

# HORIZONS UNLIMITED

*Pastor Sarah W. Utterbach*  
REDEEMING LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER

Insights For  
Each Day

September • October • November 2005

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# HORIZONS UNLIMITED

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## Insights For Each Day

A ministry of  
Sarah W. Utterbach



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

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

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

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

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

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

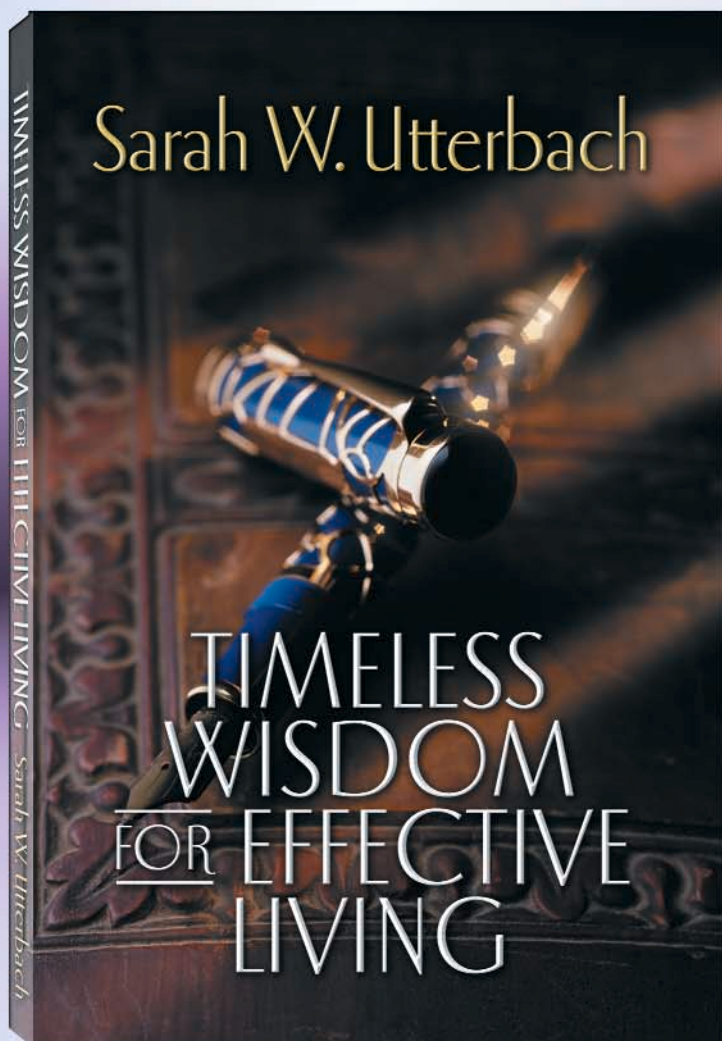
*My desired harvest is that lives will be changed, souls will be saved, and that every victim will become victorious.*

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

His Joint Heir,  
Sarah W. Utterbach



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# 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.

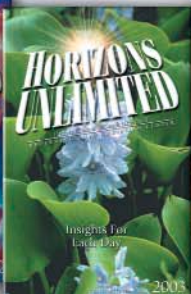
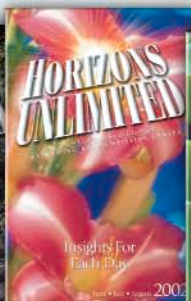
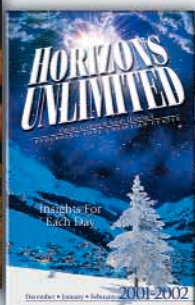
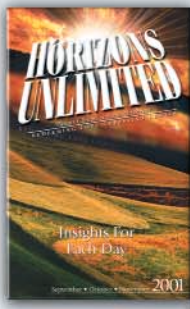
In 1979, I observed in the life of a friend a devotional practice that seemed unusual to me. Every day, my friend would walk into an open field across the parking lot from her office. There she would sit down on a rock to pray and write in what appeared to be a notebook or journal. After several weeks 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 that are 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 we also discover key elements of His great and unique design for our individual lives.

