

# HORIZONS UNLIMITED

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Pastor Sarah W. Utterbach  
REDEEMING LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER



March • April • May 2007

Insights For  
Each Day

March • April • May 2007



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## 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.*

Volume 6, Number 3  
March • April • May 2007

# HORIZONS UNLIMITED

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## Insights For Each Day

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A ministry of  
Sarah W. Utterbach



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Redeeming Love Christian Center  
145 West Route 59  
Nanuet, New York 10954-2200  
Phone: (845) 623-9300  
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All scripture references are taken from *The King James Version*, unless otherwise noted.



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

More than 25 years ago, I was prompted by this verse to begin to train myself to be able to distinguish the voice of the Lord from all other voices. Since Jesus said that as one of His sheep, I would hear His voice, then I began to expect to hear Him. When He said, "I know them," I concluded that those who know me speak to me. And, the better we know each other, the more often we talk. So I decided to cultivate such togetherness with the Lord by beginning each day with Him, before the clamor of the day had a chance to begin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

His Joint Heir,  
Sarah W. Utterbach

**DIRECTIONS TO  
REDEEMING LOVE  
CHRISTIAN CENTER**  
145 WEST ROUTE 59  
NANUET, NY 10954  
(845) 623-9300

**FROM THE  
GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE**

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

**FROM TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY**

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

**FROM NEW JERSEY**

Take the Garden State Parkway North to New York Thruway South (sign will read 87 South 287 East & Tappan Zee Bridge) to Exit 14 Spring Valley. • Please ignore the NANUET ONLY exit sign. • Make a left at traffic light. Travel two traffic lights and make a right into the RLCC driveway just before the train trestle.

**FROM UPSTATE NEW YORK**

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

**BUS INFORMATION**

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

**TRAIN INFORMATION**

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

# Schedule of Services

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

## SUNDAY

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

## WEDNESDAY

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

## FRIDAY

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

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

## REDEEMING LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER

145 WEST ROUTE 59  
NANUET, NY 10954  
(845) 623-9300

*Next to the Nanuet Mall  
Approximately 35 minutes from  
midtown Manhattan*



# *It is Written*

## *Heavenly Father,*

I am so grateful that during this time in my life, Your precious Word comforts me. It is written in Your Word that Jesus prayed for You to send another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who would abide with me forever (JOHN 14:16).



Therefore, I come boldly into the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace to help me in time of need (HEBREWS 4:16).



Jesus came to give the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Therefore, in Jesus' name, I now receive the oil of joy, and I put on the garment of praise in exchange for sadness and depression. I will not mourn as those who have no hope (ISAIAH 61:3).



I love You, Lord, and I thank You for causing all things to work out for my good according to Your purpose (ROMANS 8:28).

A black and white image of a sunburst breaking through a cloudy sky, with rays of light fanning out across the top half of the page.

# For My Comfort

I receive love and comfort through fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Your strength enables me to show love, affection, and mercy to others (PHILIPPIANS 2:1).

I in times of tribulation, Your comforting Word strengthens me. I share that Word to comfort others who are in trouble (2 CORINTHIANS 1:4).

I call on You when I feel faint with heaviness, and Your Word strengthens me (PSALM 119:28).

I don't worry about anything. Instead, I pray about everything and I thank You for providing what I need. As I do, the peace of God, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand, will guard my heart and mind, through Christ Jesus (PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7).

Thank You for keeping me in perfect peace, as I keep my thoughts focused on You (ISAIAH 26:3).

*In Jesus' name, amen.*





# How This Devotional Came To Be

Dear Reader,

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

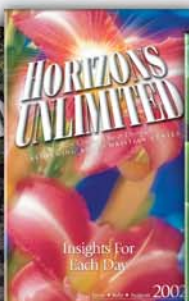
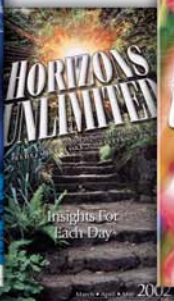
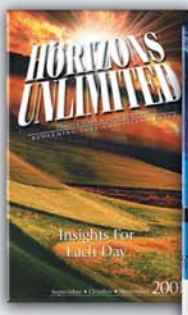
In 1979, I observed in the life of a friend a devotional practice that seemed unusual to me. Every day, my friend would walk into an open field across the parking lot from her office. There she would sit down on a rock to pray and write in what appeared to be a notebook or journal. After several weeks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

*God speaks to people?* I thought.

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

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

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





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

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

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

the Scriptures.

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

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

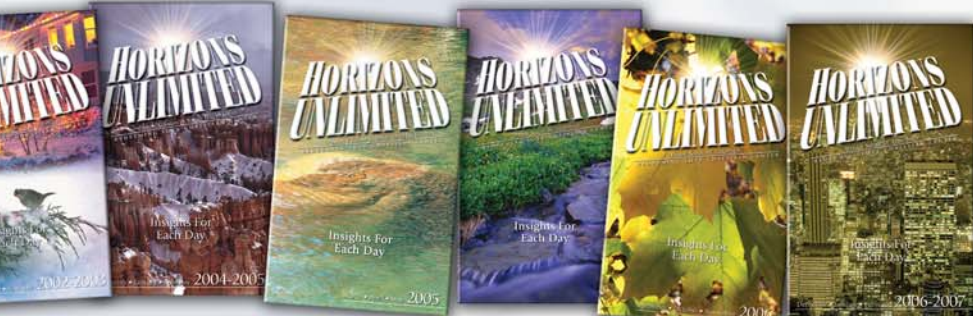
I encourage you to open your heart and allow the Spirit of God to speak to you about your own life and needs. And as you read the following devotional passages and excerpts of what He has spoken to my heart, I pray that you do more than merely read the words I have written on the page. I pray that you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

Keep looking up; Jesus is expected!

His Joint Heir,

*Sarah W. Utterbach*

Sarah W. Utterbach





# RLCC

REDEEMING  
LOVE  
CHRISTIAN  
CENTER

AT THE VILLAGE



## Schedule of Services:

### WORSHIP SERVICES:

Every Sunday evening at 6:00 p.m.

**HEALING SERVICES:** Every second Sunday

### COMMUNION SERVICES:

Every first Sunday

### BAPTISM SERVICES:

Every fourth Sunday

### SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL:

Every Sunday at 4:30 p.m.

For more information, please call the church office at

**(570) 424-2300**

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

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

## Directions to REDEEMING LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER at the VILLAGE

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

### FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

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

### FROM THE TAPPAN ZEE BRIDGE — WESTCHESTER COUNTY

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

### FROM SOUTH NEW JERSEY

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

### FROM NORTH NEW JERSEY

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

### FROM UPSTATE NEW YORK

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



## A Hardened Heart: Temptation's First Step

Hebrews 3:8 (KJV)—*Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.*

**A** hardened heart occurs when you refuse to respond to the Holy Spirit's voice. The more you refuse to hear and act on what the Holy Ghost is saying, the harder your heart becomes. He never stops speaking, but as our heart becomes hard, the messages have more difficulty penetrating. This is the first step toward temptation.

When you allow your heart to become hard, you can no longer hear the warning of the danger ahead. You don't know whose company to avoid, or where not to go because trouble awaits you there. The voice of the Holy Ghost is always speaking to us. He has to speak to us because of who He is and who we are. It's just that what He is saying to help us is not as easily heard when our heart has become callused.

One of the main reasons to keep a pliable heart is to avoid the adversary and his influence. Isolation and solitary time are no guarantees of protection from the devil and his cohorts. Satan and his family never take a break, a vacation, or a rest. Never think that because you avoid people and places that you are free from temptation. You must keep your heart massaged with the truth spoken to you by the Holy Spirit and acted upon.

The devil never minds your listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, as long as you do not act on what you hear. He knows a disobedient and rebellious heart is an invitation to tempt you. Failure to repent says to him, "Okay, begin the snowball of temptation." And, before you know what happened to you, you are overwhelmed with a giant of temptation with no clear direction on how not to yield.

The only way I know to resist temptation is to have a heart to obey every prompting of the Spirit. On our best days, we can't really avoid temptation. The enemy is everywhere you go, including church. He'll have you focus on someone in the choir or someone else in the service, and you'll never hear what's in the song sung or the message preached. Guard your heart from becoming hardened to the voice of the Spirit. Temptation lurks around the corner of a heart that's hardened.



## Strength and Victory Are Gifts From God

Psalm 33:16-17 (NLT)—*The best-equipped army cannot save a king, nor is great strength enough to save a warrior. Don't count on your warhorse to give you victory—for all its strength it cannot save you.*

**S**pared for the moment is about the best that you can expect unless your confidence is in the Lord. The Secret Service, CIA, FBI, or any other organization you can think of is powerless to protect you without divine intervention.

The list is too long to name the men and women who died while surrounded by hired or volunteer protectors. I am still a bit puzzled by ministers of the Gospel relying on armed bodyguards to protect and shield them from the very people they were sent to encounter.

I usually carry a few copies of our *Horizons Unlimited Daily Devotional* when we travel because I expect to strike up conversations with people. That is a part of my calling. I like riding the buses at times as well as the subway. I know that I can have a car service when I want to, and for trips to the airport I often use it. Yet, in addition to seeing new places when riding the buses, I see new people. Who knows? The Lord may set up an opportunity for me to minister to someone, or He may have an absolute stranger confirm for me something He has already spoken to my heart.

God sent His Spirit to insulate me, not isolate me.

During the 60s, when I saw many of our leaders gunned down as though it was merely a drive-by shooting, I knew that I needed to look for something and someone that was human enough to be touched by what I was encountering, yet divine enough not to be limited in any way by what I faced. Jesus is that "Someone." This is the verse that helped me reestablish my priorities and place my confidence upon Him who would not disappoint me.

Are you in need of strength? It is a gift from God, and I believe the only thing that can defeat a God gift is failure to receive it. Walking in victory is the same gift coming from the same place.

So, men and women of God, retire your armed henchmen, your bodyguards, and your armor bearers because the only thing your armor bearers can do is to bear arms, and that is the wrong weapon if you expect to win.

## Authorized To Do Either, or Both

Luke 5:24 (KJV)—*But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon the earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.*

Jesus said this because the religious leaders of His day had no understanding of who He was. That has not changed today. Not only do most religious folk not understand who Jesus is, they fail to understand who they are in Him. *The Message Bible* says, “Well, just so it’s clear that I’m the Son of Man and authorized to do either, or both....” He now spoke directly to the paraplegic.”

Jesus’ authority while on the earth was not as the Son of God but as the Son of man. God always intended for a man, who was one with Him, to have dominion and authority in His earth. Adam was that original man who gave his authority over to satan through disobedience. His disobedience caused mankind to become sinners. But through Jesus’ obedience, we were restored to our original position of authority and dominion (Rom. 5:10).

He is the vine. We as believers are the branches (John 15:4-5). When the branch remains connected to the vine, the same source that nourishes and provides for the vine provides for the branches. The closer I draw to the Lord’s teachings, the clearer they become. Many of us have been living beneath our privileges. We cannot be of benefit to others when we have little understanding of the purpose of a branch. Fruit is not born on the vine if there are branches connected to the vine. Fruit is usually manifested on the branch, not the vine.

The religious leaders had a challenge with Jesus forgiving sin. Yet He said in John 20:23, after His resurrection, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and *whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*” *The Message Bible* says of this verse, “If you forgive someone’s sins, they’re gone for good. If you don’t forgive sins, what are you going to do with them?”

This is not speaking about forgiving someone who has wronged you. You have no option in that case. This is speaking of a son of man anointed and authorized by his relationship and connection to Jesus to forgive sin because he serves no other purpose. The devil and his crowd cannot do that. Only a new creature in Christ is authorized to both speak to the condition and also forgive the sin.

**Now Available in Real Time Simulcast Via the Internet**

# **The Choice Is Yours**

## **LIVE Call-in Radio Talk Program**

**F**or more than 14 years, Sarah Utterbach has hosted *The Choice Is Yours*, a live call-in radio talk show aired each week from Manhattan. Until recently, only the New York Tri-state area could tune in to this consistently popular program. Now, however, via the Internet, listeners around the world can hear and enjoy Sarah's Word-rich, wisdom-filled insights that point them toward a practical application of truth, and a more rewarding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We invite you to visit our website [www.redeeminglovecc.org](http://www.redeeminglovecc.org) for more information about this exciting broadcast and to learn the times you can listen and, if you like, to call in. A number will be provided for you to call in and speak with Sarah live on the air and to have your own question answered and your need specifically addressed. Or, if you do not wish to be on the air, you will be directed to speak with a prayer partner who will agree with you in prayer according to the Word of God concerning your need.

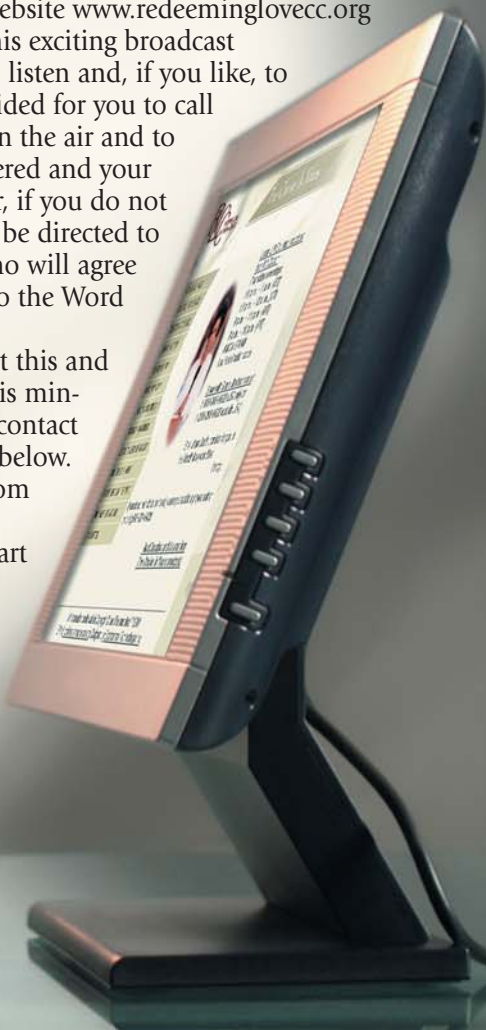
For more information about this and other exciting outreaches of this ministry, log on to our website or contact us at the address and number below. We look forward to hearing from you and to the opportunity to become a vital and uplifting part of your week!

### **Redeeming Love Christian Center**

**145 West Route 59  
Nanuet, New York 10954-2200**

**Phone: (845) 623-9300**

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





# 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!

## No Room for Slothfulness

Proverbs 18:9 (KJV)—*He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster.*

**A**nytime we don't put our all into whatever we're doing, slack workers and destroyers become kin to us. These troublesome relatives indicate a slothful spirit is trying to attach itself to us.

No matter the task I undertake, I either give it my all or leave it alone. Why? The Lord observes what we do, especially since we represent His Son. Moreover, God has the right to inspect our work, and He rewards those who seek Him and represent Jesus with excellence. Look at the record: Jesus never failed at anything. Did the sick fail to be healed or the demon-possessed fail to go free? Never! No matter the task, Jesus demonstrated excellence.

In contrast, I can accept a person who doesn't know how to do something, yet is willing to learn. But my tolerance level is not very high when a person offers a "so what" attitude. Those what-difference-does-it-make people don't flow well with me. I require people's best when they work for me. This is not simply my standard for paid employees—this applies just as much to volunteers. **Whatever task you undertake,—do it well and do it right!**

Want to hear something fresh off the Holy Ghost press? "If you can't do your best, stay out of my sight." I never wrote that before, but in the future you'll see signs and banners proclaiming its truth because nothing is required of you that God didn't already equip you to accomplish. Now if you find that a task is not required of you, then why are you doing it at all?

The Bible says there will be room in heaven for the perfect and not-so-perfect, but why settle? At the judgment seat of Christ we'll all learn of good things we could have done better and better things we could have done best. Still, there is no room for believers to be slothful in their work because then they'll discover their closest relative is a brother whose name is waster.

## Rejoice: God Is at Work

Psalm 69:32 (NLT)—*The humble will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God's help live in joy.*

**I**t is not difficult to find people rejoicing when everything seems to be going their way. But that is not the only time we should be rejoicing. I have learned the importance of being happy when all I have is God's Word to support me, when everything and everyone around me has said to quit—and quickly.

To know that God never ceases to work is very reassuring. When God is at work, that is really a time to get glad. Why? Because God doesn't just do busy stuff.

**Your help comes from  
the Lord. He said so.**

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When God is working, things that never occurred before happen—and they are always for our profit. We benefit when God is at work.

No, we don't always see what He is doing, and we often do not understand His plan for the moment. But whatever God is up to, we will advance, increase, and experience abundance in the area we most need it.

What activates all of this? First, we need to become humble enough to know we can do nothing of value apart from God. Then we must make a conscious effort to seek God's help. We are in line for His help to be ever present as we seek Him often and regularly.

There is an unspeakable joy in His presence. Watch it, though, because that kind of ecstasy is addictive! Imagine staying so high from hanging around Jesus that you become oblivious to lack in your life. Your help comes from the Lord. He said so. He said that He would never leave you nor forsake you, so that you could boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:5-6, KJV).

When you begin to rejoice at the work of God that you cannot see, the visual part will come soon and the gladness will be a bonus. It's the afterglow of the rejoicing that you already initiated.



## Until There Was No Remedy

2 Chronicles 36:16 (KJV)—*But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, til there was no remedy.*

**A**lthough this verse refers to the covenant people of God, a time came when no further remedy remained for them because of their faulty behavior, attitudes, and rebellion.

Thank God, we the church have a remedy, and His name is Jesus. Often we seem to be in no better shape than the Israelites, but because of Jesus' obedience to the Father, we—His body—will never experience the wrath of God. He will, however, allow us to do our own thing. He will repeatedly tell us of the consequences, and the way of escape, but He will never stop us. No, He will just stand by and watch until we come to ourselves and choose "the remedy."

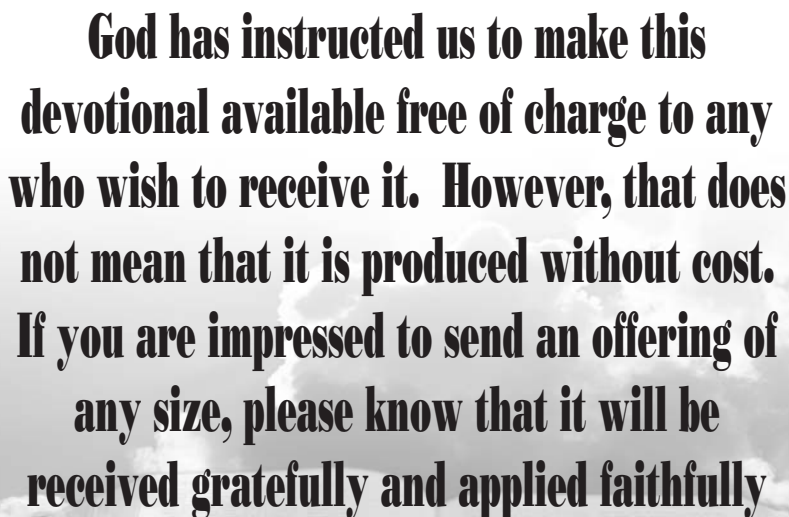
As a parent, I grieve when my children continue to do things that are contrary to the Word of God, because I know that for them it is a no-win situation and I am unable to prevent them. The only thing I can and will do is pray for them as I continue with my life in the Lord.

You may want to quit your job because of the cursing and teasing you experience from the unsaved on your job. You are there to be a witness, a light. How would the heathen see Christ if you left your job since you may be the only one in that work-place to reflect Him?

As a messenger of God, I expect to be mocked. I am no longer surprised that God's Word is despised by some, but I am meeting more and more who are hungry for the truth, which I will not be discouraged from sharing.

The calamity in 2 Chronicles 36:17 that occurred concerning the children of God was no accident or surprise to God. The verse said, "He gave them all into his hand." Aren't you glad that the only One God is turning us over to is Jesus? We can turn one another over to Satan for the destruction of our flesh, but our spirit belongs to Jesus and is untouchable.

Never misuse any child of God, because we have all been made priests unto God, and He, like you, is not pleased when anyone misuses what belongs to Him.



**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**

## Perfected, Proven, and Protected

Psalm 18:30 (NKJV)—*As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.*

I think it is so exciting and reassuring that the Creator of the universe could inspire sixty-six books to be written which would cover any challenges, concerns, and conditions that would confront me in life. God has never made a mistake. His Word is more stable than the Rock of Gibraltar and has never failed anyone using it as the guide for decision-making.

Our trust in God is what activates Him as our shield of protection from enemy forces. God does not *use* a shield to protect us. He *becomes* our shield when we trust Him.

In this dispensation of grace, the morality of a nation is not dependent on the leader of the nation. Presidents, kings, premieres, and rulers cannot legislate morality. Even dictators fail to make people what they don't want to be. If dictators truly controlled people, no one would ever risk death to attempt to escape the countries they ruled.

No, we must understand that a nation is made up of people, all of whom need Jesus Christ in their hearts. For without Him in their hearts, morals and morality are just words one group uses against another.

