning God for our desires, which are often selfish. In prayer, we do at times ask of, or beseech, the Lord. But that is just one kind of praying. I never have to pray for what I have been authorized to claim based on my oneness

with Him,  
which is the  
seal of my  
covenant with  
Him.

Verse 2 of  
Luke 18 speaks  
of a judge who

**The devil does not have the power to wear us out; he deceives us in our ignorance of our identity in Christ Jesus, the knowledge of which is where all of our strength comes from.**

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neither feared God nor regarded man. This widow understood persistence so she continued with this judge until he wanted to get rid of her before she wearied him (verses 4-5).

The devil does not have the power to wear us out; he deceives us in our ignorance of our identity in Christ Jesus, the knowledge of which is where all of our strength comes from. When you know who you are in Christ and what He has promised and provided, you will “ding dong” the devil until he releases what he is illegally holding that belongs to you. His greatest fear is that you will become a believing believer who refuses to give up until you have received all that has been promised to you.

Become a winner that will not quit. The Greater One lives inside you. The devil can't win unless you quit.

## Your Childlike Spirit Gets You Into God's Kingdom

Luke 18:17 (TM)—*'Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in.'*

God does want us to behave like children except in the areas of humbling ourselves, submitting to Him, trusting in Him, depending on Him, and showing Him gratitude. Our flesh tries to dominate our behavior, which rejects all of the above. However, our spirits thrive on all the above.

This kingdom represents our rule and reign in this earth realm. God is sovereign and He alone rules in heaven. This nation of a foundation of power makes us rule and reign here

and now when we humble ourselves to His authority in us. We can't resist the devil until we first submit to God (James 4:7). Who is more trustworthy in our lives than the Lord?

**Our earthly parents can only claim us as dependents up to a certain age. God wants us to depend only on His written and spoken Word to us forever.**

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Our earthly parents can only claim us as dependents up to a certain age. God wants us to depend only on His written and spoken Word to us forever. This all leads to the reverence of Him, which should make our hearts glad. When we are no longer affected by earth's economy, prognoses, diagnoses or legislation, we are free to enter God's kingdom, which is not a future place, but a realm of authority in which we can enjoy things here and now.

It makes no sense in the natural, but total submission and gratitude put you in a position to rule. Release your childlike faith now.

## When You Know How!

Philippians 4:12 (CEV)—*I know what it is to be poor or to have plenty, and I have lived under all kinds of conditions. I know what it is to be full or to be hungry, to have too much or too little.*

**A**lthough I don't recall ever being where food was not available to me, I have for various reasons been hungry. When you know you can identify with the plight of others, compassion then rises up in you—not pity, but compassion. Pity carries no power with it to change the circumstance. Compassion activates faith in God's Word and almost "with violence" takes back from the devil what he has stolen from an uninformed person.

**As a child of the Most High God, I have the ability to alter anything life throws me that is contrary to God's plan and purpose for me.**

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Unfortunately, there are preachers and so-called Christians who preach and teach that the negatives of life come to all and must be endured. That's a partial truth, which makes the whole thing a lie. I agree that negatives come to all—to sinner and saint alike. However, as a child of the Most High God, I have the ability to alter anything life throws me that is contrary to God's plan and purpose for me. How can I change it? First, I know that Christ gives me the strength to face anything (Philippians 4:13, TM). Secondly, once I have faced life's "anything," I then use the words of my mouth to decree and declare what God has promised me.

When you know how to activate the principle of "believing in your heart and saying with your mouth," you will take back what ever the devil has stolen.

## What State Are You In?

Philippians 4:11—*Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

I recently took this verse literally. Although I live in New York, I was in Oklahoma, having found that I failed to pack my sneakers and exercise clothes. The devil's voice came immediately to give me a way out of my commitment to God's requirement for me to walk 30 minutes three times a week. I only had three days left in the week to comply.

On my way to the mall to purchase new gear, I passed a Salvation Army store. The Holy Spirit said, "Is there any reason

**May we always remember  
that it is all about honoring  
our commitment to Christ.  
Other things don't count.**

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why you can't get what you need in there?" I said, "Not at all!"

I never concerned myself with who would see me going in or coming out of the store, and I was not completely

unknown in city I was visiting. Having spent slightly more than \$17.00, I had everything I needed to obey my commitment to God, and that excited me. Later while walking, the Holy Spirit reminded me that 27 years earlier when we had moved to this same city to attend Bible school, we did not have a choice as to where we could shop. Goodwill and Salvation Army were our Neiman Marcus!

Today I can shop where I choose, but I was so focused on fulfilling my commitment to God that nothing else mattered. I was secure enough in Christ to make the selection that was pleasing in His eyes. He told me so.

May we always remember that nothing matters more than honoring our commitment to Christ. Other things don't count.



## See Him For Who He Is

1 Peter 3:16 (TM)—*Keep a clear conscience before God so that when people throw mud at you, none of it will stick. They'll end up realizing that they're the ones who need a bath.*

**I**t appears that the Church's power has weakened over the years for failure to see Jesus for who He is, which means we can never see ourselves for who we really are in Him. Sinner and saint alike experience persecution and adversities. But know that these things come to ripen us for harvest, to make us pure before God.

Remember, those that endure to the end will walk in total and complete victory. Why? We discover that no enemy force can overpower us. After a couple of victories, we want to invite the devil to shoot his biggest shot. When he does, he demonstrates his own insufficiency. Sure, he gets in a "sucker punch" occasionally, because we were not guarding our hearts with our confession of God's Word. But the devil cannot knock us out of God's planned race and journey for our lives.

**A knock down is not a knock out. A knock down is another chance to get up and resolve to get back in the ring.**

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A knock down is not a knock out. A knock down is another chance to get up and resolve to get back in the ring. We become strengthened, and any power to defeat is diminished in our sight. When we see satan for who he is, a defeated foe, we also see Jesus for who He is, our victorious champion. That always leaves us in a position of triumph.

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At your request, a complimentary copy of the devotional will be sent to you or to your friends and family. In order to continue to receive the devotional, a request must be submitted to the ministry that includes the recipient's name and complete address along with the statement, "Yes, I want to continue to receive the devotional." You may send your request by one of the methods listed below.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**MAIL:** RLCC, 145 W. Route 59, Nanuet, NY 10954

**FAX NUMBER:** 1-845-623-9324

**E-MAIL:** [firsttime@redeeminglovecc.org](mailto:firsttime@redeeminglovecc.org)

**WEB SITE:** [www.redeeminglovecc.org](http://www.redeeminglovecc.org)

**We must have a written or printed request.**

Therefore, PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE MINISTRY

*God has instructed us to make this devotional available free of charge to any who wish to receive it. However, that does not mean that it is produced without cost. If you are impressed to send an offering of any size, please know that it will be received gratefully and applied faithfully.*