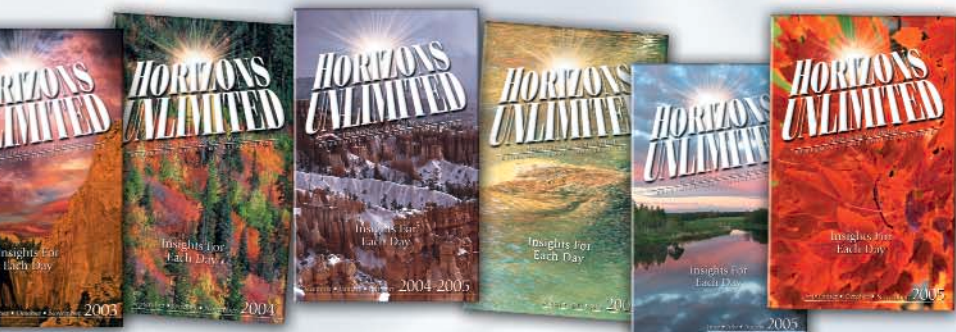
To know one’s individual purpose is the ultimate insight from God. It is divine insight or spiritual revelation which flesh and blood cannot make known to you. Divine insight is beyond the reservoirs of man’s intellect. But it is not difficult to tap. The will and wisdom of God are as near and as available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

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

Keep looking up; Jesus is expected!

His Joint Heir,

*Sarah W. Utterbach*  
Sarah W. Utterbach





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God has instructed us to make this magazine available free of charge to any who wish to receive it. However, that does not mean 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.

## Are You Serious?

Proverbs 21:30 (NKJV)—*There is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the Lord.*

**T**his scripture is a treasure to me. I can rest in the Lord knowing that no deception of the enemy can affect God's plan for me or for humanity.

The wisest ones can't outsmart Him. God brings a spirit of confusion to those convinced they have the know-how to thwart Him. World leaders gather in summits all over the globe to stamp out Christianity. They are wasting their time; you can't counsel against God and prosper.

Worship of anything or anyone other than God is equivalent to having a metallic god as in Psalm 115:4: "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands." Verse 8 says, "Those who make them are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them."

Without God's spirit in you and me, we, too, would be mere statues. Thank God for His Spirit in us so we can worship Him and grow to be capable representatives of His Son, Jesus.

**It takes the Spirit of Christ  
in a person to appreciate  
the importance of one soul  
coming to Christ.**

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I have seen people who, by the world's standards, were ready for the junk pile, changed into productive persons in God's army and make a difference in the world. I am one of them; and it is all because of the Spirit of Christ Jesus that dwells in me.

Recently, while on vacation driving from New York to Florida, the Spirit of God came on me in various restaurants and stores, and I found myself asking people, "Are you a Christian?" Some were; however, there are five more souls in the Kingdom of God today because, as a child of God, I'm never on vacation from the call on my life.

No statue or idol can do that. It takes the Spirit of Christ in a person to appreciate the importance of one soul coming to Christ.

Today, your choice is to witness to others as a Christian or be witnessed to so you can become a Christian. Won't you ask Jesus to come into your heart so you can join the ranks of those who will live with Him forever?

## Delighting in God's Word Saved My Life

Psalm 119:92 (NKJV)—*Unless Your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.*

I had been in church all my life but I recall only hearing the Word of God preached a few times by someone so excited by what it said that they were convinced that everything apart from it was in vain. At forty years old I was introduced to Scripture as being truth and life. Think of all the years between my conviction at age seven and my conversion at age forty.

Thank God that He allowed me to find out that nothing would work for me apart from His Word.

Materially and socially I was successful. I knew how to acquire and achieve; I did not know how to be happy or content. I wanted to be happy with or without the trinkets and toys. That is what the Word of God did for me.

When I began to delight in the Lord through the Word, life entered into me. When I read, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4), a hunger for the Lord became almost insatiable.