Commit to pursue what is perfect, what is proven, and the One who can protect you. Presidents, politics, and policies never change humans. The Word of God taught by pastors, lived by parents, and practiced by individuals brings change. When people change, the nation is affected. For we cannot obey the laws of the land until we first obey the laws of God. The government cannot guarantee our protection; only God, our shield, can.

*Dear Father God, thank You for helping us to see that we must rely on You and Your Word for safety and stability in life. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

## Come In and See

Luke 8:16: (NLT)—*No one would light a lamp and then cover it up or put it under a bed. No, lamps are mounted in the open where they can be seen by those entering the house.*

**W**hy stay out where the darkness can overwhelm you? Come in and see. Jesus is not concealing from us anything that we need to know. Failure on our part to enter in is what keeps us in the dark and uninformed.

How do you enter in? First, you must acknowledge that if you are outside of the Lord's house, light is limited to all that have not yet chosen to enter. From the outside, you don't know what is hidden and what the secrets are. Entering in provides us with the opportunity to pay attention to what's being said. To come in suggests that we are now open to more or better understanding.

From outside of God's family, His message is obscured, and the distractions around you often prevent you from listening. Anyone

**Entering in provides us  
with the opportunity to pay  
attention to what's being said.**

neglecting to listen with spiritual ears will always run off with only a portion of what is being said, and the wicked one will target him the same as he would a forgetful hearer. That's how he

tricked Eve. She thought she had heard what God said, but her speech betrayed her, and the devil took advantage of the moment.

Stop half-quoting Scripture. Either say what is written, or be quiet until you know it. How do you know when you know it? You know it when it proceeds out of your mouth without any hesitation, because it's so lodged in your heart, having entered in, that the only exit for it is your mouth. The heart never fills up on half-Scriptures or good intentions. If anyone knows that you know it and are speaking it with confidence, the devil should.

The ones who have entered in are very apparent to the devil. First of all, they have learned enough of the things previously hidden to them, and the secrets only those intimate with the Lord have access to, that they have become wise enough to stay in once they came in. They are protected and secure, having come into the light. Why would they want to retreat to the devil?



## A Worker With Wisdom Always Increases

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

**E**ven though this verse does not contain the word “wisdom,” it certainly implies it. After all, wisdom is required to understand how important it is for everyone to work. Why? Because the Bible said, “If you don’t work, you don’t eat.” If you neglect to eat often and long enough, you will simply die. But the wisdom to work guarantees that you will increase.

“Work” is not a dirty word. If you never receive another idea, skill, or gift, you will still increase because of your labor. In fact, most of what we possess today is because God blessed our labor, not simply gave us His favor.

I am not a workaholic; however, I often have many “irons in the fire” at the same time. People want to accord me “superwoman” status, but truly the “super” part comes from God. Interestingly, it appears that the more I extend myself in His work and show His compassion for other people, the more energized I become and the more I do. It is another form of the seed time and harvest principle at work.

When you fail to work, you become tired and ultimately sow nothing for God to increase. Anyone can obtain wealth per se,

but it is often fleeting and lacking in a solid foundation. It’s here today and gone tomorrow. But increase provided by God has substance and very often longevity, while wealth obtained by vanity is founded in quicksand.

There are abusive employers just as there are negligent employees, but make sure that you are guilty of being neither. Work as unto the Lord knowing that you are so good at your job that whatever salary you receive from man could not possibly match your work ethic and skills.

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

**Y**e are the light of the world. A city  
that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and  
put it under a bushel, but on a candle-  
stick; and it giveth light unto all that  
are in the house.





Let your light so shine before men,  
that they may see your good works,  
and glorify your Father which is in  
heaven.

—MATTHEW 5: 14-16





## Contentment Must Be Cultivated

Philippians 4:11-12 (TM)—*Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little.*

I used to spend too much of my life pursuing what I did not have, thinking that once I got it, I would live happily ever after. It took many years to learn that happiness and contentment are not due to *what* I had, but *whom* I have: Jesus.

**It took many years to learn that happiness and contentment are not due to *what* I had, but *whom* I have: Jesus.**

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Paul said, "I have learned to be content." This suggests that he was not born with a sense of contentment. To cultivate anything *costs*. Paul and the rest of us have paid dearly to learn contentment. But it was worth it. I have some wonderful friends whom I love dearly, but for a season in my life, they were like toxin to me. The Lord was working on enlarging me, spiritually, but their conversation was always about carnal things. They were not bad or wrong things, although a little gossip always managed to find its way in, if even briefly. They were just not helping me move to the next level, spiritually.

Thank God for Caller I.D. It's even better than a secretary. It allows you to hear the Holy Spirit's voice regarding when and with whom to engage in conversation. Being now single, I realize that the life I now live cannot be done when one is closely involved with a spouse, a parent, siblings, offspring, and so forth. Paul is speaking to and about me when he said, in effect, "A woman who is not married, or a girl who has never married, is busy with the Lord's work. She wants to be holy in body and spirit. But a married woman is busy with things of the world, as to how to please her husband. But I want you to live in the right way, to give yourself fully to the Lord without concern for other things" (1 Cor. 7:34).

This kind of focus and contentment has to be cultivated, because everything around you offers distraction. God's treasures are not on the surface. They have to be mined—but, oh, their value!

## Righteousness Versus Revenue

Proverbs 16:8 (KJV)—*Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right.*

God knows we need money to do certain things in life. He knows bills need to be paid and other things need to be purchased. This is the question: What price are we willing to pay to get what we want?

Revenue can be earned or even obtained illegally. Righteousness, on the other hand, was purchased by the life-blood of Jesus Christ, who now freely gives of Himself to those who receive Him as Lord and Savior. There should be nothing in life we desire more than to be in right-standing with the Lord.

God is fully aware that things are not equally distributed in the earth, but He wants us conscious that we're only passing through on our way to a place where there is equality. Meanwhile, because we can operate His kingdom principles while here, it's important for us to pay close attention to our value system. Enough hard work produces revenue for anyone, but only those who by faith say yes to the promptings of God's Spirit receive the benefits of righteousness, which have already been bought and paid for.

Righteousness will not be for sale or auction, but it's still up for grabs to anyone who will take hold of it! We must press righteousness into our bosom until we no longer know where it ends and we begin. In fact, there's no beginning or ending for the just in the eyes of God.

I hurt for those in the body of Christ who desire filthy lucre and merchandise the gifts and talents that God blessed them with. Since the events of the Old Testament were provided for our example, it would benefit us to review Israel's support of God's work and His temple. I'm not suggesting that Israel had it together all the time, but we cannot ignore the good they did.

Righteousness is to be treasured because it cannot be measured beside anything this world has to offer; it is incomparable. I'd rather have little with righteousness than large amounts of revenue with unrighteousness—especially since in Christ everything is already mine.

# Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?

*Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!*

*(Malachi 3:10, New Living Translation)*

**T**he tithe God is speaking of in this passage is one tenth of a person's increase. In the United States, that would equal one-tenth of a dollar, which is one dime of every dollar.

Notice: God only asks of you one dime, and He leaves you with ninety cents. Does God need your dime? Of course not! But you need to give it to Him. When you choose to honor God with one tenth of your substance, you invite and invoke His blessing upon your remaining ninety percent. You can do far more with a blessed ninety percent than you could ever accomplish by trying to hoard and hold onto the extra dime that belongs to God anyway.

When you give your dime, you give God access to protect you and your possessions from the devourer. When you rob God of that ten percent because you think you can't spare a dime, you invite the



thief—the devil—to steal and destroy from you. But don't take my word for it. God said try Him and prove Him. I guarantee you that God can meet your challenge.

Discover for yourself how powerful one dime can be when you give it to God in obedience. Once you prove God's faithfulness, my sister or brother, you'll be glad to "spare a dime."



## Deal With It

Romans 8:18 (TM)—*That's why I don't think there is any comparison between the present hard times and the coming good times.*

**T**he Father is revealed *to* us, but Jesus is revealed *in* us. Anyone who expects to get to God's glory without enduring some suffering has not read and meditated on scriptures in the New Testament.

What are some of the sufferings of the New Testament? It is the Greek word 'pathema,' meaning *something having undergone hardship or pain; an emotion or influence; affliction; or motion*. God does not cause it, but He certainly permits it.

Sure, we're going to experience some of the same tests and activities that the world encounters. The difference is, they have no promise that their future holds anything better for them. Not only does our future improve for us, but His glory is going to be revealed in us. So deal with these light afflictions. They are for the moment, which is all the time we will spend here in the earth compared to the time we'll have in eternity.

Look more closely at this verse in Romans 8:18. The Scriptures further state, "The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in until both creation and all creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens" (Rom. 8:19-21, TM).

As believers, we must train ourselves to see beyond what others see with the eyes in their head, and see what only our heart can see. Without being born again, your heart's eyes are darkened and are unable to see in the spirit realm, or by faith, which is where the real, genuine, and lasting things are occurring.

When presented with the challenges of this world, I begin to thank the Lord, because the real me—my spirit, my inner self—recognizes that the challenge is presented to cause me to react and miss what God is about to do for me, in me, or through me. In other words, it's called a distraction. Anything that hinders our total devotion to the Lord and spiritual matters is a distraction. It has no power to prevent, only to distract, yet we need to deal with it.

## The Answer to Revival in the Earth: Exhibit the Holy Ghost Life

1 Corinthians 2:4 (KJV)—*My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*

**T**he body of Christ is not void of power today. The church or facility we gather at is not the church of the Lord Jesus Christ; we are. Our charge and responsibility is to exhibit the Holy Ghost life, the Spirit of God and Christ in us, to manifest miraculous ability and perform mighty wonderful works, thereby gaining the reputation of workers of miracles.

We do this by allowing our words and thoughts to proclaim and herald divine truth. We cannot accomplish the purposes of God by our persuasive, convincing words, which are lower and worldly. Contrarily, we are to allow the higher spiritual words of the Father, of Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit to convince and persuade humankind. Only by the power of God at work in us will we see the change we long to see, hear the words we long to hear, and observe the miracles we long to observe.

We the church, the body of Christ, must allow God's Spirit, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, to live in us. When the Holy Ghost life is exhibited in our lives as the only way to go, God then will begin to release that same life in us to go out from us to benefit others by changing their lives.

Human vessels who are not experiencing this Holy Ghost life for themselves cannot teach about it with clarity. A person's eloquence or seminary training will not convince and persuade humankind that God is still all-powerful. Rather, the world will see the truth because of God's Holy Spirit life in those criers—those who herald His divine truth—who live it first.

*Dear Father, in Jesus' name, please move by Your Holy Spirit today to fill us and empower us to live according to Your life in us. Yielding to the flesh will not result in immediate physical death, but it will destroy all the effectiveness of Your people as witnesses for Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, I call down Your higher and spiritual life on Your people. Energize us with Your Holy Ghost life. Then cause the miracles to flow through us to others in need of You. Amen.*

# Worship Is Your Protection

One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. (Psalm 27:4)

A heart devoted to God is a necessity in this hour. Thoughts and desires consumed with your devotion to your Creator are crucial to keep you free from deception. Distractions come to divide your time, attention and desire and to pull you away from a vitally united intimacy with the Lord. A divided heart and double mind can easily be taken captive and led astray by the enemy.

Stop right now and consider: What is the one thing that you truly desire? If you answered money, favor, freedom, health or any other good thing, allow me to help you focus on the heart of the matter that is truly the bottom line: Everything you need, and everything of value that you hope to be, is found in Him. Seek first the kingdom of God and His ways of doing and being right, and all these things will be added to you (Matthew 6:33).

The devil goes about as a roaring lion, prowling and seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 4:27). If your lifestyle is one devoted to worship of God and obedience to His Word, the devil may not devour you. No matter who you are, or where you are, you can live a lifestyle of worship because worship is based on your choices, not your circumstances. You may be behind bars as you read this, hear me: keeping your heart focused in worship of God will make you freer than you've ever been.





A favorite tactic of satan is to distract and divert your attention by any means necessary in order to prevent you from giving your full attention and affection to the Lord. God is searching for those whose hearts are completely His (2 Chronicles 16:9). Don't worry—worship. Don't strive for things—worship. Don't beg God for what is already yours in Christ—worship. Worship will set your life free from the captor's snare and flood your life with God's transforming presence. What are you waiting for? Worship Him only. For, worship is your protection in this hour.

## Empty-Handed

John 7:45-46 (NLT)—*The Temple guards who had been sent to arrest him returned to the leading priests and Pharisees. "Why didn't you bring him in?" they demanded. "We have never heard anyone talk like this!" the guards responded.*

**W**hen demons assigned to us come to attack, they should hear such faith-filled words being spoken that they return to the devil empty-handed because their mission was not accomplished.

When the devil's imps show up for their attack, they should discover that, as God's people, we are "avoiding youthful lusts and are running from what stimulates anything wrong in us."

They should fail to find us involved in "foolish, ignorant arguments." Instead, they should find us "refusing to quarrel with each other, demonstrating kindness to everyone, and being patient with difficult people because, through Jesus, God has changed our hearts and our habits."

Those imps will have no choice but to return to their leader in a state of confusion, because we no longer fit the mold of what they have observed in Christians. Once we believe the truth, we will "come to our senses and escape the devil's trap." When we change, he can no longer "hold us captive to do what he wants us to do." (See Second Timothy 2:22-26.)

For too long we have unwittingly cooperated with satan in his plan to steal, kill, and destroy God's people (John 10:10). The demons assigned to discourage and defeat us must be sent back with their hands empty because of the words that proceed from our mouth, which line up with God's will, purpose, and master plan for mankind. When satan inquires of those demons, "Why didn't you bring them back as I demanded?" they will have to say, "We have never heard any Christians talking like these. They are not like the others you sent us to attack."

Paul's letters to Timothy are a tremendous revelation as to what a Christian should do in most situations. But even if you can't find the word you need in Timothy, you can find it in you. The Holy Spirit will help bring it up and out, and the devil will end up empty-handed.

## A Desire Is Not a Need

Proverbs 14:21 (TM)—*It's criminal to ignore a neighbor in need, but compassion for the poor—what a blessing!*

**W**hat are the needs of the poor? I believe that food, clothing, water, and shelter are needs; everything else is desires. It is criminal to see someone hungry, "naked," thirsty, and without shelter to protect themselves from the elements, and not attempt to aid them with as much as is within your power to give.

However, I believe you really need to seek God's wisdom in discerning whom He wants you to assist. There are times your helping someone could interfere with what God is working out in that person in trying to get him or her to learn to depend on Him. God will clearly tell you when He wants to use you to benefit a brother or sister in need. Some people, without realizing it, have habitually trained themselves to make a phone call rather than go directly to the Lord.

Every time I have been in need of anything in my life and went to the Lord as my source and supplier, He spoke to the individual He chose to use to meet my need. This way, I felt no obligation to the person, and the person knew he heard from God rather than have his emotions dictate his giving.

Scripture says, "My God shall supply all my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19). Once I learned the difference between my need and my desire, I could comfortably go to God, confident that He would always provide the basics for me. He always has. He always will.

Watch that you don't set in motion habits, traditions, and culture that the Lord cannot continue to allow if you are going to be used effectively in His kingdom. I never tell anyone except God about my situation. He may speak to many about it. It is then up to them to obey Him.

When someone comes to me, not knowing I have a need, and tells me the Lord told him or her to give me certain things, I am comfortable that we both have heard from Him. "You have not because you ask not" (James 4:2) does not mean that you are to look to anyone but God. He wants us to enjoy others but to depend on Him. A desire is not a need.



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May your ways be known throughout the earth,  
your saving power among people everywhere.  
May the nations praise you, O God.  
Yes, may all the nations praise you.  
Let the whole world sing for joy,  
because you govern the nations with justice  
and guide the people of the whole world.

## Anticipate With Pleasure

1 John 3:3 (KJV)—*And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

As I am increasing in years, I find myself answering the question, "How are you?" by saying, "I've never been better or happier in my life." Obviously, this is not the answer most people expect, so they are unsure about where to go next.

Following breakfast at a hotel on the Maryland shores recently, two seasoned couples got into a conversation about their planned activities for the day. One couple suggested that the other visit a particular antique shop because of the "good buys." The wife then said, "I don't know why I shop there. I've been keeping house over sixty years. I already have my mother's things plus my husband's mother's things, but I'll probably buy something anyway."

I suddenly felt a twinge of sadness. I thought, *She doesn't even realize that she is an antique herself and how fortunate she is to have lived this long.*

It's time for us to start eliminating what we have accumulated over the years and begin to "free" ourselves of anything we are not going to be able to take with us into the next life. I began to think of the Church and about why we are void of power and joy.

First Thessalonians 1:9-10 came to mind. The early church was excited about turning from idols to serve God and wait for Jesus' return. They were anticipating with pleasure their future in Christ while they put their past behind them as they served the Lord. In other words, they had a hope of a future beyond this world. Far too many believers are still living as though this life will go on forever. The early saints so looked forward to the return of Jesus that they lived daily as though He could arrive any second.

First John 3:3 in the *Good News Bible* says that everyone who has this hope keeps himself pure just as Christ is pure. When I observe the lifestyles and attitudes of today's Christians, I realize they have lost hope for the future, so they go after whatever will bring them pleasure now.

Don't be deceived concerning eternity. If Christ is in you, you have the hope of glory already. And one day, He will appear to receive you and take you there.

## Stinking Thinking Smells Up Your Life

Proverbs 4:23 (KJV)—*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

**W**e really do become what we think. That is why clean, healthy, and positive thoughts are like medicine to our bones. Conversely, negative, perverted, and bad thoughts aid in the deterioration of the physical body.

Years ago, I began to develop a system to protect myself from aging prematurely, while at the same time renewing my youth. I examine everything and everyone in my life to either embrace it for the good it adds to my life, or reject and eliminate it for its toxic effect.

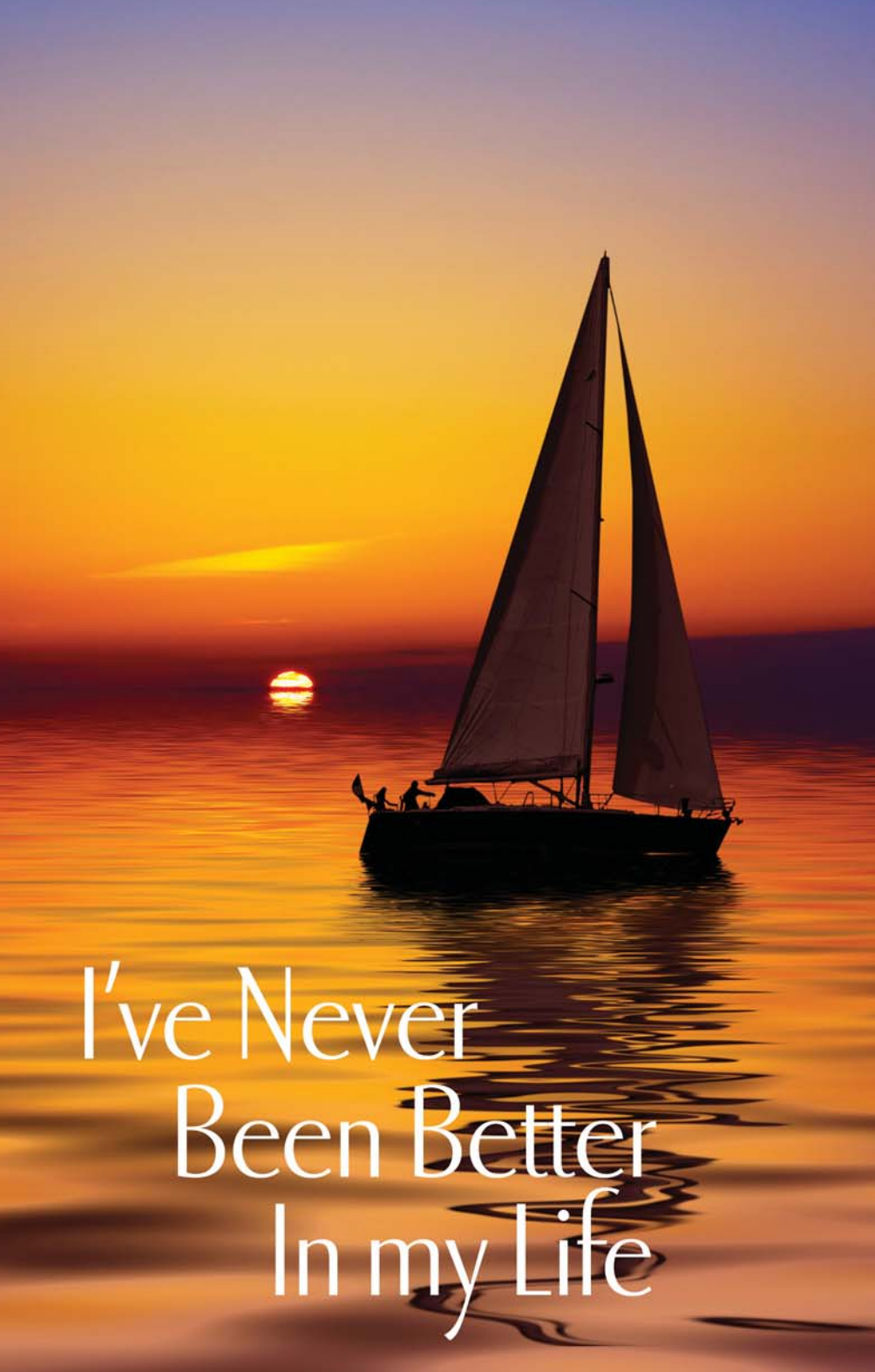
I rejoice at the very thought of God using me to reach the lost, the downtrodden, and the rank sinners. However, God does not require me to bring each of them home with me, nor does He require me to be the answer to every need. I am to present Jesus, live an exemplary life, teach the Word in season and out of season, pray, and help them to focus their affection, adoration, and worship on the one true and living God.