I am grateful God did not allow me to be satisfied with anything apart from Him. I enjoy many wonderful things but there is nothing I am so attached to that I cannot walk away from it. I feel the same way about people. I experience some wonderful relationships, but because of my love for Jesus I don't expect to miss a step in my walk with the Lord whether another person is present or absent in my life.

Enjoy everything you have as well as the people you know. Love Jesus more than anything or anyone and you will wake up every day happy or, at the least, content.

Whatever it is that you think will make you happy does not come close to what the Lord has for you when you seek Him first, His kingdom and His righteousness. His Word equips you to be happy and successful.



## Demolished Theories and Barriers

2 Corinthians 10:5 (KJV)—*Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

**M**ost of us have runaway minds. I find I have to put the brakes on my thoughts because my mind sometimes acts like it is not my friend; worse, sometimes it appears to want to get me killed.

Watch wanting to speculate when the word is very clear for you to obey. Speculation, for a believer, is an assignment to cause you not to trust God, the only one you can trust. It has to be destroyed. It is our enemy.

Imaginations are nothing more than theories and arguments hoping that you will give them power to control. You and I have the ability to cast them down; without our cooperation, they have no life of their own.

Conceit and pride are imaginations that will take over if you fail to stay humble. Humility is when you have more than you ever dreamed you could have and understand that your skills, talents, and gifts come from God. It tells everyone that all that you are, have, and do is because God loves you.

One of the best ways I have learned to bring my thinking into captivity is to obey 1 Peter 2:23 and 1 Peter 4:19 which teach us to commit ourselves to the One who judges right. I give my soulish area over to the Lord, the same way I gave Him access to my spirit for the purpose of salvation:

1. I make a choice to do it.
2. I operate my tongue and vocal cords to confess my choice.
3. I believe that it was a done deal with the Lord.
4. I act like it is so.

Thoughts come up occasionally that are looking for space in which to breed. The only ground or place they can grow is in the human mind. You may not prevent their arrival, but you certainly don't have to entertain them or treat them as a welcome guest.

## Don't Put Your Value On It

Deuteronomy 7:25 (NKJV)—*You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourself, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God.*

**T**hat brings back memories. When Clinton and I first married we purchased a six-foot diameter zodiac for our home. It covered an entire wall.

God began to introduce truth to us and, because of the truth, we put the zodiac out for the sanitation hauler to remove. I heard in my spirit, "Borrow your neighbor's pick ax and chop up the zodiac into small pieces so that no one will be able to take it home as an innocent ornament. It carries with it the spirit of what it represents."

My first reaction was, "We paid several hundred dollars for that piece, why destroy it?" It was my spirit man that said, "It's not good for your house. You would not want someone else to innocently take that spirit into his home, would you?" That settled it; my husband and I destroyed the piece.

Our marriage had struggled for the first three years then, suddenly, it began to turn around when we removed that piece from our home and destroyed it. What we considered an innocent ornament was a snare to us, and our marriage was negatively affected by it.

Are you innocently wearing anything that God could consider an abomination? It matters not how much it cost, get rid of it. It is hindering your progress spiritually.

Many people bring home as souvenirs figurines, statues, or masks, without realizing what they are releasing into their homes. No amount of prayer, fasting, or therapy will help until that abomination is out of your house.

After destroying that costly piece, we asked for God's forgiveness. Then we asked Him to show us anything in our home that He considered an abomination. We burned more books and destroyed more record albums than you can imagine.

I know to pray and do what the Word says regardless of cost. Do you?

## Equal Rights For Women

Numbers 27:4 (NKJV)—*"Why should the name of our father be removed from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father's brothers."*

**A**ren't you glad that Jesus freed us from what was almost considered a curse?

For a man not to father a son in the Old Testament was not received well. The only thing worse than not fathering a son in the eyes of that society was being barren as a wife.

This was the first pre-nuptial agreement. The daughters of Zelophehad petitioned to receive an inheritance for their father's name so he would not be penalized for not having sons. They did not protest to the other women. They believed God would do the right thing and would speak through his servant in charge. He did; and they received from God what they requested.