Because I am responsible for the thoughts I retain, I find that rehearsing negative thoughts about what someone said or did to me is absolutely exhausting. Therefore, I confront issues and people as soon as I realize I am thinking too much about what to say or how to relate to them.

Confrontation without anger is healthy for all concerned. However, anger without confrontation will develop into a root of bitterness in your heart. Paul said that meditating on true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and good reports, and setting your affections on heavenly things will result in a long, healthy, prosperous life.

*Father, because Your Word guarantees that I have the mind of Christ and Your wisdom as a part of Calvary's benefit package, I reject any thought that seeks to hinder my heart's free flow of love, joy, and peace. My life is to be a sweet smell unto You because my heart trusts in You. Stinking thinking is not part of Your good gift to me in Christ Jesus. I choose to think on those things that help me to run this race pleasing in Your sight, in Jesus' name. Amen.*





I've Never  
Been Better  
In my Life

*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* — PHILIPPIANS 3:12-14

**A**t 70 years old, I have more than a few years behind me. Some days have been joyous, other days less so. But one thing is true: Every day has been a step in the journey that brought me to this place in God where I now stand. In Him I live and move and have my being. Having tasted of His faithfulness through the years, I rejoice in knowing that the best is yet to come and today I've never been better in my life. I say that with confidence and boldness at every turn because I know that regardless of any situation or circumstance I may face, God is continually working all things together for my good as I place my trust in Him.

What about you? How are you doing today? Are you struggling with anxiety, doubt, fear and disobedience in your life? Or, are you casting the whole of your care upon Him, knowing that He cares for you? The Bible tells us the tongue is like the rudder of a ship. The rudder is such a small piece, but it controls the direction of the ship. Your tongue has the same function. The direction of your words determines the direction of your life. Therefore, make certain you speak words aimed in the direction you want your life to go. As you do, you will find that each day you can say, "I've never been better in my life!"

## Christ Is Bigger Than Your Crisis

Matthew 15:27 (KJV)—*And she said: Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.*

**T**hough she was not a Jew, nor was she promised anything from the Lord, this woman got what was needed for her situation, because she saw Jesus as bigger than her crisis. She had no problem accepting that she was not one of the children or even that she was referred to as a “dog.” She stayed focused on Jesus and what she needed, so she obtained what His compassion provided to comfort her.

This woman knew she was not entitled to the whole loaf or even the bread on the table. But she had heard enough of Him to recognize that the bread He provides for His was always in abundance; therefore, a crumb would satisfy her need. What expectation and faith!

Sometimes we could add a little humility to our faith instead of approaching the Lord with an attitude of entitlement. We acknowledge that we are sinners saved by grace, and without His grace we would have nothing.

What are you in need of from the Lord today? Your approach to Him, your attitude about Him, will determine its deliverance or its delay. In calling for the elders of the church at Ephesus, Paul shared, “I served the Lord with all humility of mind.” Humility is modesty of mind, not thinking more highly of yourself than you ought (Acts 20:19; Rom. 12:3).

Peter taught the importance of handling yourself as a Christian, be ye leader or layman. He had a special word for the younger believers, which included being clothed with humility in order to serve one another. That is what it’s all about: serving, not being served. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).

This mother in Matthew 15 voluntarily humbled herself because she was after something for her child, not herself. She tapped into His gracious grace and walked away with what she needed. Sometimes you have to look past any name-calling or offense and past what appears to be an unconquerable crisis—to the Christ who withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly.



## You Can Go Beyond What Is Compelled of You

Matthew 5:41 (KJV)—*And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.*

**I**n the job market and in today's workforce, most employees seem to be more interested in the benefits and the perks of employment than they are in being productive. The desire to be paid is what usually compels people to go the one mile, but it is the decision to go the extra mile when no one has promised you an increase or a bonus that gets others' attention.

More than twenty-five years ago, when I was working at IBM, I heard one of the up-line managers make a statement that I have not been able to improve on, so I adopted it. He said, "If you never do anything more than what you get paid for, you will never get paid for any more than what you do."

Why should your boss give you an annual raise if your production has not increased? Money is not a motivator to get you to do your duty; money is a reward for your having been internally motivated to do it.

Spiritually, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) is not what I am striving to do; it is a glimpse of what I am capable of doing. Of course, I understand that it is totally impossible to live the Sermon on the Mount without an inward compelling to please the Lord, which for me always seems to include the way I relate to others. I used to work hard to try to please the Lord. I don't anymore; instead, I work to effect positive change in others' lives. When I do, I sense that He is pleased.

People compel with external motivation. By the Holy Spirit, Jesus compels from within in such a subtle way that you don't really know when the work began. All you know is that He who began it will continue and complete it as we yield ourselves more and more to Him by trusting His Word to instruct us and His Holy Spirit to direct us.

### **People compel with external motivation.**

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*March 19, 2007*

PASTOR

SARAH W.  
UTTERBACH

*Happy  
70<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday*

## Stand Perpendicular

**M**y child, I have set you up and erected you to stand with divine confidence in Me so that nothing present and nothing to come will cause you to stagger.

I am unlimited; therefore, do not limit My provision in your life. I can only be to you what you allow Me to be, knowing that though I have control I operate for you only with your permission. My steps are not ordered by you, but your steps are ordered and ordained by Me. I allow you to make preparation, and you need to permit Me to cancel your plans for the good of the whole. Failure to be sensitive to My still, small voice could result in much disappointment and many disasters. Therefore, remain pliable to My ultimate best—not just for you, but work with Me in My concern for others as well.

You will never regret My mid-course change or correction to what is already planned and in motion, for I know and have the entire picture, and all the parts must work together for good for those who love Me.

Move with holy audacity at the prompting of My Spirit. Listen carefully with your heart, for the volume of My voice is not always the same, but the sound should never be unfamiliar. I am interested in and concerned for all that involves you. I am near to help at all times. Talk to Me. Talk to Me about all things, and I will advise according to that which will place you in the position of standing perpendicular and erect, never down and out.

Let your heart rejoice in Me. Release your light to be exalted in Me. As you walk in your uprightness, I will understand your reverence for Me and I will allow your mouth to be enlarged over your enemies. Therefore, they will be at peace with you and inquire of Me.

Remember: Wherever you are is where you are supposed to be, for I have directed and fashioned your steps to be properly fitted for My master plan.



## He to Whom the Son Will Reveal Him

Luke 10:22 (KJV)—*All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.*

**T**his verse taken literally says that no one has seen either the Father or the Son, except he to whom the Son will reveal Him. However, it is speaking of the revelation of the Spirit of the Father and the Son. If we believe the Bible, and we should, we can clearly see that other humans saw Jesus, but I believe that He is more than the man who walked the earth. While His earthly example is amazing enough, it is pretty obvious that we, the body of Christ, are to know more.

The Bible tells us much about God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. It even tells us about the person of the Holy Spirit. However, it takes Jesus to reveal to His body who the members of the God head really are.

We must be able to perceive some things about the Godhead in order to understand God's plan for humankind. There are times that I must by faith move on what is stirring inside of me. The inward witness is still the most reliable force working to keep me walking in the victory of the cross.

I do not believe that we as Christians need to fail in anything. Equipped with the authoritative voice of the Holy Ghost and the inward witness of the voice of a regenerated human, we are to win all the time because His Holy Spirit has revealed the Father and the Son to us.

No loving parents would withhold from their children the values, standards, and essentials that would cause them to become victorious. No one would block from his human body the information to live in divine health. No one would see a pit and deliberately walk toward it.

Likewise, Jesus wants each one in the body of Christ to have the revelation of who they are, how they operate, what they think, when they plan things to occur, and where they are in the scheme of the plan of God.

The faith walk is never to be in ignorance of the plan but to believe everything God says, and act on it when you can't prove it to a soul because you have been given the revelation.

## Created For His Pleasure

Colossians 1:19 (TM)—*He was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—He is supreme in the end.*

**W**hen you read and meditate on Colossians 1, you begin to discover that the resurrection of Jesus put us in the original state in which we were to function—in order to bring pleasure to the Father, to heart of God.

We have done both God and our offspring a great injustice in not realizing that from the beginning, man not only had dominion and authority over God's earth, but he had a responsibility to co-create children for God's pleasure, not theirs. This helped me to better understand Abraham's willingness to offer up Isaac to the Lord, as well as Hannah's willingness to give Samuel for the service of the Lord. Zacharias and Elizabeth released John to fulfill God's plan for mankind.

We have so hindered our children's lives in requiring them to do what pleases us and not giving them back to the Lord. Instead, we have forced them to attend our alma mater or learn our

trade, and, at times, take over our business. Some time ago, a young lady said to me that she was attending the college of her parents' choice, because that's where they attended.

I don't believe it ever occurred to us that one of our responsibilities to God is to give birth to His children and then train them in the nurture and admonition of *Him* (Eph. 6:4). By so doing, they can develop their own relationship with God and grow up with a desire to please Him, not to please their parents, whose ideas and plans for them are so limited.

It is through Jesus Christ's resurrection that we are to be born again, not to miss the fires of hell, but to bring pleasure to the Father through our submission and obedience. We submit because we reverence Him. We obey because we love Him.

Parents, those offspring do not belong to you. They were created for His pleasure. Give them back to their real Parent. You can never give them what He has for them.

**Parents, those offspring do not belong to you. They were created for His pleasure. Give them back to their real Parent.**

## Tried, Not Tired, by the Word

Psalm 105:19 (KJV)—*Until the time that his word came:  
the word of the Lord tried him.*

**H**ow often it may appear that what we have spoken has been just idle words; and unless they are inspired of God, generally they are. However, words uttered from our spirits are guaranteed to come to pass with “scrupulous exactitude,” in the words of an old saint of God.

Joseph was probably as stunned as anyone when he spoke the words in Genesis 37:9 to his brothers concerning his dream about ruling over them. Verse 11 says, “And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.” Thank God that there is at least one person open to observe what you speak by inspiration!

The time would certainly come that Joseph had spoken of. The Lord would prove that Joseph was right. But this leader, this ruler, this man whom the Lord was with, making everything he did prosper, showing him mercy, and giving him favor, was sold as a slave. Most of us would have disqualified ourselves at that point and abandoned God, not remembering that He would not abandon us. But the Scripture says that God allowed the famine upon the land, that He sent a man before them—Joseph, who was sold for a servant.

When we are being used by God, closely related to Him and committed to His cause, we could find ourselves in what appear to be peculiar circumstances. Look at Jesus. I know it takes effort; I’ve been there. But that is the time to stay steady and declare, “Lord, I may not understand what is going on, but I know this: You are working it all for my good because I love You, and nothing will separate me from Your love. Please continue to work in me both to will and to do of Your good pleasure.” It really is about God’s plan for humankind being fulfilled, not our temporary creature comforts.

*Heavenly Father, forgive us for our murmuring and disputing about these momentary light afflictions we occasionally experience. Help us to grasp the whole picture by faith in Your promises to us and through us. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.*



## Will We Die or 'Be Changed'?

1 Corinthians 15:51 (TM)—*But let me tell you something wonderful, a mystery I'll probably never fully understand. We're not all going to die—BUT we are all going to be changed.*

Everyone in the earth who came by natural birth is mortal, or subject to death. However, Christians are now immortal, free from death, or "deathless." When a believer ceases to exist in this earth, we really are incorrect when we say he or she is dead. Instead, we should say they are changed in preparation for their *final* change.

What we call death is really a dress rehearsal for the ultimate change, which will occur when Jesus appears and we become glorified in order to be like Him.

The unsaved person dies and is buried like Ananias and Sapphira. Scripture also says that Jesus died and was buried. So what is the difference? If you keep reading, it says Jesus rose on the third day, according to Scripture.

Those who "fall asleep" in Christ are usually buried. But since the dead in Christ are going to rise first to join with those who remain and have never experienced death, they are now simply *hidden*, which is what "buried" means in the Greek. Those preceding us out of here are merely lying *hidden*.

Paul said it was a mystery that he probably never would understand. I don't understand it, either, but I believe it. Because Jesus did it, so will I. The *New Living Translation* of First Corinthians 15:51 calls it, "a wonderful secret God has revealed to us. Not all of us will die, but we will all be transformed."

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "If we remember that all the trees of the earth are marked for the woodsman's axe, we would not be so ready to build our nest in them. We should love with love which expects death and separation. Our dear relatives and friends are only loaned to us. The hour when we must return them to the lender's hand may be near."

For a believer, death and separation are temporary. We will see our loved ones again if they, too, are believers—only we'll not have the same relationship. We'll all belong completely to Jesus in the next world. So let's enjoy each other here and get as many heathen to come to Christ in order to increase the number of His possession.

## Whom Are You Leading?

1 Samuel 22:2 (NIV)—*All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader.*

**W**ho is more in need of a leader than those in debt? Most people owe a natural debt of some kind. (All of us owed a spiritual debt that we could never pay, but thank God our Champion took care of that for us.) The Hebrew word here for debt is *nash*, from the root word that means “lead astray (mentally), to delude (manually), or to seduce, beguile, and deceive.” A person who is under this influence needs a leader—and badly.

Furthermore, who is more in need of a leader than the discontented? According to the original Hebrew wording, this is the group of people who have become bitter, angry, chafed, and heavy. They are breathing, but they are more animal-like than human. Their very souls and lives are in jeopardy because they have become slaves to

**Ask God for a leader to help you become disciplined, for it is lack of discipline that has helped create your dilemma.**

their appetites and desires for things they can’t afford or do not need at this time. Someone needs to lead them. They have their salvation, perhaps, but are totally defeated in life as Christians. God never wanted His children to settle just for heaven someday. No, He intended that we be in a win-win situation at all times while here on the earth, where He sends leaders.

True leaders from God may not be excited at first about the group assigned to them, but they will never take advantage of or abuse them. Some so-called leaders prey on the distressed, the debtors, and the discontented, but God sees and knows all things.

If you fall into any of these groups, don’t add despair to your life by becoming discouraged. Ask God for a leader to help you become disciplined, for it is lack of discipline that has helped create your dilemma. With God’s help, it is never too late to correct some bad habits that you may think are part of your genealogy. Start today with Jesus, the ultimate leader.

# Discipline Yourself To Love and Obey the Truth

**O**ne of the most powerful words you can ever learn to say is “no.” When you can say “no” to sin, “no” to corrupt companions, and “no” to your own flesh and mind when the carnal nature tries to pull you away from the love of God, you will understand just how powerful that smallest of words can be.

Make a practice of disciplining yourself. Discipline your own body to accept the word “no.” The flesh left unrestrained will cause you untold difficulties. Begin to make discipline a priority in your life. Don’t search for the easy approach or the easy way out of anything. Discipline yourself to love and obey the truth. That habit, when cultivated, will produce rich benefits in every area of your life.



## What's in Your Bosom Bag?

Ecclesiastes 7:9 (KJV)—*Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.*

**I**n Luke 6:38, Jesus said, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." When Jesus said that men would give into your bosom, anger was not one of the things He was talking about people giving you in return for your giving.

As we are all aware, the words "rage," "indignation," and "vexation" are synonymous with "anger." However, you may not know that the Hebrew word for "anger" here also includes the meanings "grief" and "sorrow." The Bible does mention some grief and sorrow that we are to bear, but this is not it. When you allow situations and circumstances, and sometimes even people, to cause you unnecessary grief and sorrow, then according to the Bible, you are a fool: "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools" (Ecclesiastes 7:9).

Do not allow "stuff" and "things" to upset your spirit. The word "fools" here means "stupid" or "silly." When things occur that you do not agree with, or when someone does something to you that is unfair or unkind, stop before you react. During that pause, make this heartfelt decision: "I refuse to act stupidly and silly and allow this to cause me grief or sorrow." This way, you stay in control of your life. Believe me, the opposite, releasing control of your life to anyone else, is downright stupid and about the silliest thing you can do.

Therefore, instead, choose to keep your bosom open to the kind of return that Jesus had in mind for His followers. Protecting your bosom is your responsibility. Promises for godly provision are God's job, but He can't let His blessings into your bosom if you have allowed anger to occupy the space.

*Father, I thank You that You have not given me a spirit of stupidity. Therefore, I elect to keep anger out of my bosom, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Familiarity Breeds Contempt

Luke 4:24 (KJV)—*And He said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.*

**W**e need to get over being accepted and popular if we have been called to share truth. There were many widows and lepers in Israel, but God only sent the prophets to one widow in Sarepta, a city in Sidon, and to a Syrian leper. Why? Because the widows and lepers of Israel would not walk in their covenant rights or show proper respect for the servants of God as being representatives of Jehovah. Therefore, they were not going to be able to receive what God had already provided.

Neither the widow in Sarepta, nor Naaman, who was a Syrian, had a covenant right to the blessings of Abraham. But, God wanted the covenant people to know that He is the God of mercy and love and that He is free to pour out His blessings on whomever He chooses. He also showed them that those who treat His messengers without the proper respect are doing so to Him. Failure to recognize and discern Him in and through His servant or messenger hinders your receiving, even though you have been given covenant rights.

God does not like it when we show disdain for His leaders. We are not to worship them or make idols out of them, but we are to receive them as from the Lord. Even though they have the anointing and ability to act on the Lord's behalf, they are unable to be effective where they are not received as from the Lord.

How many times have we missed out on God's provision because, when He attempted to work through the person of His choice, we allowed our familiarity with him or her to prevent us from receiving through that person God's best for us? The Lord is the One deciding whom He will use. Our only response is to be open to receive and then thank Him for meeting our need, because that brings Him pleasure.

God does not meet our need just because we have a need. Yet He delights in the prosperity of His people. He did not make money or finances available to the widow or the leper; instead He met their need. Often, we must refocus and become reprogrammed concerning what the Lord wants to do for us. Never allow familiarity to breed contempt on your part.

## Strong Faith Ignores Facts and Focuses on Truth

Romans 4:19 (KJV)—*And being not weak in faith, he [Abraham] considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.*

**F**acts can lie. Actually, they usually do alongside the promises of God. In the story of Abraham, for example, the facts said that this old man's body was past the age of reproduction. The facts said that his old wife had a dead womb and had not produced a baby in all her years. However, truth is based on the promise of God. Regardless of any present fact, faith is what you trust when the word of the Lord has been spoken to your heart.

Weak faith observes the facts of the moment and fails to believe in the very thing able to obtain what you want and to cause you to be unmoved by what you have. Truth must be a focused promise.

I have wanted many things, but some came and some did not. Why did certain things not come into my life? They were not in line with God's plan for me. However, there has not been one single time "the word of the Lord came unto me, saying..." that it did not happen and, often, without delay.

When the word of the Lord comes to me, not only is it a promise through God's Word, but it may also be delivered by a still, small voice speaking inside me or by a divine messenger who has nothing to gain from speaking to me. The message so burns in me that my spirit lights up like a holiday tree! I can't ignore it, run away from it, or go a day without thinking about it. It is a promise that must come to pass, and I have little to do with it, except to believe.

Fellowship with the Lord and a hunger for His Word have provided me with the strong faith to simply believe, which is all that is needed to bring to pass what is spoken to my heart. I encourage you today to stay in God's Word and ask for His grace to believe every word in the Bible. Your faith will grow to ignore the facts and focus on the truth, which always produces.

## Fast-Food Fads and Fancies

Proverbs 15:14 (TM)—*An intelligent person is always eager to take in more truth; fools feed on fast-food fads and fancies.*

**M**y, how times have changed. Two of the pleasures I enjoyed on a recent mini-vacation were the quality of food and the service offered in the restaurant at the hotel where I stayed. Though the dinner music was not Christian music, my spirit did not ball up in knots listening to it. The other dining room guests consisted of an older crowd whose conversation and behavior exemplified those who have lived long enough to learn that fads (for a day) have very little appeal or pleasure that lasts.

How we long to return to the importance of simply believing in Jesus, serving the Father, and awaiting the Lord's appearing. There are those today who have never tasted anything that was not fast food—and it doesn't matter if I ever have another home-cooked meal—but I still enjoy quality food placed before me.

The same is true of hearing the gospel preached. I can tell the difference between a preacher that has spent time in the presence of the Lord and one who has just recycled or thrown something together to feed the people.

I was the keynote speaker at a junior college graduation years ago. I shared a message entitled, "Class Is In When Classes Are Out." There are some things you can be taught in school that can aid you with your profession in life. However, if you never learn *class* and display it at all times, you will hinder how the Lord can best use you.

Class is not the socially acceptable things society dictates, which will judge you. You can be trained for that. But the wisdom of God operating in your life and the truth you share are acquired by spending time with the sovereign Lord, even if you never attended a day of school.

Fast-food fads and fancies are supposed to give us more free time; yet, people are more stressed out than ever. In fact, these things have helped dull our sensitivity and perception to spiritual things, and cause us to disdain and despise even what is of quality in the natural.

Let's not wait until we are old before returning to or pursuing what is important. Intelligent people are still eager to take on more truth.



## Special Purpose or Ordinary Jobs

2 Timothy 2:21 (KJV)—*If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

**I**t is time for the body of Christ to wake up to the reality that the work that God needs to do in us is already completed in Christ. We now choose to work on ourselves externally because that is where the challenge lies.

You and I must consistently make a conscious effort to cleanse thoroughly from us those bad habits, those undisciplined attitudes, and those behaviors that are displeasing to the heart of God.

Our approval must come from God. When we hear, study, and choose to model the teaching we receive, we will never be ashamed of our work. The pride of authorship will bring us before the Master of our house, who will use us for special purposes, not just ordinary jobs.

**Our allegiance is not  
to us, but to our  
Lord Jesus Christ.**

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Average and ordinary vessels come cheaply, but special purpose vessels are costly. Purging oneself carries with it a high premium, but to be used of God brings dignity and esteem of the highest degree.

The expression "to thine own self be true" sounds nice, but its logic is limited. Our allegiance is not to us, but to our Lord Jesus Christ. He bought us with a price, the shed blood of Jesus; therefore, our vow is to our Father. I will be true. Will you?

Fruit manifested is partially the work of patience. Without patience in practice, our hearts will start to doubt, and a doubting heart is a dishonest heart. Choose to trust God and become "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

*Father God, in Jesus' name, I thank You that the fruit of patience is mine now through the new birth. I elect to hear Your Word and keep it, thereby causing my heart to be honest before You.*

## God, You Choose

Numbers 27:16 (KJV)—*Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation.*

Can you imagine that this is the response you make when God just informs you that you are about to die because you failed to glorify Him by not calling forth water as He had instructed when the people rebelled (v. 14)? No other story in the Bible has taught me more about not allowing other people's choices and behavior to affect me to the point that I forget to obey God and what He has told me to do.

Moses did not try to justify why he got angry and struck the rock instead of speaking to it as he had been instructed to do. He did not ask God to forgive him and give him another chance. He did not ask who was going to take over when he was gone.

Moses understood that it was not his idea to be involved with these people in the first place. He did not sign on to deliver them out of Egypt or provide for their comfort and care in the place where God had allowed them to come. Moses accepted that, while God had done much through him, his season was over because he reacted to the people instead of responding to God, and he neglected to obey God this one time.

From what I read, Moses' perfect track record with God carried with it no weight now. It appears that leaders are not permitted the luxury of disobeying God and continuing to retain their position or anointing, especially when they don't immediately repent. In my opinion, David was guiltier than Moses when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. Yet David repented and submitted himself humbly before God, though he was a king.

David's sin was against the flesh. Moses committed another form of adultery. He ignored a directive from the Lord and did things his own way. Adam was guilty of the same thing, which caused us to be in the shape we are in today.

God seems to measure disobedience differently from the way we measure it. When we follow any voice or spirit other than the Lord and what He is saying to us individually, we have committed a type of adultery or worshipped another idol not made by hand.

## Offenses and Justification—A Dual Deal

Romans 4:25 (KJV)—*Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

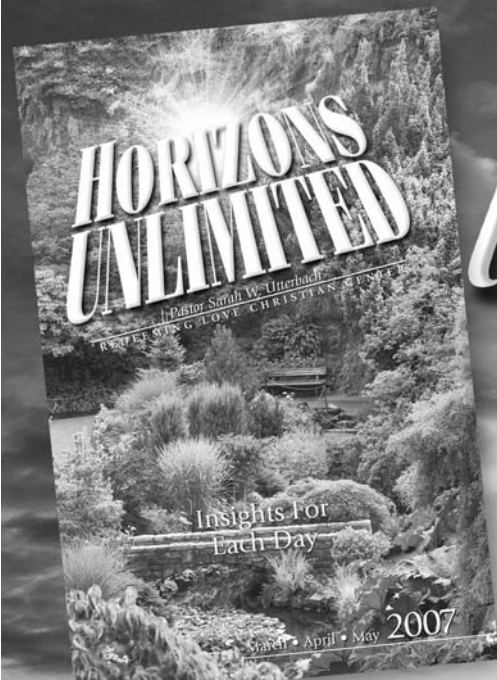
**T**he King James Version's rendering of this scripture is not always clearly understood—especially by new believers. Yet the message it contains is quite simple. The New Living Translation says, "He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised from the dead to make us right with God." Innocent Jesus willingly became guilty, though no one could accuse Him of a single sin.

In contrast, in our judicial system in the United States a person is "innocent until proven guilty." Our system would not allow an innocent person to willingly take the place of a guilty person. However, from the beginning, our Father God has allowed the innocent to be sacrificed for the guilty. In the Old Testament, for example, animals were sacrificed and their blood was used to symbolically cover people's guilt.

Even so, Romans 4:25 shares of a dual deal made in our behalf: Jesus obligated Himself to the obedient act of dying for our offenses and sins, and God then raised Jesus again to justify us. Had Jesus not been raised after death, the sacrifice of His life would have been no different than the sacrifice of every animal slaughtered in the past. Priests annually had to remind the Jews of their sins and offenses against God; but once we received Jesus Christ as our Savior, a record of our sin no longer existed.

Jesus took all of our offenses into hell and left them there, and He arose from the dead triumphant over sin, hell, the devil, and all they represent. When Jesus stood before the Father with His sinless blood as the final sacrifice for those who would believe, I became justified, you became justified, and the way was made for all of humankind to receive Him!

Glory be to Jesus! He was the only One who qualified. He was the only One who understood God's plan to restore humankind. Many people were raised from the dead in the Old and New Testaments, but only One was innocent. Only One would never again die. Only One can forever live with the Father in heaven and in our hearts at the same time. His name is Jesus Christ—the "dual deal" maker.



# HORIZONS UNLIMITED

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## God Is Not Hiding

It's wonderful to know that in the midst of every trouble we can find God when we look for Him. To me it's even more exciting to know that the One who delivers can also keep or prevent me from trouble if I elect to confer with Him first.

The Hebrew word translated "trouble" here means a *tight place*. We've all been in a few of those, but notice that any turn towards God to search out His presence in prayer or worship will allow Him to appear. You may not see Him with your physical eyes when you turn to Him, but your eyes of faith will know that He is present.

Trouble may still be where you are today. This verse does not say, "They turned from their trouble." It says that they turned to God and sought Him. Picture this: in the middle of a major attack from the enemy, you start to pray and worship God. You have just now turned to Him, and you are searching out His presence in the middle of this tight spot. No place is ever so tight that we cannot search for God in it.



## Today's Fears and Tomorrow's Worries Are for Naught

Romans 8:38 (NLT)—*And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away.*

**N**otice that Paul did not say, "I have proof of this." He said, "I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love." I meet people who say, "God doesn't love me anymore." I am tempted to respond, "You are a liar!" What these people actually mean is "If I were God, I would not love me because of what I have done." That is the very reason that, as a six-year-old girl so truthfully said, "God is God, and no one else can be Him."

The only thing that can convince people that God loves them is time in His Word. The most convincing evidence of God's love is that He sent Jesus to the cross to fully accomplish the requirement of the law for us. Then, what robs people of being convinced of God's love? The most common thieves of the knowledge of God's love are fears of today and worries of tomorrow.

My son told me the following story. God asked a person to name the two days of the week that begin with the letter "T"; after a couple of seconds the person replied, "Today and tomorrow." You might smile, but today and tomorrow are the days I am talking about. It is sad that so many of God's people allow today's fear and tomorrow's worries to block out their enjoyment of today's successes and tomorrow's potential. When they allow fear and worry to take their joy away, they lose sight of God's love for them.

I did not always please my mother, but I always knew she loved me. In truth, the very fact that she punished me for wrongdoing let me know—in sometimes painful ways—just how much she loved me.

If you have rebelled or behaved in a manner that is displeasing to God, then repent! Then reject all fears that come your way. Refuse to allow concerns for tomorrow to rob you of your joy today. Today's fears and tomorrow's worries will only make you doubt God's love for you—and that is an expense you can't afford. Ask the Holy Ghost to help you, and He will!

## Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Psalm 62:10 (TM)—*And a windfall, if it comes—don't make too much of it.*

I think we have missed the principle of what Paul said when he was thanking the Christians in the church at Philippi. I am not opposed to messages that teach on increase. I am opposed to a lack of balance in these teachings.

Some of the “increase teachers” seem to heap condemnation on those whose finances are, at times, somewhat deficient. That saddens me because, while I believe that the Lord delights in the prosperity of His children, what Paul was saying is, “I know how to live when I am poor, and I know how to live when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens, when I have enough to eat and when I go hungry, when I have more than I need and when I do not have enough. I can do all things through Christ because he gives me strength” (Phil. 4:12-13).

The key to a successful, fruitful, and happy life is not based on what you have, but on who you have. One of the greatest lessons I have ever learned is that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). I have been poor and I have been rich. Unless you are relying on Jesus to strengthen you in all things, you are deficient even if you possess riches. What you have can make your flesh comfortable, but your spirit could be doing cartwheels at the same time.

Learn to settle who you are in Christ Jesus so that when your windfall occurs, you won't make too much of it. Remember, the more you get, the more you must manage. When what you have starts to distract you from spiritual things or eternal truths, you need to begin a fasted life so that the Holy Ghost can lead you regarding what is pleasing to the Lord. The devil will help you to get anything that you will make an idol of so that you forget to serve the Lord and await the return of Jesus (1 Thess. 1:9-10).

Those seriously awaiting Jesus' appearing do not have to be told how to live in this life, because their hope is already in the world to come—in things eternal, not “here today and gone tomorrow.”

## Stay, Repent, Say I'm Sorry, and Fix it

Ecclesiastes 10:4 (KJV)—*If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.*

**P**eople are quick to throw in the towel and run from anyone who requires them to be better or do better on their job. In fact, one of the reasons so many people are unemployed today is that they quit when the boss corrects them rather than to stay, repent, say they are sorry, and resolve the conflict.

I have had friends and employees who were seriously challenged with saying the words "I'm sorry." Nevertheless, part of resolving any conflict is to apologize. Even if you make a mistake and fix it, you will leave a bad taste in the mouth of the offended party if you do not apologize.

Contrarily, you have no right to forgive a person who does not ask you for forgiveness. Jesus showed me this one day when I was forgiving someone who had not asked. He reminded me that even though God loved and fellowshiped with me, He could not forgive me until I humbled myself to ask Him. The disciple is not greater than the master (Matthew 10:24), so I follow the Master's lead and forgive others when they ask me to.

Most people will forgive you if you ask, but they do not appreciate you acting as though nothing happened. Still, what if, for instance, you do not like how your boss appraises your work? Stop looking for the wrong in your boss! Stay, repent, say "I'm sorry," and fix what is wrong. After you get it straight, then leave—if you have a better job waiting and the Holy Ghost agrees with your departure.

Sadly, many pastors are afraid to preach the truth about what is displeasing to God. People do not like to be corrected or required to live by Bible standards, so they leave the church. Pastors, let them go! Sooner or later someone will stand and say, "Thus saith the Lord!" Preach truth—even if you have to learn it while you are sharing it. Of course, as a pastor you should not correct another if you are not living by the Word and doing what is right before the people. Study it, know it, preach it, and set the pattern for your people to follow God's ways.

## His Unchangeable, Unbreakable Promises

Hebrews 6:17-18 (TM)—*When God wanted to guarantee His promises, he gave his word, a rock- solid guarantee— God CAN'T break his word. And because his word cannot change, the promise is likewise unchangeable.*

People often say, "There is nothing more sure than death and taxes." God's Word is. People have been known to be raised from the dead, and some of those are alive today. Taxes have changed over the years and can only be levied when people are employed.

God wanted to show the heirs to His promise that He would never change His mind, so He gave us both His promise and His oath. His promise is His Word, and His oath is binding. God cannot lie; therefore, He has bound Himself to us eternally. "Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can take new courage, for we can hold on to his promise with confidence" (v. 18, NLT). His promise like an anchor for our souls (Heb. 6:19).

Our spirit has it settled. It is our mind that needs reassurance at times. Our confidence confirms for us that the curtain has been removed and that, at will, we can enter into where Jesus has already gone to assume His role as our High Priest forever (vv. 19-20).

I no longer make my confession of sins to a man, nor do I look to man for my safety and protection. Man cannot absolve me of my sins, especially since Jesus took His untainted blood into the Holiest of Holies and presented it to our Father on my behalf.

God said it, that settles it, and I believe it. Because the Father said it, for me it is settled. It's not settled because I believe; it's settled because Father God said it.

Very few ever called their biological father a liar, a man who is capable of lying by virtue of his being human. How much more confident should you be when your Heavenly Father speaks. He cannot lie. If God were ever to lie, He would cease to be God, and that could never happen.

God does not tell me everything the way I want to hear it, nor does He take me down the path that I would lay out for myself. But after 70 years, I can still boldly say He has never disappointed me, lied to me, or let me down. His promises are still unchangeable and unbreakable.



## Trouble Comes; It Just Won't Last

1 Thessalonians 3:3 (NLT)—*To keep you from becoming disturbed by the troubles you were going through. But, of course, you know that such troubles are going to happen to us Christians.*

Troubles can only be measured by the people who are experiencing them. However, God's solution is the same for everyone: His Word, acceptance of His Son, and obedience to the leading of His Spirit. Trouble does not come to defeat us; the devil knows that is impossible. The best he can do is to disturb us from the tranquil state that Jesus made available to us at Calvary. The chastisement of our peace was laid on Him; therefore, though trouble comes, it cannot last for those who know the promises and peace of God.

The King James Version says, "No man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto."

We have been forewarned that we would suffer trouble, or affliction; therefore, we need to understand that God is working it together for our good. The devil has no new trouble to direct our way. However, God has creative solutions that are new every morning.

Interestingly enough, the things that used to frighten me and cause me headaches and stomachaches no longer faze me. Once I understood that I was redeemed, ransomed, and restored to the Lord, the care and keeping of my spirit, soul, and body were committed to Him. I simply decided to believe His promises and rest in what He said because He cannot lie.

Trouble has knocked at my door many times. Sometimes I have even left the door open to it, but the unwelcome guest cannot stay without my permission. One of the quickest ways to get rid of anything you have allowed access to you is to repent, turn from it, and watch the Holy Spirit or angels on assignment take it from there.

Some of you reading this knew before you got involved in trouble that your choice was not God's best, but you thought you could participate in what God had not ordained for you. Just repent. Some of you, on the other hand, are experiencing the negatives of life simply because you are godly Christians. Either way, rejoice—for what was intended to harm you is being redesigned as a stepping stone to your ultimate position before God.

## I Can Pray To My Father

Matthew 26:53 (NKJV)—*Or do you think that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He will provide me with more than twelve legions of angels?*

Jesus was very clear that, at His request, His Father would provide in excess of 12,000 supernatural forces to assist Him. Are we not His body? Yet our Father is usually our last resort when we find ourselves up against something. We have the same Father that Jesus has, and He loves us just as much as He loves Jesus. Yet too often, we act as though God is against us and that He delights in our failure. You know where that lie comes from, and you need to ask forgiveness for entertaining it even for a split second.

One of the wisest things I've learned to do is to pray to my Father prior to considering all of my choices. He offers His wisdom for the pleasant things I want to do and confirms with His approval. Well, I have news for you—He does the same thing with what we consider the hard, or difficult, stuff. Nothing we want or need to do is hard to God. It is only difficult when we discuss it with everyone else and exclude Him.

We put ourselves through unnecessary torture by delaying talking to Him in the first place. I've learned to make it easy on myself by taking everything to Him for His input. He not only responds, but He confirms it almost immediately. My flesh does not always like the answer He gives, but my spirit simply says, "He knows all the facts and the truth also. Unless and until He fails you, you owe it to Him to trust Him in this." I have yet to regret trusting Him.

After He was betrayed and taken captive, Jesus chose not to call for reinforcements, because He was more concerned with scripture being fulfilled than He was with victory for the moment. He saw the big picture. Sometimes we need to back up in order to increase our vision. At times, we miss the forest because of the tree that is blocking our view. Since Jesus knew and understood that He could pray to His Father at any time, I believe we need that same assurance.

So what are you waiting for? It starts with, "Dear Father God..." The Holy Spirit will help you with what should come after that. Don't imitate anyone else's prayer. Have your own conversation with Him. And don't forget to listen and not just talk.

## What Are You Waiting For?

Ecclesiastes 10:11 (NLT)—*It does no good to charm a snake after it has bitten you.*

**S**ome people are like snakes—and it is risky for you to allow them too much access and freedom in your life. But unless and until the Holy Ghost reveals a potentially dangerous snake in your midst, do not operate in fear.

I used to think “snakes” recognized their deliberately wrong behavior. However, experience taught me that even if they recognize and dislike their wrong behavior, they do not always know how to stop their actions. Such snakes are particularly dangerous to have around. It is easier to know how to handle snakes who present themselves as snakes because they are never going to change. The most volatile snakes want to be pets, and yet they are still very much out of control and malicious.

What do you do? Charm them with the Holy Ghost and the Word of God—hoping they will change—but keep enough distance between you to allow the snake to demonstrate that it is harmless. Otherwise, you will be the first one the snake bites—and it will be too late to charm the snake then! The taste of your blood will excite it more and more until it kills you and your vision—or until you kill it.

**Trust God to work  
all things together  
for your good.**

The truth is that you are always at risk when you try to salvage a person, but failure to try disqualifies you as a Christian. What is the solution? Trust God to work all things together for your good, even when others harm you. Be sensitive to the Holy Ghost concerning those around you—especially to those who are close enough to bite.

Go through life walking in love, but also confronting in love whatever makes you uncomfortable as you interact with others. Accept the fact that people can change, and do your best to help them be the best they can be. Look for their improvement, but keep your distance until change manifests. Remember: The choice to change is theirs, but the choice to protect yourself is yours!

## In the Light of His Countenance

Numbers 6:24-26 (KJV)—*The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord Himself make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.*

**I** get very excited when I see blessings and promises made to Israel because I know that, as the spiritual seed of Abraham, I have the promises and Jesus also. *Wow!*

Look at what Aaron was directed to pronounce over the children of Israel. And notice who was going to initiate it: "The Lord—He is going to bless you." One of the Hebrew words for "bless" is to *kneel*. When we kneel to God as an act of adoration, He will cause everything else to kneel in our presence, or to bow as a benefit to us.

The Lord will also keep me, or hedge me about. He will guard and protect me, and attend, preserve, regard, and save me, and look narrowly or be single-minded about me. To have His face shine upon me is to have Him smile on me. He makes Himself luminous and shows me light, or enlightens me and sets me on fire!

When God is gracious to me, He is saying, in effect, "I will bend and stoop everything in kindness to you as one would an inferior. I will bestow favor and give or grant you your protection. I will be merciful and show you mercy. Instead of your having a pity party, I will pity you and pray for you."

The Lord's lifting up His countenance means He is lifting up His face and giving us peace. He is never down; His face is always up. We have used the expression so many times, "In your face, devil" to explain our victory over satan and his demons. But we've missed it in that it is not about being in his face. It's about drawing so close to the Lord that we discover that the peace, the benefits, the smile, the gifts, and the prosperity in every area are found from God looking us full in the face (Num. 6:26, TM).

When we humble ourselves and submit to Him, kneeling as an act of adoration, He causes everything that disrupted our peace to bow before us in order for our peace to be restored in the light of his countenance.



## One Manner of Law

*Leviticus 24:22 (KJV)—Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I am the Lord your God.*

New arrivals do not require new rules. When new employees come to work for this ministry, we give them a copy of the employee manual. They sign a statement that they received it, and from that point on they are to perform and adhere to its every word in order to remain employed at RLCC. We make no attempt to force them to read it; it is their responsibility.

Similarly, God inspired men to record everything we would need to know to live victoriously here in the earth. This God-inspired record tells us about relationships, finances, health, death, peace, love, self-control, giving, living, and so forth. The more we read His manual, the more we understand what He expects us to know.

Just as the employee manual benefits both the reader and the employer, the Bible benefits the reader while at the same time profiting God. When God's children know and apply His Word in their lives, two things happen. First, they make God's heart happy. Second, they avoid unnecessary trouble from which God would otherwise have to rescue them.

However, unlike employee manuals and policies, which are frequently updated, the Bible remains as the Spirit of God wrote it through men. The language may be modernized, but the intent of the content is the same and will never change.

Strangers and people of different cultures and backgrounds will eventually cross your path. However, Leviticus 24:22 reminds us to have one manner of law for the stranger and the native alike. This is a good rule to follow because you never have to try to figure out what fits whom. It is time for us to learn to fit the Bible's teaching because God will never adjust it for us. The letter of the law remains the same, but He can adjust the Spirit of the law to meet us individually and that will never violate His Word or His plan.

## My Travel Agents

Deuteronomy 1:32,33 (NLT)—*But even after all he did, you refused to trust the Lord your God, who goes before you looking for the best places to camp, guiding you by a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of cloud by day.*

**W**hen I travel, I almost always consult a travel agent to assist me with finding the best route, aircraft, and accommodations. They have more information and better access to see the full picture of what I want to accomplish. It just makes sense to me to benefit from their expertise.

Like travel agents, the Lord knows the best route, transportation method, and accommodations for our journey. He precedes us to search out the way we should go and where He wants us to settle for the night. He orders our steps with great wisdom, for He first checks out the path for us to take. After everything He has done to demonstrate His care and concern for our every need, you would think that our lack of trust in God would get pretty tiresome to Him.

My travel agents and I have mutual respect for each other. They know what my standards are, what I require and expect. They have worked with me long enough to perceive and anticipate what will make me happy. I do not question my travel agent's arrangements, because it is her job to keep me coming back as a happy client.

As our Father who made us, God knows what we need and enjoy. God did not spare Jesus to ensure that I would have eternal life; therefore, He will withhold nothing that I need (Romans 8:32). I refuse to question Him even when I misunderstand His choices for me. He has yet to be wrong, so why concern myself since His concern is me?

We do not have a pillar of fire or a cloud to lead us, but we do have the Holy Ghost. I trust His navigation more than any fire or cloud. His Spirit working with our re-created spirits will never lead us in any way that is contrary to the Word or displeasing to the Father.

Ask Jesus, for we are His body. I will never believe that His Father would ever do anything to jeopardize or hinder His Son's body—you and I, His family. The problem may be that you still don't know who you really are. Your Travel Agent has you covered. Relax.

## Some Things Take Time

2 Samuel 5:10 (KJV)—*And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.*

I have learned to appreciate God's grace because it has been by His mercy that He has not permitted some things to become a reality in my life until the autumn of my years. Of course, like most young adults, I wanted it yesterday. However, now I realize that I would not have been ready, and only God knew when I would be prepared to manage and perform it in excellence.

It was said of Daniel that an excellent spirit, along with many other qualities, was found in him: "Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar" (Daniel 5:12).

We are born in sin and shaped in iniquity, which leads me to believe that we receive excellent spirits as we grow in knowledge and understanding. Then the increasing knowledge and understanding cause doubts to be dissolved.

When David was a teenager, the prophet Samuel anointed him as king. However, he was thirty before he became king of all of Israel. First, he was king over Judah for seven and one-half years. Then he became king over Jerusalem and Judah for another thirty-three years (2 Samuel 5:4-5).

It takes time to reach the level of maturity that God seeks in His servants of high authority. What God has planned for you may happen in stages. If so, do not be discouraged. Most people are not able to handle the total package at once, so relax and comfortably allow yourself to grow or become great as the Lord God of Hosts is with you.

*Father, I am so glad that in Your wisdom You know what I am capable of and when I am ready for Your perfect plan for me. I know You are concerned about all that concerns me and that I can depend on You to take me where I need to go, one step at a time. I bless You, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Insight Over Income

Proverbs 16:16 (TM)—*Get wisdom—it's worth more than money; choose insight over income every time.*

**W**isdom pays better dividends.

Too many believers haven't a clue about how to get any of these things operating in their lives. They think that because James said, "If you lack wisdom, ask for it" (James 1:5), the next choice they make will be "right on." Failure to read the next verse and apply it will hinder the wisdom of God that makes you productive. You must believe and not doubt. Doubters can ask until their mouth is dry, with no meaningful results, even though Jesus has been made unto them wisdom.

Suppose your car ran out of gas, and I came along with a full tank and offered you enough fuel to get you to a service station. If you did not understand the rules of siphoning, you'd never get the gas that I have into your tank. Therefore, you would be in no better shape than you were before I came along. How do we get the wisdom of Jesus to work in our lives? We have a full tank in our spirits, but without knowing the importance of praying in the Spirit, we'll never get it up to our head, where it can explode into creative ideas, perception, and insight—which in turn could make our income increase.

Money without wisdom could result in poverty at anytime. God's wisdom, however, when believed and acted on will almost always guarantee you income. Insight from God should always be preferred over income from man. God, at times, uses money. But He has also been known to cause increase beyond the available funds. God used Pat Robertson with \$70 to cause CBN, Regent University, the Family Network, and so many more things to increase to a \$500 million empire. The song says, in effect, "Little is much when God is in it."

The *Horizons Unlimited* devotional is just a portion of what God has done after we found ourselves leaving two perfectly good jobs years ago to follow His leading. I am still challenged to explain how we went from 58 cents in 1979 to where we are today—with no telethons, radio rallies, fund-raisers, gimmicks, games, unfulfilled promises, and so forth. He simply honored us with insight while He took care of the income.



## Put Out To Be Included In

John 9:22 (KJV)—*These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.*

**F**ear of man will cause you to make the wrong choices. Fear of being excluded will influence you to believe that you have taken a negative route, though you have done what you knew to be right. Fear of masses of people will cause you to abandon your offspring.

**Anything viewed through  
the eyes of fear will always  
be a distorted picture.**

Fear is detrimental to your ability to make sound choices. Fear clouds your spiritual vision to the point that you miss the very thing you are aspiring to attain. Anything viewed through

the eyes of fear will always be a distorted picture.

With God as your heavenly eternal Father, you need not fear. David said, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). Even when we are destitute or loosed from the very ones whom God used to bring us into the world, God remains faithful. Therefore, remain faithful to Him.

A human being may be able to put you out of a facility, but no one can put you out of the kingdom when you choose to confess Jesus as the Christ. Never allow fear to cause you concern about belonging here in the earth when eternity awaits the words that will seal your destiny. What are those life-changing words? You can say them now: "Jesus, You are the Christ, the Son of God, and You are my Lord."

*Dear Father God, I thank You that You are my strength, my refuge, my buckler, my fortress, my deliverer, my rock, my shield, my stronghold, the horn of my salvation in whom I trust. Because of my faith in You and Your covenant concerning me, may I never be alarmed or exceedingly terrified or more in awe of people than I am of You. You are the one and only living God. I will call upon You, for You are worthy to be praised. So shall I be saved from my enemies (Psalm 22:4).*

*I thank You for it, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## It Takes Two to Tango

John 8:4 (NLT)—*“Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the very act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?”*

**L**ike all wise people, Jesus said nothing at first because He knew that they knew the law of Moses concerning this. Since there was no man present (because a person cannot be caught in the act of adultery without there being another person involved), Jesus used the law to agree with them.

It sounded as though Jesus was letting them off the hook by saying, “All right, stone her.” But then He said, “Let those who have never sinned throw the first stone.” Because they only produced her and not the man, they were in sin, and Jesus knew it. Jesus resumed what He had been doing and they judged themselves.

I learned as a child that when you point your finger at someone else, three of your own fingers are pointing back at you. That has been a great source of insight in helping me learn to limit my accusations of others. It is the desire of Jesus always to reconcile us and eliminate from us that which separates us from the worship of Him and the Father.

Sure, you may get accused of many things; just don’t be guilty—or, at least, examine your accusers to see if they have dealt with a log in their eye (Matt. 7:3-5). Often, they will abandon focusing on the speck in your eye after a bit of self-examination.

Jesus never asked the woman if she was guilty of what was said of her. He only wanted to know the status of her accusers. He asked, “Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” When she answered in the negative, He said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

Jesus knew that she was not innocent of the charge. But He is our advocate, not our judge. However, He is also our advisor, which is why He left her with the instruction to “go and sin no more.” He does not just accuse or condemn us. He instructs us in how to stay out of the enemy’s territory and walk the path of victory with Him. It takes two to tango in sin, but it also takes two to walk in freedom. Jesus and you always make a majority.

## Split the Ear With Sound

2 Chronicles 13:15 (KJV)—*Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.*

**A**ll of us occasionally find ourselves in positions where it appears that we are outnumbered, outclassed, and headed for defeat. But thanks be to God, that is not the final report for those who will split the ear with sound. When we shout out loud in the midst of seeming disaster, God immediately hears and comes on the scene to confirm His covenant with us.

**Lift your voice, split  
the ears of the enemy,  
and watch the hand  
of the Lord deliver you  
of every adversity.**

The truth is that you cannot shout that loudly if you do not have a covenant with God. It is confidence in the covenant that inspires us to shout when fear tries so desperately to be the order of the day. When you know your covenant, like Abijah, you will declare, “‘God Himself is with us for our captain’ and to

fight a covenant child is to fight against the Lord God: and ‘ye shall not prosper.’”

Praise God! It does not matter if it appears that the enemy is before you and behind you. When we covenant men and women cry to the Lord, when the new breed of priest sounds the trumpet, we split the ears of the enemy with the sound that is loud enough to reach the ear of our Father, whose ear is unaffected by the sound except to respond to it on behalf of His children. Lift your voice, split the ears of the enemy, and watch the hand of the Lord deliver you of every adversity.

*Father, I thank You today for the covenant You made with me. Because of it I can stand confident that Your comfort is mine and the enemy is confused because he can't rattle me. Therefore, I will continue to shout Your praises in the midst of every effort of the enemy, for I know that You will contend with any who contends with me. I thank You for hearing my cry, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Killing Their Sacred Cows

Acts 6:14 (KJV)—*For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.*

**W**hen they can't resist the wisdom and Spirit of God in you, they will come up with false witnesses to try and get you killed (v. 13). People do not like having their "sacred cows" kicked over, even when what you say is truth misunderstood.

A sacred cow, or custom, is *a usage prescribed by habit or law*. Often, otherwise good people, will become irate when you introduce something other than or in opposition to what they have been taught all their lives, even when you can prove it according to scripture.

I experienced that years ago. The uncle of a friend of mine was a gracious host and pleased about our attending Bible school until we shared some truth from God's Word that did not line up with his denomination's tradition. Because he was a deacon in his church, and we were new kids on the block, he yelled that we were traitors and had left what we were taught. Then he quoted something to the effect, "\_\_\_\_\_-born, \_\_\_\_\_-dead." (The blanks represent the name of his denomination.) Suddenly, that same gracious host let us know we were no longer welcome in his house.

We had not left or betrayed anything. We just had Someone revealed more deeply to us. We were hungry and thirsty for the will of God, which can only be supported and revealed to you by His Word.

The Jews were not the only ones upset about their customs being tampered with. The Romans felt the same way (Acts 16:21). Paul knew King Agrippa was an expert in all the customs of the Jews, so he requested Agrippa hear him patiently (Acts 26:3). Finally, Paul, arriving in Rome, told the Jewish leader that he was never guilty of committing anything against the Jewish people or other customs, yet he was delivered unto the hands of the Romans, anyway.

So don't think because you are innocent of any wrongdoing that those wanting their customs, traditions, and habits will be pleased with you and welcome you. Do it God's way, anyhow! He will give you the grace to endure others' attitudes and abuse.



## Tell It to Jesus

Micah 7:5 (KJV)—*Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.*

Let's face it, all of us talk too much to everyone except the Lord. I have had many friends over the years and I have considered myself a friend to more than a few. However, I have found my confidence in some of them betrayed and I have found my mouth repeating things that should have remained silent. I have repented and I suppose they have also, but to this day I have regrets that I could not be trusted to keep the doors of my mouth closed.

I share with the congregation of RLCC all the time, "Do not tell me anything you don't want repeated, not because I am a gossip but because I want to remain transparent. In addition, I don't want someone else's secrets to weigh me down." I use everything I hear as a sermon of how to live in freedom and victory. I may not call out names but I will surely use the example to try to help others.

One of my favorite tear-jerking songs as a child was, "I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus. I cannot bear these burdens alone; I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus. Jesus can help me, Jesus alone." Over the years that song has become sort of my theme. I am not aware that I have any burdens and if I did, He has authorized me to take care of them. He has empowered me to believe that nothing is impossible to God or me as a believer. Therefore, I try to avoid anything that I cannot openly discuss before anyone. The only secrets I have are those that the Lord speaks to me for me to ponder in my heart until He brings them to pass.

The Lord spoke to me once and called me "Big Mouth," because I shared with my late husband what He had said to me about going to Bible school two years before we were to go. He told me if I ever told Clinton anything else that He told me first, He, God, would stop talking to me. I had been waiting all of my life to hear the voice of God and I was not about to risk losing that.

Learn to talk to the Lord about everything. He knows it already and will not tell another soul. Try working it out yourself with the Lord before you talk to anyone else. They may not help, but they could hurt.

## Mightily Grew the Church

Acts 19:20 (TCNT)—*So in a powerful way the Word of the Lord kept spreading and growing.*

**T**here is no way that the church will not grow when the Word of the Lord spreads and grows. What has hindered us? What we are doing and allowing in our homes and lives that has stifled growth? It was not until these heathen heard the prevailing Word and “cleaned house” that they began to grow and spread powerfully. When they cleaned house, there was room to receive this new doctrine, which was evidently sovereign over that to which they had been exposed.

Can you see this? The Word of God kept spreading and growing in a powerful way. Witches and warlocks opened themselves up to receive the new teaching. Think about how many movies, DVDs, videos, and so forth that we as Christians justify watching, because we are unwilling to discipline ourselves to rid our hearts and minds of this perverted so-called entertainment. You’re not really being entertained, because your spirit is churning on the inside when it’s forced to watch that which is unholy and not pleasing to the Lord. We must train ourselves to be inspired by that which would please God.

There are choirs and so-called Christian entertainers who are clueless about the anointing of the Lord, so they yield themselves to what sells products, because the love of money is stronger in them than the love of ministering to mankind. Inspired music and messages last throughout the centuries. We quickly outgrow the entertainment stuff, because it can’t grow with us. But anything that is inspired appeals to our spirits regardless of our age or status.

I challenge you to sit quietly in the presence of the Lord and inquire about what He wants you to listen to and watch. Remember, it’s about what pleases the Lord and not what our flesh enjoys. The Lord said to me one day, “I created everything, including you, for my pleasure; and I’ll work it all together for our good.”

We may enjoy each other and find pleasure in one another, but everything was created for His pleasure, including our children. Our pleasure should be in pleasing Him.

## Recognized Because of Time With Jesus

Acts 4:13 (NKJV)—*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.*

A person could be unlettered, illiterate, and absolutely ignorant in worldly knowledge and still impact the world for Jesus. If a person will spend time with Jesus, then the Holy Spirit will make that person bold to do things that would cause others to marvel.

People are not impressed with what you know. They want to know about what you can do with what you know, especially when it will positively affect their lives.

**The more time  
you spend with Jesus,  
the bolder you  
will become.**

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Education and information are wonderful, and God can and will use our knowledge for His glory when we submit it to Him for His service. However, we are never to allow the devil to hinder us from running through troops and leaping over walls, pulling down strong-

holds, or anything else that we need to do to complete the task that God has called and equipped us for.

Regardless of your academic achievements, spend time with Jesus. The more time you spend with Him, the bolder you will become. Soon you will begin to demonstrate what you believe about Him, and the next thing you know people will recognize you—not because of what you look like or what you have because of your natural parents, but because you have been with Jesus.

*Dear Father in heaven, I thank You because one day you allowed me to see Jesus in another person. It piqued my curiosity, and aroused and stimulated my spirit to the point of causing me to pursue the peace and the power that is the hallmark of a person who has been with Jesus.*

*May others see in me the One whom I represent in the earth. Increase the spirit of boldness in me to speak, do, and live what I truly believe. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.*

## Neither Allow the Past or the Promise to Ruin You

*Leviticus 18:1-5 (TM)—God spoke to Moses: Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them, 'I am God, your God. Don't live like the people of Egypt where you used to live, and don't live like the people of Canaan where I'm bringing you. Don't do what they do. Obey my laws and live by my decrees. I am your God. Keep my decrees and laws. The person who obeys them lives by them. I am God.'*

**M**ost believers understand that the life they were delivered from should not continue to influence them. However, I am not sure they understand that God delivers us into a land, not a lifestyle. Though this message was for Israel, it holds true for us as well. So often, we get out of the ditch of legalism, which is a good thing, but then we find ourselves falling into the ditch of too much liberty. That is not a good thing. We get saved, look at the world around us, and decide that in order not to stand out or be different, we will imitate and conform to our new environment.

God is saying to us, "Don't do what they do. Obey my laws and live by my decrees." He, not the place we are to possess, is our God. He, as God, always wants to be the object of our worship. He wants us to seek Him first. Then what He has promised and provided for us will not become an idol or a stumbling-block.

Some of us need to stop right where we are today and re-establish our priorities. He has delivered us from the past. He will take us into the promise, provided we remember what His plan and purpose are for us. It matters not where we are; it's about keeping His laws and decrees. I assure you that obedience to what God says guarantees that we will live by every word that He has decreed.

Let's rejoice together over where God has brought us from. But let's never forget that His deliverance obligates us to remember that in our liberty and new location, it is still His desire to be our God. He has brought us into our promised land and equipped us to affect and infect the inhabitants of the land. But that can only occur when they observe that we will not be moved or influenced by them, their culture, traditions, or habits. After all, we are not just after the land. Since the heathen have been given to us as part of our inheritance (Ps. 2:8), are we not after them also?

## Would You Kill One Jesus Died to Save?

Matthew 7:15 (KJV)—*Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

**A** ravenous wolf is a killer and every sheep is at risk of death when that kind of predator is on the loose. What kind of prophet is a false prophet? He is one who is dishonest, untrue, and a liar. All of those terms are rooted in the devil, the father of deceit and lies.

True shepherds must believe God for a way to (1) protect the sheep, while at the same time (2) try to salvage our brothers and sisters who have gone from sharing the truth to imparting falsehood. Their falsehood is so close to sounding like the real thing that even the very elect are deceived and led astray. When that happens any minister caught up in it is doing what is equivalent to killing the sheep that Jesus died to save.

How can sheep know the difference between a true and false prophet? Matthew 7:16 says you can detect them by the way they act just as you can identify a tree by its fruit. Thorn bushes never produce grapes. Thistles never provide figs. Healthy trees produce healthy fruit, which is good or beneficial to others. Unhealthy trees produce unhealthy, bad fruit that is not at all beneficial to anyone. Every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire (7:19).

Not all people who sound religious are really godly. The decisive issue is whether they obey the Father in heaven.

Deception that leads to death often comes in very attractive packaging. Calling Jesus "Lord" but distorting the teaching of the Bible, which is divinely inspired by the Father, is deadly. True disciples of God hear the instruction of their teacher, adhere to it, and make it their lifestyle.

Three questions every sheep must ask about the teaching and preaching they hear:

Does it line up with God's words in the Bible?

Does it benefit all people and not just the individual sharing it?

And will it bring glory to almighty God and cause Jesus to say "Well done!"



## What to Look For!

Psalm 120:2 (KJV)—*Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and a deceitful tongue.*

**T**here are at least four types of Christian or religious leaders who are deceiving the people of God and those who would like to be His people:

1. False prophets (Matthew 7:15)
2. False Christs (Matthew 24:24)
3. False apostles (2 Corinthians 11:13)
4. False teachers (2 Peter 2:1)

Notice that each of these types of leaders has power to influence other people. They may even have miraculous power and the ability to demonstrate signs and wonders.

Paul was concerned that some of the believers in Corinth were being led away from their pure and simple devotion to Christ just as Eve was deceived by the serpent (2 Corinthians 11:3). He said that they seemed to believe whatever anyone told them even if it was different than what he taught them. It didn't matter to them if it was a different Jesus, a different spirit was being received, or a different kind of gospel was received than the one they believed. This explains why once seemingly solid men and women of the Gospel are going another way now. If they accept a new Jesus and a new spirit, they will get a new gospel and preach it to others (2 Corinthians 11:4).

Paul said, "I may not be a trained speaker, but I know what I am talking about. I think you realize this by now, for we have proved it again and again" (2 Corinthians 11:6, NLT). Paul said he would cut the ground out from under the feet of anyone who boasts that these liars are doing the same work he was doing. He called them false apostles. They fooled the Corinthian believers by disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

Peter said there were false prophets in Israel just as there would be among the saints. Their end, he said, would be swift and terrible. Many would follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality, and by their presence Christ and the true way would be slandered. Greed caused them to make up clever lies to get the believers' money, but God condemned them (2 Peter 2:1-2).

Ask God to help you to know who and what is false. There is only one Christ, one Spirit, but many false apostles and prophets.

## His Glory Shall Be Seen Upon Thee

Isaiah 60:1,2 (NLT)—*“Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all the nations to see! For the glory of the Lord is shining upon you. Darkness as black as night will cover all the nations of the earth, but the glory of the Lord will shine over you.”*

**T**his was spoken to the people of Israel who are the inhabitants of natural Jerusalem, but it is also for spiritual Jerusalem, the Church. It is because of the people of Israel and the glory shining upon them through Messiah, that those of us who were without God (and it does not get any darker than that) would one day find the light.

When Jesus was crucified at Calvary it turned as black as night though it was early afternoon. His triumphant victory in being raised by the Father brought light to us through Paul. He was told to come to us, the Gentiles, to open our eyes so we could turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then we would receive forgiveness of our sins and be given a place among God's people who are set apart by faith in Jesus (Acts 26:18).

My late husband and I had just returned from a trip where we had ministered for several days with a powerful anointing.

After an overnight stay we normally join the other saints for breakfast, and then leave. This time we were impressed to eat at a new local restaurant in the town. The food server came to get our order, and as I began to share what I wanted, she asked, “What do you do?” Before I could reply, Clinton said, “You’ll never guess.”

She said, “You are a preacher and I know I need to turn everything over to Him because doing things myself is not working.”

I said, “That is true.” Thinking she may have seen me on TV or in a copy of Horizons Unlimited, I asked if she had seen me before. She responded, “I have never seen you in my life, but I know who you are.”

This was a first for me, and after being assured that she knew Jesus I gave her a copy of Horizons Unlimited. I did not understand why we were directed to that place. I did not know what the Lord had said to her. It was not until I read these verses in Isaiah 60:1,2, that I realized what she saw looking at me. To you I say, Rise, shine for the glory of the Lord will shine upon you.

## Who and What Blocks Your Blessing

Jeremiah 5:25 (KJV)—*Your iniquities have turned away these things and your sins have withholden good things from you.*

**O**ften we try to blame others for the lack we experience in our lives. Occasionally we attempt to move the focus off ourselves and onto others when, in fact, it is seldom another person that is responsible for what is going on around us.

Isn't it interesting that we seldom accuse another for the successes we have? How often do we bring attention to others when all is going right and well with us?

It is so easy to look for a face and a name to blame for the challenges we encounter in life. According to Jeremiah 5:25, "Your iniquities have turned away these things and your sins have withholden good things from you."

What is the message here? Stop looking at people to accuse for the negative that is occurring in your lives.

Are you interested in God's good things showing up in your life? Then remove sin once and for all. I assure you that it is not the sin of your mother-in-law, your employer, or the next-door neighbor that keeps good from happening in your life. God is the only one authorized to place sin on someone. He did it once when He put the sins of humanity on Jesus Christ who carried them all into the pit of hell where they belong. He left them there, and He rose triumphant. What an elaborate plan God had for you and me to enjoy His benefit package!

The devil is fully aware that he cannot defeat a believing Christian so he comes up with annoying little things in the form of disappointment, deceit, and delays. I think of him as no more than a gnat at a picnic. Are you going to miss enjoying the entire picnic because of a gnat or two? I hope not. Just take out your Holy Ghost fly swatter, which is the Word of God spoken in confidence, and make him wish that he had gone somewhere else for the day.

Carefully examine yourself today. If all is well and the Father is pleased, keep going. If all is not well and there are corrections to be made, make them, repent, and keep going. The point is to eliminate anything that will hinder you from moving on.

## Guard What You Preach

Galatians 1:8—*Now though it were myself or some angel from heaven whoever preaches a gospel that contradicts the gospel I preached to you, God's curse be on him.*

**I**t is such a privilege and an honor to share truth from God's Word with others. It is so exciting to observe lives changed by the power that backs up the truth. I do not understand why anyone feels the need to come up with his or her own doctrinal "wrinkle" about God's truth.

Paul said to the church in Rome: "So to the fullest extent of our ability I am ready to preach the Gospel to you in Rome, as I have to others. For I am proud and unashamed of God's joyful message because it is a tool showing God's power which brings salvation to all who believe what is shared in it." (Romans 1:15,16).

That message—bringing fallen man back into complete relationship with the one true living God—is on the first line, on the middle line, and every line throughout God's Word. Any other message that is preached by any other person is a lie. It hinders and delays people from acknowledging with their mouths that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is Lord to the glory of God.

Regardless of what anyone else says, Paul teaches us plainly that we must (1) openly admit with our mouth that Jesus Christ is the Lord and (2) believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead—then we shall be saved. For it is with the heart that we believe unto righteousness and by saying so with our mouth that we make confession unto salvation (Romans 10:9-10). Anyone sharing any other Gospel about how to be born again, Paul said, let that one be cursed by God. I know that we are in the last days because what Paul told Timothy, Titus, and Philemon about false teachers is happening before our very eyes.

Paul said that if he ever taught something other than the Gospel that he originally brought to them, he wanted God to curse him (Galatians 1:8).

I wonder how many of us ministers of the Gospel would say that to God before we spout off our new "wrinkle." Preacher, please guard what you preach.

## Personal Benefit Is No Reason to Believe

Jeremiah 28:10 (KJV)—*Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.*

God does not change what is written in His Word in order to benefit anyone personally. What He has predicted shall come to pass. However, because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ at Calvary we can now experience His grace to endure to the end and not allow negative circumstances to affect us.

Though Hananiah the prophet removed the wooden yoke from Jeremiah's neck, Jeremiah was not personally relieved. After all, he himself had put on the yoke. It was a symbol to the people that they were going to experience some negatives for a time before God delivered them.

False prophets are not new. Their mission in life is to get God's people to trust in a lie (verse 15). Jeremiah responded to Hananiah in the presence of the priest and the people in the temple. Jeremiah reminded the people of what the ancient prophets had spoken. That everyone who predicts peace as a prophet must carry the burden of proof. Only when the prediction comes to pass can it be known that it was really from the Lord.

That is a good rule for all of us to follow. Never look at what is going to benefit you personally if it is contrary to the inspired written Word of God. Regardless how much you desire for a thing to occur, never go against what is written. When there is a conflict between what you desire and what is written, ask for the grace to stay steady in the midst of what is written.

Hananiah came with words of peace when God had said to His people, "You must submit to Babylon's king [Nebuchadnezzar] and serve him" (27:7, NLT). There was a season for Nebuchadnezzar to be used as "God's servant" (27:6).

The key here is to stay so close to God that you recognize whom He is using for the moment and obey the leader at hand. When God is through and His plan is fulfilled, He and He alone will change people and things. In the meantime, do the honorable thing. Trust God who has a plan for your life to make it all work together for your good and His glory.





# A Letter For Life

Education is important for success in life. However, education without wisdom is nothing more than acquired information, which does not guarantee success for anyone.

Celebrate your culture, your color, your community, and your country. Nothing is wrong with that. But do not limit yourself to them. We have become a global people; therefore, it is important to develop those things in your life that can open a door where there is one. Every time a door opens for you, look for the opportunity to introduce others to the same door regardless of their ethnicity. We are a part of a whole.

Life will present you with many opportunities to become prejudiced, pompous, and paranoid—resist all of them. Your future prosperity will not be based on merely what you acquire, achieve, and accumulate.

Pride of authorship is putting your signature on the inspiration and creativity of dreams within you that will become realities as you submit to authority, work ethics, and compassion for others. Never allow quantity alone to be your focus for the future. Numbers are subject to change. Both ethical and unethical acts on your part will be remembered wherever your name is mentioned—never forget that.

Though you may never receive an inheritance from anyone, don't despair. Decide that you will leave one, not only for your heirs but also for the heirs of humankind. The world is looking for what you have, just make sure you use it for yourself.

Read what you enjoy. Play at what is morally pleasurable. Guard what you allow your eyes to see, for images linger to influence long after words are forgotten, so choose wisely. Follow the voice within you as long as it takes you down a road or path that you would want others to follow, and never look over your shoulder to see who is following.

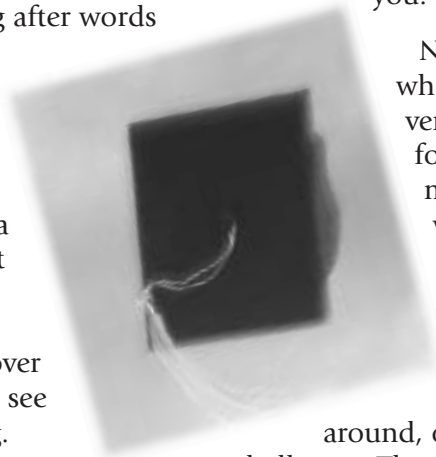
Remember to switch lanes when you see that you are on a collision course. Change is good when it prevents you from an unnecessary crash. Listen to anyone but always decide for yourself. When it comes to making the ultimate, defining decisions in your life, the choice is yours. Never relinquish that right to another.

Like me, you may have experienced skin "of color," a ghetto birthplace, segregation, a broken home, a single female parent, molestation, limited education, divorce, out-of-wedlock parenthood, and more. Life does that to us sometimes, but none of it is to be used as a crutch to lean on. Each potential obstacle can be a steppingstone to your upward mobility. I did it and so can you.

Never ponder what might prevent your success for more than a moment. Then, with your next breath, decide to locate the strategy that will navigate you in,

around, or through the challenge. The point is don't quit, stop, give up, or give in. Keep going: nothing and no one can prevent you. Never consider a delay a denial.

Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's; and, render unto God that which is God's. I set myself in agreement with you for the Master's perfect plan to be fulfilled in your life as you line up your life with His.



## Good Begets Good

Ephesians 6:8 (KJV)—*Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

There are several lessons in this verse. It says that it matters not your status, your color, or your gender—you will receive good for good. It says to me also that healing is the banner under which we march, because God only does good to those who have done good to others. It is another form of seedtime and harvest.

There is so much envy and unrest in the body of Christ about what another person has. We need to learn that where much is given much is required, and the grace to perform it is also given. When you scheme and create ways to do what someone else is

### **We need to learn that where much is given much is required.**

called to do, and you have not received God's grace to pull it off, as my mother would say, "That will be a tough row to hoe." That means you will experience much opposition and unnecessary difficulty in getting that

ground cultivated.

We need to educate our children on this verse early in life so they can practice it and recognize that the good in life comes as a result of God responding to what they first did. Conversely, the devil will "reward" any man for the evil and bad that he does. I assure you God's reward will be far more palatable.

As a person of color, I have real challenges with any one suggesting to me that the color of my skin is a hindrance to me. God did not make a mistake when He made me this color. Society may try to prevent me from experiencing all that God has planned for me. But they will not be successful unless I believe that their puny efforts are greater than my God's promise: "Whatever God has said to me, that thing shall surely be."

That does not mean that just because it is written in the Bible that I am going to have it. It means that when the revelation of His Holy Word is received in my heart as Him speaking to me, that thing shall come to pass. Therefore, my plans are to keep doing good. Then the magnet of good will attract the magnet of God, and I will beget whatsoever I do.

## God Has Indeed Said It

Genesis 3:1 (KJV)—*Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

**J**ust before I read this verse the Spirit of God had spoken to me throughout an entire chapter of the Bible. It was so awesome, real, and full, only my spirit could receive it. Before I could doubt what was being shared with me I made a vow to receive it and a commitment to accept that it was the Lord. He was speaking about some specific and future thing concerning me, RLCC, the property in the Poconos, my children and people and resources, in particular. In fact, He confirmed it in so many ways in His Word, I could only sit and cry tears of joy that He wanted to give me such an anchor to hold on to.

When I got to this verse where the serpent questions Eve as to whether God had said what had been spoken to her, the Spirit spoke loudly to me and shouted, "God has indeed said it!" I thanked Him and committed to ponder it in my heart.

The moment was so sacred and holy. It was so personal to me that when I started to share it with Clinton, the Spirit stopped me and told me to "show it to him in the Word when it has come to pass." That tells me that it will not be long before it begins and I will live long enough to testify that I received the news before it happened because it was already done in the spirit realm.

Whenever the Lord speaks to me in such a definite way and gives me scripture to support it, I simply hide it in my heart and do not allow the sin of doubt to taint it: "For it shall come to pass." The manifestation of it has been released and the benefit to others is on its way. I will be the manager of it because of faithfulness to believe that it is so. Every word of it will be seen, felt, and heard by others because I know beyond a doubt that "God has indeed said it." No serpent or demon on assignment will cause me to doubt it.

*Father, God, You are the best, the greatest, the one and only God. Your salvation will surround me like a fortress and praise for You will proceed continually from my lips.*

## Your Words Were Heard

Daniel 10:12 (NKJV)—*Then said he to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come for your words."*

**A**re we really interested in God hearing and answering our prayers? Then stop praying selfish prayers. We were not given the privilege of praying so that we could increase in our personal assets.

Prayer is the privilege of talking to God about changing cities and nations. We are to mature beyond praying just for I, my, mine, and me. We are to talk to God about universal and eternal things, not just about the local things. It is all right to pray about local and community changes, but never stop there. When our affection

is set on things above then we should begin to speak of things on the earth that we want done in heaven. I suspect what we talk to God about universally will help to influence what we rule and reign over eternally.

### **Even Jesus found it necessary to pray while He was here in the earth.**

Angels have no need to pray, but even Jesus found it necessary to pray while He was here in the earth. John 17 tells us what Jesus petitioned the Father while He was here. Notice that His primary focus was to benefit people. That is where we must go in order to get the heart of God. It is always God's desire for His people to be blessed in the earth, but for it to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Since it is true that we brought nothing into the world and will depart with nothing, doesn't it make Holy Ghost sense not to be limited by what we accumulate here? I want the mind of Christ concerning what to hold onto and what to let go of. Anything that will hinder my trust in the Lord—and my willingness to have confidence in Him alone to provide what I need when I need it to fulfill His plans and purpose—I want to let go of. It all comes from Him. It all belongs to Him and He decided to share some of it with us to enjoy while we work with Him to benefit people. Let go and let God.



## Holiness Is a Call

1 Thessalonians 4:7 (KJV)—*For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

The temptations for today's youth are greater than they were in my day sixty plus years ago. One of the reasons for that is that parents and the community have lowered their standards. You find few, if any, examples of holiness among Christians.

As a young woman, I wanted to wear certain style clothes because they were sexy, but I could not leave "Miss Earnestine's" house with them on nor could I return in them. I had to find somewhere to change into and out of them and that was not easy because my friends' parents had the same standards. Now the parents not only allow those clothes to be worn, they purchase them both for their daughters and for themselves. It is hard to say no to a young person when you have not said no to yourself.

Many of the outfits that I purchase, because I like the basic design, have splits in the skirts, as my mother would say "to gazoo." That simply meant extremely high. I do not deny myself the outfit; I just take it to my tailor to close it up. I know the effect of a very high split skirt. Before we married, I totally distracted my late husband with a split that was too high. I was a Christian, loved Jesus, but as carnal minded as could be. His reaction was just as carnal.

The Bible tells us to abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22). No one ever told me that I was called to holiness nor that everyone should know how to possess his or her vessel in satisfaction and honor (1 Thessalonians 4:4). These truths must be taught over and over by precept and example.

Dads, you're not off the hook. What are you watching on TV? What type of videos and DVDs are you bringing home? What is the latest magazine subscription you purchased? In case you have forgotten the purpose of your salvation, may I remind you that it is to be a witness for Christ and not just go to heaven to escape hell.

What kind of message are we sending with the way we dress, the words we speak, and the actions we display to others? As Christians, we are to warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, and be patient toward all people (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

## Guard Your Action and Your Teaching

1 Timothy 4:16 (NLT)—*Keep a close watch on yourself and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right, and God will save you and those who hear you.*

**T**here seems to be a doctrine of “taboos” going around in some circles that have nothing to do with what the Bible teaches. The teaching of the Word of God does not allow for your personal preference or your opinion to become doctrine for the people.

It is clear in the Bible that you and I are our own keeper. It is okay to be your brother’s keeper, if God has assigned you to do that. But it can never become your personal project. The verse above clearly states that we are to keep a close watch on ourselves and on what we teach.

One of the hardest things is to stay true to what is right. People seem to have a challenge with using their own brain. I want to use the tool God has given me to hook up with His mind, to teach what He is saying. Because God does not contradict Himself, He will not tell you something that the Word does not support.

Our executive assistant said to me one day, “All I ever wanted from childhood was to be in a church that taught the Bible.” I am aware that we grow in truth as we teach truth. However, when I have shared from a level where I was, will I be Christian enough to share the illumination of a word when it is given to me, or will I stay on what I previously said because it sells tapes or books?

When we remain true to what is right, the promise to us is “And God will save you and those who hear you” (1 Timothy 4:16, NLT). This tells me, since I know God’s desire is for all people to be saved and come into the knowledge of the truth that it is important that I cautiously guard my manner of life and what I teach to His sheep. Because what I teach by precept and example when it is right according to God’s Word, will save me and save those who listen to what I say and watch what I do.

We each have a will. That gift (our will) is not to be used to do anything we want to even though it may be lawful. Our will is to give us the privilege to link with God’s will to benefit His people which brings Him glory. Today ask God to show you how to make it all apply to others in such a way that their lives are positively changed forever.

## And You Think You Are So Smart

Jeremiah 51:15 (KJV)—*He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.*

Can you do this? Of course not. And neither can anyone else. One of the things that the Holy Ghost is showing me is the false teaching and doctrine of sonship. Brothers and sisters, that is not in the Bible. It is idol worship. It is a doctrine designed to personally benefit the teacher and leave you hanging high and dry. Paul was inspired to say to us in 1 Thessalonians 1:9 (KJV): "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

Have you noticed that idols are made up of silver, gold, and brass? In other words, they are made up of precious metal and are appealing to the eyes but they have no life in them. That is true also of the ones made of wood and stone. Why? Because they are dumb. Also notice that all gifts, offerings, and sacrifices brought to natural idols are left at the altar because the idol has no life, no power, and no ability to move it or use it to benefit others.

That is not the case with human idols. When you bring your gifts to them at the altar, they allow you to stuff their pockets until they are bulging. Or they will have their "armor bearers" there to pick it up. Those gifts are not used to serve people, but for the personal use of these human idols who brag of how many cars and planes they have, or how and where they live. Folks, this is idol worship.

Material possessions are not my focus. I want to impart to the people principles so they too can know how to be abased and how to abound. When you turn from idols or false teachers or lovers of filthy lucre to serve the one true living God you will find, like Paul, you know how to be content in whatever state you find yourself.

You need power, wisdom, and understanding. God used these three things to create the earth, establish the world, and to stretch out heaven. They were not for His benefit, but for His people forever.

Turn from human idols and serve the living God who will use you and your gift to help people and bring glory to Him! That is smart.

## Today Is Always Today

Hebrews 3:15 (KJV)—*While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*

**D**uring a Sunday church school message recently, the Holy Spirit had me say to the people that regardless of the day of the week when we arrive at a place it would still be today. The point was that the voice of God speaks to us each day, and whatever God shares with us should be received and applied in obedience. Otherwise our hearts will become callous and eventually hardened. We could find ourselves in deep unbelief that prevents us from entering into His rest. We abide in His rest when we believe His promises to us and act like they are so regardless to what the “seems like” of life show us.

It is pretty clear to me that I can expect to hear the voice of the Lord daily. Not because He has no one to talk to, but because He

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wants us to get our directions from Him on a daily basis. He has the whole picture and knows the whole story. I must and I can prevent my heart from becoming hard by obeying what He said.

Verse 12 says that not obeying and following God will produce in us an evil heart

of unbelief. Failure to act on the promise of God spoken to you will create evil in your heart. Hebrews 4:10 tells us that “He that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

There is nothing wrong with working a second job for a period of time if it does not prevent you from assembling together with the saints to receive the encouragement you need to get into God's perfect plan for your life. Two jobs are not to become a lifestyle. No one's life should be work, work, work. You were born to have times of labor, leisure, love, and laughter. Learn to allow for each of these by balancing your desires to line up with His will for your life.

## Tell the People to Get Moving

Exodus 14:15 (NLT)—*Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the people to get moving!"*

God clearly told Moses, "You are My choice to lead My people out of Egypt into the Promised Land." He did not discuss the Red Sea route at all, because it was not an issue with God. Therefore, it should not have been an issue with Moses.

Most of the time we want the entire plan of God for our lives spelled out for us in advance. That is not likely to happen, because there would be no faith involved and without faith we would not be pleasing in God's sight.

We need to settle this faith requirement. We must have and exercise faith. Period. God was saying to Moses, "What is your problem? You are asking Me to do something that I told you to do. The best you will receive from Me, Moses, is the strategy as to how to do what I told you to do."

That key is all we need. Moses told the people not to sweat it because God would fight for them (Exodus

14:14). God is saying, "I don't need to fight for them, I told you to take them through. Nothing and no one can prevent that if they will keep moving and pay no attention to what they observe in their path. Since you stopped to cry to Me, now I'll tell you what you have to do. However, make no mistake about it, had you all continued in your journey what you needed to know to pass over would have been revealed to you as you walked."

Once God tells you to go, unless He tells you to stay, keep moving. He saw every obstacle before you began your journey. If He wanted you to make it a concern, He would have included it in His instruction to you.

What are you waiting for? You have your marching orders, now march, and do not delay your trip by observing the surroundings. They were not put there to prevent you. They were always there for you to overcome. So come on over, now.

**Once God tells you to go,  
unless He tells you to stay,  
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## My Friends Do What I Command

John 15:13-14 (NKJV)—*“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”*

**W**e often say that we have friends as long as they do what we say and when they don’t go along with our program we no longer consider them friends. Actually that is scriptural. Jesus made friendship with Him conditional. We should also. However, when we do, we need to make sure that what we require of friends is the same that He requires.

Is your heart clean enough and are your thoughts pure enough before God that you could comfortably demand this requirement of a friend? Jesus never obligated anyone to Him, but He obligated Himself to them when He willingly laid His life on the line for them. Are you willing to do the same? If yes, then you, too, have every right to require an absolute commitment of them to do what you ask of them.

I understand that there is the language of love, but it often does not hold up in a test. However, the lifestyle of love according to the Bible is enduring, but it is often unpopular because it calls for decisions that are sometimes hard to understand.

One thing I know for sure is the lifestyle of love will not be popular but it is never lonely. You just don’t get to fellowship with humans that much anymore on a social basis. In fact, a social life and personal friends are as the Lord wills. Once I released my social life to the Lord and involved myself with people of His choosing I became less frustrated and aggravated. God created everyone but He did not create everyone to be a part of your life. Learn that lesson early and well. There are those whom you would like very much to be a part of your life but their lifestyle would prove too costly for you.

Trust God to select those who are part of His plan for your life, for when you do, your demands on them will be the same as Jesus’ demands and vice versa. Anyone selected by God to be your friend will gladly follow His plan because they realize that they are on assignment with a greater charge than you could ever make. The reward for their obedience is also greater than you could ever give.

## What Does the Lord Require?

Micah 6:8 (NKJV)—*He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?*

**T**his is called simplifying your life.

The Christian walk is not complicated. It is only uncomfortable to the Christian who attempts to walk it in a way other than God's way. Have you ever tried to put your shoes on the opposite foot? They fit, but something is not quite right. Your ability to move forward is not impossible but it sure is awkward and uncomfortable. Of course, you can continue to move forward, but not as comfortably as you could with the shoes on the proper foot.

I feel sorry for any Christian who tries to walk in his or her righteousness and still dabble in sin for pleasure. It must be miserable. Trust me, no sin for the moment is worth the feeling of guilt or filth you feel afterwards.

Hebrews 11:24,25 (KJV) reads:  
 "By faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Why? Because he

esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the rewards (Hebrews 11:26). He was looking to God for the greater reward.

Too often we limit our vision to what is before us for the moment and miss the eternal picture. Think about it. Moses had enjoyed the conveniences, wealth, and education of the palace from his cradle. But "he came to years" and suddenly he had a choice to make. I am unclear how Moses knew that he was a Hebrew and not an Egyptian. However it happened, he was willing to forsake Egypt, and did not fear the wrath of the King. He endured because he saw Him who was invisible.

You and I need to look to the one who is invisible, the One the Lord requires us to see. Every other thing or person must lose its or their significance in comparison to Christ.

**Too often we limit our vision to what is before us for the moment and miss the eternal picture.**

## Perilous Times

2 Timothy 3:8 (KJV)—*Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.*

**A**ll of the indications around us suggest that we are truly in the last days. The times are difficult and grievous. It is not the time to quit and give up. It is the time to lock into your position in Christ Jesus and declare that you will refuse to move or be moved.

Those who welcome truth are the wiser for it. Others are content to resist the truth. The Bible says that they are men whose minds are corrupt and whose faith is counterfeit.

In these last days fake faith will not sustain you. I want the real thing, therefore, I ask God to increase my desire for truth. I don't just want information that fills me with data. I want the kind of data that was here before data was a word. I am looking for truth, which I can store in my spirit to be made free when I need freedom.

This is not the season for depraved minds influenced by the devil. That person's thoughts and actions, even their words, will portray the devil, which, I am pleased to say, has no influence or power over me. And the devil should have no influence over you either.

If you are not walking in victory and God's abundance, you just plain do not know enough truth. The only thing I know to do for any one who resists truth is to (1) Pray for them, and (2) Keep preaching and teaching the truth and trust the Holy Ghost to create in them a hunger for it. Whatever you do, remember, do not change your message ever, and only change your method if you have heard from the Lord.

There will be scores of people to resist what you have to say. Pray for them. But keep moving in the direction of the untold numbers of people who have been praying for someone like you—with what you have to say—to come into their lives and point them in the right direction. You never have to memorize truth, it just flows from you at the right time, and it never changes. Do not become exhausted chasing after the resisters. Praise God for the hungry ones who are panting for truth as a deer does for water.

## Only Jesus

Lamentations 4:17 (KJV)—*As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our watching we have watched for a nation that could not save us.*

As far as I am concerned, I live in the greatest nation that I know of in the earth. But my confidence to be saved and protected is not in the United States; it is in the Lord. Verse 12 reads, "The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem." Sound familiar!

Prior to 9/11, no one would have thought that what happened would even be a thought in anyone's mind. It was that kind of thinking which made us so vulnerable. When evil thoughts dominate the thinking of even good men, anything is possible to them. That is why our focus and our affection must remain only on Jesus.

There is no protection and safety for us believers except in Him. Proverbs 1:33 (NLT) says, "But all who listen to me will live in peace and safety, unafraid of harm." We need to pay closer attention to what the Lord is saying to us both in His Word and in our hearts.

I am all for prayer. It is a good thing. But God did not promise protection, safety, and freedom from harm to those who pray all the time. Here He said it will be found in the home of those who listen to Him, not Him to them.

Jesus said My sheep hear My voice and another they will not follow (John 10:5,27). People, if the Lord has assigned you to a shepherd, why are you listening to the teachings of others? It may not be that what they are saying is in itself wrong, it could be that it is wrong for you. It could be wrong for you if you are not assigned to them for instruction or your shepherd has not brought them in to the sheepfold where you have been placed.

Nothing quite compares to time alone in the presence of the Lord. Why do you feel the need to fill all your free time listening to tapes and running to every meeting in town? I do not believe that the evil of this world can happen to me if I stay in the place where I am to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit warning me of potential danger. If I am always talking yet not listening to Him, but listening to others, I could very well find myself in some serious situation that could have been avoided.

## Wind Driven

James 1:6 (KJV)—*But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

**I** love to observe the ocean, especially during a storm. I have seen the calmest waters become fierce and dangerously violent because of something that I cannot see—the wind. I have heard the wind and I have seen its aftermath, but I have never seen the wind.

How is it that an invisible force can cause such a negative effect to the visible things around us? A wave as large as it can possibly be gets its energy from wind that is way beyond human control.

Wind that is just blowing can make for a joyous vacation aboard a sailboat. But that same wind, when it is driven, can become a monster leaving in its path all kinds of destruction and damage.

**I have heard the wind  
and I have seen its  
aftermath, but I have  
never seen the wind.**

When we ask God for anything without doubting, He works through His Holy Spirit to bring all things together for our good. The wind of His Spirit blows gently in our direc-

tion and good things occur. Can you imagine God answering your prayer of faith by crashing the answer to you? He does not cast our gift or answered prayers at us. However, the moment we waver or doubt God concerning our request is the moment we give energy to the negative wind. Then it begins to drive our request or our dream out of control. A doubtful prayer is a wind-driven prayer from a double-minded person whose stability is questionable.

James 1:7 says, "For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing from the Lord." Why? Because God does not have driven blessings and answers. He calmly blows what we need and desire our way according to His plan for our lives.

Settle it once and for all that God does not hear prayers and requests apart from faith in Him to perform what He has promised. It is essential for us to hear what He is saying to us and act as though we have it when we hear it. Failure to do this will result in our deceiving ourselves.



## How Are You Praying?

Acts 4:29 (KJV)—*And now, Lord, behold their threatening: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.*

One of the wonderful things that the Holy Ghost taught me to do was to personalize my prayers. What a difference it has made in trusting God. Thank God I have matured enough spiritually to find that I no longer petition Him for “stuff and things.” Once I learned the principles of what delighted His heart and operated in them as a lifestyle and not as foreplay to asking Him for a new toy or trinket, He seemed to be delighted in providing things I never thought to ask for.

The key to the above prayer was their worship of Him, not what they wanted from Him. The Lord had just spared Peter and John from the Sanhedrin Council with just a threat. Peter and John came to share with friends and family what was said to them and probably what they had responded to the council. Verse 24 says, “And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast [past tense] made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is.”

Acknowledging God for having created everything and everyone is a good way to get His attention. I believe that if we assembled ourselves together—each one acknowledging God for who He is and what He has already done—He would hear, not so much our individual words, but the spirit of what we are saying as though one person was speaking.

I would couple Acts 4:24 and Ephesians 6:19 together to say this: Father, I know You hear their threats, criticisms, and accusations concerning me, which I will not address or defend. In the meantime, please grant me, Your child, a spirit of boldness to confidently continue to preach and teach Your Word. I will lay my hands on those in need of a touch from You. I expect that You will perform signs and wonders in Jesus’ name. As for me, that utterance will be given to me that I will open my mouth boldly to make plain to everyone the hidden truths of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. For I am one of Your ambassadors here in the earth. Whether in bonds or free, I commit to say boldly what You tell me to say to further the Gospel, to benefit mankind, and to bring glory to You.

## We Lie and Do Not the Truth

1 John 1:6 (KJV)—*If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.*

I am amazed at the number of Christians who try to give the impression that they are comfortable sinning. As a Christian before I submitted wholly to the Word of God, I tried to be socially and politically correct. But I was miserable trying to serve God and flesh at the same time. So, I know that though others may be doing it, they are not happy campers at all. Been there, done that, and bought the tee shirt.

The message through the Apostle John is “God is light and there is no darkness in him at all” (1 John 1:5 NLT). To have fellowship with the Father and live in His presence we must approach Him through the cleansing blood of His Son, Jesus Christ (1 John 1:7).

Two forces are vying for your attention all the time. One is the darkness of Satan and his lies. The other is that of our Father God who is pure light Himself. If you are in the darkest pit or tunnel, the tiniest match or flashlight turned on dispels the darkness around you and your vision becomes affected in a positive way. However, you can be in the brightest room in the world and observe that unless someone turns off the light, no darkness can exist at all. There is no such thing as tiny darkness affecting absolute light. It is either total darkness or darkness affected by light in one form or another.

Wake up to the truth that you cannot keep sinning and claim you have fellowship with God. The Greek word *koinonia* for fellowship means partnership, participation, social intercourse, communication, benefaction, a sharer, an associate, and a partaker. Of course you want this with the Lord if you have received Jesus Christ. As I did, you simply needed help with the “how to.”

You love the Lord, so did I, but the darkness surrounding me was overtaking me and I did not know how to stop it. But Jesus already did! One day I simply acknowledged that I did not know how to be a Christian. I stopped looking for human examples of people who talked it but failed to walk it. I began with believing that if God would require something of me He certainly would show me how to do it. He would not do it for me. But if given opportunity, He would instruct me in His truth as to how.

## Nevertheless I Have Something Against Thee

Revelation 2:4 (KJV)—*Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*

**J**esus said, “I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted (Revelation 2:2,3, KJV).

After all that was right and pleasing to the Lord, He still had something against this church. Folks, it is not always about what we do that is right. We have to guard against what we neglect and ignore that we should have done as directed by the Spirit of God.

If there is anything written in the Bible that helps me to keep a deflated head and to walk as humbly as I can before the Lord, it is these verses. One thing I have learned is that God’s mercy is extended way out beyond anything we do. Admittedly I do not understand Christians, specifically leaders, not spending time in the presence of God, who have no hunger for the Word or pleasure in pleasing Him. Unless you see it as a privilege to serve Him according to His plan you have not grasped the essence of the reality of being a Christian.

You are doing a good job in your service for the Lord. You are improving in your fruit walk on a daily basis. And your righteous indignation should rise up at the sign of evil or deliberate wickedness. You are on the right track and making progress. But do not become impressed with your press. It is a snare of the devil to trip you up in pride: “Look at me, look and see, I’ve been good.” Continue to do what you are doing to please the Lord in every area of your life.

But do not neglect your first love, which includes learning to release His love in you toward others, especially believers, at all times. There may be some additional unique things the Lord has for you to do. Make sure to make time to spend with Him to hear what they are and purpose to do them. You will never regret your decision and He will have nothing against you.

## The Unlearned and the Unstable Find Truth Hard

2 Peter 3:16 (KJV)—*As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*

**P**eter is doing his best to prepare the Church for the return of the Lord.

When the Father announces that it is time for Jesus to return for His Body, there will be no more opportunity to get ready. There will be no more choices to be made. That is why we must do what is pleasing in the Father's sight now.

This seeming delay in the return of the Lord is for us to account that His long suffering is for salvation. Please do not be ignorant, unfixed, and unstable to the truth which the wisdom imparted to Paul has made available to us. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9, KJV).

It is time to become serious about our future. There was a time when ignorance and being unfixed, always vacillating, was tolerated. Not anymore. In this dispensation when the Holy Ghost has been given to the Church to aid us in hearing and walking out truth, there will be no excuse for the ignorant, the unfixed, and the vacillators. According to Peter, the "unlearned and unstable" wrested the Scripture because some things were hard to understand. He said that this "wresting of scripture not understood" would result in their own destruction.

I may not understand every scripture I read. However, I approach it by faith and a desire to see it all clearly. I have made a decision to believe it by faith and trust the Holy One to give me understanding as I need it. When the Bible asks me a question about where I stand, I examine myself and attempt to give a truthful answer. When it tells me to stop, quit, give up, or change some habits in my life, I ask for His grace to assist me. When it tells me what my responsibility as a believer is to God and people, I see what I can do and request help with the hard stuff.

## Hoping Power Will Not Get It

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

**I**t takes God a split second to alter all circumstances for his people. When Jim Crow laws were written, it changed the attitude of some weak people towards people of other races, but some things cannot be changed. There were signs at fountains saying “White Water” and others saying “Colored Water.” The sign did not have an effect on the water at all, it was still the same. However, attitudes changed. The same people who previously drank from the same fountain now felt either superior or inferior. The thing that changed Jim Crow laws was just another law to override it.

Whether you are Jewish, Hispanic, Asian, or a person of color, it matters not what is written against you. God can and will move on the heart of people willing to listen to Him and rewrite something that will put you on top. The question is not that God can’t fix it for you. The question is what will you do when you get in power or on top? Will you become like them or will you represent Jesus, the one who got it changed for you?

I do not hope to have power over the devil, who is my only enemy. I have power over him because my Champion obtained it, and by conquest gave it to me. I am not “a-hoping and a-praying.” My hope is in Christ Jesus and in my praying which is saying what I believe based on what God has already promised me.

There is no power in anyone “hoping” anything against the people of God. Do not look at what is written unless it is God inspired or in the Bible to determine what will be the outcome of your life. The devil comes to steal, kill, and destroy. In addition, he comes to deceive so those who fail to learn who they are in Christ Jesus will fall for his lies. Trust me, anyone that is trying to form anything against you is uninformed of God’s Word. If you don’t know God’s promises to you, make a decision today to learn about Jesus. By His Spirit He will teach you, then your faith to believe will take charge.



## Jesus Christ, Esquire

1 John 2:1 (KJV)—*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

If any man sin" is not for every person. It is for those who have become the Father's little children. We should always be little children in our relationship with the Lord, acknowledging our dependence on Him in and for everything. But that doesn't mean we are "childish." As grown-up men and women in Christ we should have put away childish things that were reflected in our understanding in our thoughts and in our speech. Maturity carries with it responsibility to act and speak like the Lord.

We are expected and required to grow up in our walk with Him. The Lord did not promise us anything easy except when we take His yoke and His burden (Matthew 11:29). The key in this verse is "and learn of me." If we neglect to learn of Him, His yoke and His burden could become just as heavy as anyone else's.

The Bible does not say "with God all things are easy." It does say "with God all things are possible." Therefore we need to stop acting like little children who think everything should be easy. The tough spots have been allowed to develop our character, not destroy God's plan for our lives.

I live everyday expecting not to sin, but occasionally I miss it, especially in the area of the fruit of the Spirit. Guess what? I do not attempt to justify it, because it was not one of the moral sins. No, I run to my Advocate, acknowledge my guilt, and accept the fact that He and my Father will work it out together for my good. Never lie to your lawyer. God knew that there would be times when we behaved like little children, which is why this verse was inspired to be written. But notice He said, "Sin not."

The bottom line to this message is ask for His grace daily to help keep your walk with Him straight. However, if you do miss a step, get up, run to Jesus your lawyer, acknowledge what happened with a sincere heart, and keep stepping. Remember, this promise is not a license to keep sinning. It is the love and mercy of your Father, of one who loves you.

## Seek

*Amos 5:8 (KJV)—Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is His Name.*

Many things are automatic with the promise of salvation; other things must be sought. Israel, like the Church, was never in darkness as to what pleased God. Amos 5:14 reads, "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as you have spoken."

Though that was written to the children of Israel, we the Church, can stand on it as though it was a personal letter to each of us. Do you want to live? Seek good and not evil. The heathen have always shown concern for their personal welfare. But Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things [that I know ye have need of] shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33. KJV).

Living in one of the most active areas of New York City, I observe not only the heathen but also the Christians in hot pursuit of the basic necessities of life. They seek after them to the point it appears that they worship the material things. But they do not worship the One who not only created life but also made all of the "stuff" we will ever need in this world and the world to come. What does it mean to seek? It means to request, ask or diligently inquire after.

God is not looking for conversation with us only when our cupboard is bare and our wallet is low, heading toward empty. God told Israel that He would be with them as they have spoken (Amos 5:14). I do not believe that He would do less for us. In fact, Hebrews 13:5 tells us to be content with what we have, as our conversation and conduct are void of covetousness, because He will never leave us or forsake us. So that we can boldly say, "The Lord is my helper and I will not fear the actions of any human." I believe He, too, will be with us, as we boldly speak. I asked the Lord what did He mean by the word boldly? His response was "confidently compassionate."

Seek opportunities today to share His truth with confidence and with compassion.

## Think How You Would Feel

Hebrews 13:3 (KJV)—*Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.*

**B**efore I ever stepped inside a jailhouse I had never thought much about what it was like not to be able to make choices as to my coming and going. Since I started ministering in the correctional facilities, I now realize what a difficult position that is. Some of the people incarcerated are indeed criminals; others however, are innocent. Some get caught in the system's web and others were in the wrong place at the wrong time. All I know is that Jesus hung on the tree at Calvary so each one could receive Him as their Savior. They can experience eternal life in the future and enjoy victory while still here in the earth.

The scripture above tells us to remember those who are bound as though we are bound with them, and those who suffer as though it was happening to us. That certainly changes my attitude. I suspect that I thought like many people. I thought that since I had kept my nose pretty clean and I was not there, that they had the problem, not me. Therefore I could pretty much ignore the issue.

This verse changed my thinking. It made me realize that the only difference between us was that they had been caught, and the grace of God had looked beyond my faults and saw my need. In fact, I have come to believe that it was the same grace that allowed them to be caught. They would have self-destructed if they continued in the direction they were going. They would not be still long enough to learn how to break free in Christ.

I usually say to the residents of those facilities that since they are in a correctional facility, they can use their time there to help correct what caused them to be there in the first place. They can purpose in their hearts never to return to prison for failing to learn what they needed to learn while they were there.

Remember, we cannot prevent anyone from being bound, nor can we eliminate life's adversities. However, when we see ourselves as "bound with them", then the compassion of Christ will rise up in us to pray for them, visit them, and love them.

## Who Told You to Prophecy?

Amos 7:15 (KJV)—*And the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.*

**A**mos was no prophet, nor was he the son of a prophet. He was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore fruit trees. But when it was God's time for him to change his career path, God did not look at him or any of his connections. God sought him out, told him what to do and what not to do, and anointed him for the work he was called to.

Amos cared about Israel and had no problem approaching God about what God was allowing to happen to them. The judgments by God of the grasshopper and of the fire were both diverted by Amos interceding on behalf of the children of Israel. The Bible said twice that the Lord repented for this and declared, "It shall not be".

While Amos revered the Lord Jehovah, he was not afraid to talk to Him about some uncomfortable situations. I am tired of so-called prophets who prophesy lies, who take advantage of the office to fleece the flock for personal gain, and who offer no hope for the future apart from your financial gift to them. The spirit of greed and corruption is also loose in the earth today.

Modern-day prophets exist. However, they remember that they work for the Lord as His mouthpiece and they do not have to receive filthy lucre to speak on His behalf. I have received a few generous gifts since being in the ministry, but never once when I have just prayed or spoken to someone what was needed for that moment in their lives.

How do you distinguish between prophets of God and false prophets? One group is on a mission; the other group has a mission. One group comes in the name of the Lord with "thus saith the Lord." The others come using the name of the Lord with the purpose of extracting from you something that will personally benefit them. In other words, "I have a word to you from the Lord and you will get it as soon as you do something for me." Remember this, God's messages are free to His people because He has already paid the highest price possible for you to be able to receive. Be not deceived.

## Knowledge of Jesus Leads to Liberty

2 Peter 2:20 (KJV)—*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.*

**W**hen we were spiritual children, though we were heirs with Christ, we were little more than slaves. We still needed tutors and schoolmasters to teach us what is right.

Today, through love, we have become mature men and women in Christ, and therefore childishness is a thing of our past. This means for me that there ought to be more of a reflection of Jesus being displayed to the world than what is comfortable to the flesh.

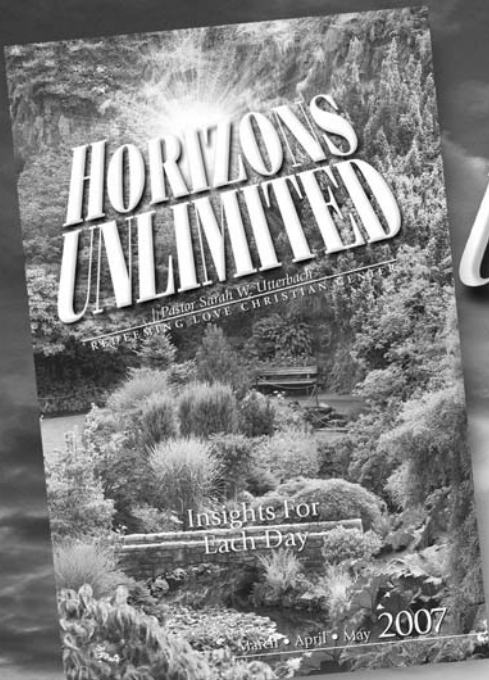
The only reason that I can see that we are still yielding to our flesh is that we do not understand the value of being led by the Spirit. Tradition, culture, family, and selfish desires are some of the toughest strongholds to be broken in our lives. I have news for you, God is not going to deliver you from what you have the authority to resist. Without the decision to renew your mind on the Word of God, you will never walk in true liberty.

The Jabez prayer in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 is the latest thing on the scene. When I inquired of the Lord why I could not pray the prayer as both sinners and saints are doing, He allowed me to see that it is the most selfish, self-seeking prayer in the Bible. Jabez wanted the God of Israel to make life sweet for him. But Jabez had no regard for anyone else, including the mother who suffered pain and sorrow to give birth to him.

I asked the Lord why He granted Jabez his request. The reply I received was for the same reason He gave Israel quail instead of manna when they asked. But with the request He also gave them leanness of their souls (Psalm 106:15). Jabez received what he requested, but there is no further mention of him anywhere in the Bible.

How would you like to be remembered only for having prayed selfishly with no regard for anyone else? Jesus did not pray for the world but He willingly sacrificed Himself for them to be restored to the Father. That is a good thing.





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## Rejoicing In Spite of Sorrow

2 Corinthians 6:10 (KJV)—*As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

There are several things you and I must do in order to rejoice in spite of sorrow. Probably the first thing is to come down out of the spiritual clouds. We want to think that serving the Lord will exempt us from any kind of suffering and that patience is for everyone else because we can have what we say immediately. But if you just keep living, you'll find that sorrow eventually comes to us all.

For example, I try to help prepare people for the passing of a loved one, and teach them the importance of maintaining the right attitude about the Lord, regardless to the winds of life and how they blow. But some people fall into the bottom of the barrel when these things occur.

God never promised that there would be no sorrow in this Christian walk. What He did promise is that in spite of the sorrow we could and should still rejoice. It is a disservice to the memory of a loved one to grieve as those who have no hope. My mother did not die to cause me pain to the point of not being able to function. She certainly did not die to cause me to resent God or turn from Him. No, she raised me to love and worship Him so that when it was time for her to depart, I would still have Him as my anchor to keep me steady.

I get real nervous when people start to make me out to be more to them than I really am. I am not cold and indifferent, but I thank God for the ability to recognize those who, if allowed or encouraged, would make me their reason for being. I am a human being who will one day cease to breathe in this earth. But I don't want my departure to be the focus. I want my example in life to be what will cause your heart to rejoice when I am gone.

Keep your focus on Jesus. Receive whatever I teach that is supported by Scripture. Love it and walk it out to the glory of God. Please do not mar my purpose for living by grieving sorrowfully beyond what is pleasing to God. I live to teach you how to live victoriously, which includes rejoicing in spite of sorrow.

## Posture In Prayer Is Incidental

Ezekiel 2:1 (KJV)—*And he said unto me, Son of Man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak to thee.*

**W**hen we become truly delivered from our traditions and rituals, we will see improved results from our prayers. Well-meaning people insist we must kneel to get through to God and, heaven forbid, that God would talk back to you except on your knees bowing in humility to Him. I beg to differ—not out of controversy, but out of a desire to share truth that never binds us but makes us free.

On Friday nights at RLCC we have corporate prayer with other believers. You see some kneeling, others standing in place, and many walking around the top perimeter of the facility. What you can't see are the hearts bowed in humility and submission to the Lord in the spirit of prayer. God could care less about our posture unless He directed us to pray a specific way.

While in Bible school I became involved in corporate prayer. I never remember our spiritual leader telling us what position to assume when it was time to pray. I observed him kneeling, sitting and, at times, standing. I found that I could march to that drum, because God allows us to worship or petition Him, as it is pleasing or comfortable to us. The object was open dialogue with a sincere heart, not prayer posturing.

However, in the case of Ezekiel, God specifically told him to “stand upon your feet.” Any other position for him at that time would have been unacceptable and out of order. Verse 2 excites me. “And the spirit entered into me when he spake to me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.”

Would Ezekiel have heard the voice of God if he was kneeling?

I think not and that was the whole point. God told him that He wanted to speak to him but He wanted him in a standing position. Why standing? I don't know. But I do know when God gives specific directions it is wise to obey.

Notice that Ezekiel did not have to stand in the presence of God in his own strength. The Spirit of the one speaking to him entered in to assist him with his standing. Because Ezekiel did not resist, he heard clearly the voice of the Almighty. What is He saying to you today?

## No Word from God Shall Be Void of Power

Luke 1:38 (KJV)—*And Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her.*

A question was posed to my late husband Clinton and me a while back that neither of us had ever considered before. It was, "Since we were all born in sin and shaped in iniquity, how could a sinless Savior be placed in the womb of a woman not saved and made clean?"

As the question was being asked, I heard the Holy Ghost speak to me about the faith of Abraham and Mary. Abraham's decision to obey God was imputed to him for righteousness and God established a covenant with him. When Mary heard the words of the Lord through the angel, she ignored her social status and her commitment to Joseph, and believed what the angel told her, that nothing is impossible with God.

Mary believed it was not impossible that she could become pregnant void of sexual intercourse with a man. Mary responded to the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." That was Mary's faith speaking. The Holy Ghost said to me that like Abraham, Mary's decision was accounted to her for righteousness. At the moment Mary spoke those words she was as much in right standing with God as she could ever be.

I can see now that Clinton's and my decision to leave our jobs to go to Bible school caused something in the spirit realm to occur between God and us. We went 1,385 miles away from home, and had no prospect of an income and no direct promise from God.

When we considered that decision I said to Kenneth Copeland, "Kenneth, having heard your teaching, we believe every word and we desire to walk by faith. But we are clueless as to where to begin." He said, "If that is your choice, you will never regret it."

It did not sound like much at the time, but in retrospect I can see that not only saying it, but also doing it when it appeared to be foolishness to everyone around us, counted for something. Today my needs are met in abundance, and I am in a position for God to use us to be a blessing to others and to further His kingdom in Jesus' name.

## It Is Your Presence that Distinguishes Us

Exodus 33:14 (NLT)—*And the Lord replied, "I will personally go with you, Moses. I will give you rest—everything will be fine for you."*

**M**oses understood the value of what the Lord said. He also wanted the Lord to understand what he was saying, "If you don't go with us personally, don't let us move a step from this place. If you don't go with us, how will anyone ever know that your people and I have found favor with you? How else will they know we are special and distinct from all other people on the earth?"

Much of the time we start out on our own and only when we bump our heads and stub our toes do we check to see if God is in fact with us. We just assume that whatever we decide to do is God-ordained and approved.

I have learned over the years that His Spirit is always with me and I will never be separated from His love. But I know beyond a shadow of doubt that His presence is only with me when He has authorized my journey.

Moses reminded God, "You have been telling me to take these people up to the Promised Land. But You haven't told me who is to assist me. I know You know me by name and I believe that I have favor with You, but if You don't mind, I would like for You to confirm it for me, because it is not a planned project of mine". Once the request was made, God agreed to Moses' terms because he was favored of God.

Are you guilty of neglecting to talk to the Lord about everything? There is no need to continue to have to have Him clean up your mistakes if you learn to distinguish His voice, obey His direction, and ask Him to confirm that what you are about to do is what He asked in the first place.

How many times have we said, "I knew that I should not have done that" or "I sensed that that was not God's best for me in this situation, but I did it anyway"? "I did it anyway" is usually an indication that we are moving without His presence going with us.

That decision you are considering at this very moment is not necessarily wrong in itself. But you need to check with God to see if it is His time for you to pursue it. Wrong timing is as bad as wrong information. Please check first with the Lord.



## I Need You, Lord!

Psalm 119:32 (NKJV)—*I will run in the way of Your commandments, for You shall enlarge my heart.*

**A**re you one of those who are under the mistaken impression that when you decide to be good, to do the honorable thing, you will just ride off in the sunset of a blissful life? Wrong! God knows that you and I need Him, but we have to ask Him to help us.

I have had to learn not to give advice automatically. When someone asks for my wisdom, they are most likely ready to receive it and they just need to be pointed in the right direction. When I observe a situation that is clearly in need of some help and I believe I know the solution to correct some “stinking thinking,”

I have learned that it is best to zip my lips until my assistance is requested, or directed by the Spirit of God.

Have you ever tried to feed a baby that is not hungry or is uninterested in the menu available at the moment? You know what they do. However, a hungry child grabs your arm with the spoon in it because you are not quick enough with the answer to their hunger pains.

Unfortunately, through ignorance or pride, people do not always know you have what they need. One way the Lord has given me to suggest that I could possibly help (without my taking over and risking rejection) is to say, “I have been praying about you and some things that I have observed going on. I believe that the Lord has given me some insight that may be helpful to you. If you ever decide you want to discuss it further with me I’ll be more than glad to share what I believe that I have received.”

Once you decide that you need the Lord, and approach Him about all things, you are ready to run the way of His commandment. You recognize that it is God who is enlarging your heart, and an enlarged heart is a heart with space in it for others to find their way also.

Don’t always show that you are a “know it all” even if you know it all. You will be much more palatable to others if you approach them in humility with an attitude of “I love you and consider it a privilege to be able to offer to you what I have.”

## How Would They Have Known?

1 Peter 3:19 (KJV)—*By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*

**T**he bodies of the Old Testament souls were in the grave just as Jesus' body remained in the tomb. In order for them to know Him, Jesus had to die and by His spirit go to them to preach to their spirits. Then, they too, could make a choice to receive Him or reject Him. These were the ones who "disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood" (1 Peter 3:20, NLT).

What chance did they have to hear and know truth as we have received it? There are those who

**God does not want one soul to go to hell as a permanent residence.**

have a challenge with Jesus' human spirit having gone into hell. They like to say that Jesus preached to those in Abraham's bosom. When the people drowned in Noah's day, Abraham's bosom was not an option because Abraham was not yet on the scene. When I meditate on what Jesus really did on that fatal day in order to save me and fill me with His fullness, I feel I could just burst with joy.

In these last and final days, we are to cease from sin in the flesh because of the example of Jesus Christ. We must arm ourselves with the same attitude that Jesus had concerning the suffering of pain in the flesh. It is not until we are willing to suffer with Christ that we are able to make a quality decision to stop sinning.

God, our Father, is the God of both the living and the dead. That means His love is extended to all of His creation and He is willing and able to do whatever it takes to have them restored to Himself. God does not want one soul to go to hell as a permanent residence. Would you want to see your masterpiece consumed in a fire? Of course not.

Adam made a dumb decision and an awful choice. All of us know that. But Jesus is also known as the second Adam, and He is always making the right choices. Let's work with Him to restore all men to the Father through Him.

## Evil Results from Knowing Right and Neglecting It

James 4:17 (KJV)—*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

**W**e would like to believe that it is okay by others to just not get involved. That way we avoid being judged. But, you are already judged if you took this position, because getting involved is required or expected of you as a Christian.

I don't expect to ever win a Nobel Peace Prize for eliminating cursing in the earth, but I can use my mouth and speak against it in and around my presence. I explain to a curser that the foul language that proceeded from their mouth was offensive to me as a Christian and I would so appreciate their refraining from it in my presence. Interestingly, every time I used that approach, not only did they quit it around me, but also they almost always apologized to me.

They did not call me a few ugly names or tell me where to go and what I could do because I did not make them feel inferior to me. I did not point an accusing finger at them or threaten them with consignment to hell forevermore. It's called the wisdom of God on how to finesse an offender.

We need to stop thinking that as Christians we are walking in love by ignoring the mostly bad habits of a few people. No. It is love to address the matter and believe God for the solution to be resolved with their dignity intact and our spirits released from being gnarled up inside. We need to stop either leaving a setting or tolerating the opposing force's takeover of our territory.

It took me years to learn that I could change a great deal of things without a war of words. I had to learn to believe God for the grace to use words the way Jesus would in a similar situation. It has helped to know my job is to reconcile others to the Lord and at the same time enjoy my liberty and life in Christ Jesus.

Are you guilty of ignoring that which is right in your quest to keep the peace? You can't have peace without getting involved. Where do you stand today? What are you working at? Are you in sin because you will not take a stand for right? It is not too late to turn things around.

## Saved to Serve

James 5:20 (KJV)—*Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

Sometimes I think we read that verse to say “highlight a multitude of sins.” The confessing of one’s faults is not to air our dirty laundry. It is so the one we share with can know what to pray about concerning us.

Faults need healing also. The earnest prayers of a righteous person have great power and wonderful results. Please do not share your faults with anyone you have not deemed

**The earnest prayers of a righteous person have great power and wonderful results.**

righteous. A righteous person will know that your situation needs healing and that will occur only through prayer. A righteous person will never condemn, criticize, gossip, or ignore you concerning an area that is sensitive and painful to you. What they will do is encourage you, and critique what you have done in an effort to help you find the right path. A righteous person will not use your challenge as conversation on the phone network.

There were things that my late husband and I knew about that we didn’t even want to talk about with each other, less we found ourselves guilty of “an opinion.” Jesus does not announce our sins to the world or the angels in heaven when we confess them to Him. As our intercessor, He knows that He is to discuss them briefly with the Father solely to ensure that they are blotted out from the “Book of Remembrance.” The only things Jesus discusses with the angels concerning us, His Body, are (1) when we are born again so they can join in the rejoicing (Matthew 10:32), and (2) what is needed to complete their assignment as ministers for us who are heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).

Let us begin to pray for the grace to help convert sinners from the errors of their way. Our Father is waiting for the precious fruit of the earth—don’t we want to participate in saving as many souls from death as we can? Let us offer up powerful prayers for them who confess their faults and seek wonderful results.

Is there one, are there two who are saved to serve?

## Jesus Christ: The Promise by Faith

Galatians 3:22 (KJV)—*But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

**T**he law put all of humankind in the same lot. The scripture concluded (shut up together and embraced in a common subjection) all under sin.

Under the law, we were all under sin. The only way out was belief and faith in Jesus Christ. God promised Him by faith, He came by faith, and we must receive Him by faith to find liberty and freedom from bondage.

Before we had faith, where was it? Where did it come from? It came from a moral conviction of the truthfulness of God, from reliance upon Christ for salvation, from assurance of the truth of the Gospel.

Faith is our fidelity and commitment to serve the one God. A person involved with any other god is guilty of spiritual infidelity, or adultery. An infidel is an unbeliever who has denied faith in what God has promised and provided in scripture.

Anyone who believes God's Word will have the assurance that everything needed for life, family, and success will come from God. Such a believer has no confidence in one's ability to perform but puts absolute and total confidence in God's willingness and ability to do what He has said.

Jesus is the promise by faith. Galatians 3:24 says that the law was our schoolmaster, or the servant that took us up to Christ; but now we no longer need a servant to lead us to anything or anyone. We now have faith, which is better than a servant. We have grace, divine influence upon our hearts and in our lives. A servant (the law) could not change our hearts. But now after the servant has led us to the One who can make the change, we by faith allow ourselves to be divinely influenced in our hearts, where all the issues of life are (Proverbs 4:23).

Father, at times Your illumination overwhelms me like a strong gust of air that takes my breath away. I'm glad You give us light in Your Word. Thank You for who You are and all You have become in my life. I have accepted the promise of Your Son by faith, and He has released me from being shut up in bondage to sin and the author of sin.



## Greedy Men Do Not Prosper

Proverbs 28:25 (NIV)—*A greedy man stirs up dissension, but he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.*

I heard a wife say that her husband was telling her what he wanted for his approaching birthday. Her response was "Aren't you ever going to be satisfied?" He answered, "Probably not." The tragedy here is that this person has all the creature comforts anyone could ask for, but it's not enough. He always wants more.

Usually when greedy adults do not get another new toy when they want it, they begin to pout like children. Strife and dissension usually follow people of greed. Their hearts are proud, and they stop trusting in the Lord for their prosperity because they think the things they have acquired are a sign that God is prospering them. However, anyone who no longer trusts God is not a prosperous person. I hurt and grieve for people who fail to trust God for all they need and desire.

Uncertain and beautiful riches flee without warning. The reason is that wisdom has departed, and where there is no wisdom there is no reverence of God.

I recently read the book written by Jim Bakker titled *I Was Wrong*. In it, he reveals that the fall of the PTL empire was not just the result of the sin of adultery; it began with his entertaining the thought to spite his wife.

Most of us can trace the downfall of things in our lives back to an unwise choice to do something without conferring with the Lord. Then we compound the problems of sin by trying to conceal it instead of confessing it. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

Lord, God of the universe, I have been the chiefest among sinners, and in my flesh there is no good thing dwelling. However, I want to say thank You for showing me that all of my stupidity will be forgiven when I confess and forsake my wrongdoing. My prosperity begins with trusting You enough to admit to what I have done because You already know. Failing to share what I have done is saying that You won't know if I don't speak of it. That is the height of ignorance. Thank You for prospering me and giving me mercy, in Jesus' name.

## God Swore By Himself

Hebrews 6:13 (KJV)—*For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.*

**I**t was both Abraham's faith and his obedience, which caused God to swear by Himself. Abraham obeyed God by being willing to sacrifice his only recognized son to God. God made a vow to an obedient man that could not be broken, because there was no one greater than Himself to swear by.

"And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself I have sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the

sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; [which is why for us Jesus said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church," Matthew

**Today, every promise that pertains to life and godliness is made to us in Christ Jesus.**

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16:18] and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice (Genesis 22:15-18, KJV).

That day Abraham heard God's voice he did not harden his heart. He yielded his first and only to his best, to the Lord, who had given Isaac to Abraham's old dead body in the first place. God did not want Abraham to kill his son. God wanted Abraham to trust Him so much that he would be willing to kill his dream in order to follow God's purpose. Until we are willing to give back to God what only He could give us, we have not given ourselves to Him. And if we have not given ourselves to Him, we have not entered into His rest.

Today, every promise that pertains to life and godliness is made to us in Christ Jesus. His promise is available for our benefit as we agree to promote the plan of God for all people. However, as with Abraham, God is looking for those willing to obey His voice—come what may.



# Family or Just Relatives?

**T**hose involved in your life now who are doing the will of God are your *family*. Those who are connected to you by blood but not by the Spirit, are simply your *relatives*.

Natural relatives are interested in doing only what is profitable to them. Spiritual families seek the will of God for the benefit of humankind and for the glory of God.

Jesus said in Matthew 10 that He came to divide relatives. At the same time, His Spirit unites God's family as one strong force in the kingdom. So many people in the body of Christ are trying to maintain unity and harmony with relatives who are choosing to be on opposite sides from God. It will not work. Light and darkness cannot share the same space at the same time. Believers and unbelievers will always clash because they are going in opposite directions.

Often, people say to me, "I want to have fellowship with my relatives, but they won't do right." Did it ever occur to you they don't know how because they have never received the Son of God, who is the only One who can make things right?

When told that His relatives—including His mother—were waiting outside, Jesus asked "Who are My mother, and who are My brethren?" Then He stretched out His hands to the disciples and said, "These are My mother, My sister, and My brethren: those who do the will of My Father."

## Son, Go Work Today in My Vineyard

Matthew 21:28 (KJV)—*But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard.*

**I**n a family business, eventually the time comes when responsibility of the business is presented to the son, not to a servant. Paul said in Galatians 4:7, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son; then an heir of God through Christ." Today, God is looking for His sons to work the vineyard. The fields are white to harvest and as heirs of God through Christ we are expected to submit to voluntary servitude to assist in bringing others into the fold before it is too late.

I have been a servant and I have been a son; sonship is better.

As a son/daughter, my desire is not just to enjoy the role and the benefits. It is to show that I, by an act of my will, want to do everything asked of me to help my Father harvest the crop of others, so that none should perish.

I have seen families where the offspring simply enjoy the name their family carries and all of the benefits that the family name provides. But they in no way demonstrate that they understand that being in a family is more than just receiving. Being part of a family means sharing responsibility to fulfill the family's purpose.

Jesus never looked at what His Father could do for Him personally. He always wanted to do the Father's will and that which pleased Him. What I see as I study the Word of God is that most of Jesus' time with the Father was listening to what His Father would say to Him which was always to benefit His Body.

Jesus had no need to make personal requests of God. He understood that the Father would withhold no good thing from those who walked upright before Him. He knew the Father found pleasure in prospering His children. The only times Jesus requested anything from His Father were for us. We read that in John 17. When He prayed concerning Lazarus, He said He did it for the benefit of the people there. He understood that the Father heard Him when He spoke Lazarus' life into existence in John 11:23, "Thy brother shall rise again." May we learn to be that kind of a son.