However, the daughters had to agree to certain guidelines if they wanted the money. For female heirs to marry, what they owned was protected from being absorbed into the inheritance of another tribe. They could have given up their inheritance to marry outside the tribe but that was not likely since they risked asking for it in the first place.

**Ladies, your equal rights must be found in Jesus.**

We have a friend who put all her eggs, which were many, into a basket with her husband's. He stopped doing things God's way and a divorce, which she did not want, occurred. He did not behave like a man of God towards her and she ended up with only her integrity and love for Jesus.

She did not embarrass him. She trusted God to work all things together for her good because she understood that her inheritance was not in this world. Because he did not do right by her or God, he lost everything including what was once a lucrative career. She never lost her desire to serve God and others. Now God is remembering what He originally planned for her.

Ladies, your equal rights must be found in Jesus. Your access to Him makes you not only equal but ahead of many. Keep your focus on what and who makes you equal.



## Evil Must Be Your History, Not Your Future

Psalm 37:27 (NKJV)—*Depart from evil and do good; and dwell forevermore.*

I'm amazed and saddened by the number of Christians who want God to deliver them from things He has already told them to quit.

Notice it says, "Depart from evil." Nowhere does that imply that God is going to remove evil from your path nor is He going to eradicate evil so you won't sin. As a matter of fact, sin is allowed to run its course so that your resistance to the wicked one will prove that the greater power lives within you. Paul wrote that when you are tempted, God would make a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Psalm 37:28 says, "For the Lord loves justice and does not forsake His saints; they are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off."

**The first thing to do  
is make evil a part of  
your past and good a  
part of your present.**

It does not get any clearer than that. As His child I will never be abandoned or allowed to deteriorate. The children of the devil shall be cut off from God's protection and preservation.

What do you want for your future? The first thing to do is make evil a part of your past and good a part of your present. God can do anything, but years have taught me that He will not do for me what He has authorized me to do for myself. As a matter of fact, He usually will not make another move on my behalf until I perform what was my part in my life.

When we have departed from evil and do good, I can assure you that when it is God's turn to move on your behalf, He will attempt to wipe out all of the devil's assignment against you if you prayed according to His wisdom and His Word.

It is never too late to get it together. I thank God I do not have to bring my history into my present because He gave me a future in His Son that has no remembrance of my past. That's good news.

## Hear and Learn

Deuteronomy 31:12 (NKJV)—*Gather the people together, men and women and the little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God and carefully observe all the words of this law.*

One of the last duties Moses performed was to command the people to hear and learn what the Lord inspired him to write and to teach. Learning should result from hearing. Often, it is not the case.

Many people listen so they can be selective in obeying what has been taught. Though we are not under the law, the liberty we enjoy because of God's grace does not eliminate the principles in His Word or His voice speaking a specific thing to our hearts to do.

Fornication and adultery throughout the Bible are forbidden. Yet, some Christians still participate in them, and have nerve enough to tell you, "The Lord knows their heart."

We recently were impressed to check on our Ministers of Helps' tithing because it is church policy that all workers, staff, Ministers of Helps, and leadership tithe. Membership in RLCC does not require you to tithe, but serving does.

When the printout was given to me, we knew that some were serving in disobedience. A general letter was sent asking all to correct their disobedience or resign their positions until they agreed to adhere to church policy.

A few came forward to explain their situation. A few agreed to sit down until their faith and finances flowed together.

I asked several, point blank, "Are you tithing?" You would not believe the answers I received. How do you tithe "occasionally"? What happened to the fear or reverence for the Lord?

We know what we have taught. We also know what you vowed to do. Based on the actions of some people, they listened but did not learn.

There is a difference between hearing and listening. Hearing results in learning; when you only listen, it's placed beside what you want and choose to do.

Thank God for His mercy and His grace. Just don't frustrate them.

## SONG POEM

by Clinton H. Utterbach

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# PURE IN THY SIGHT

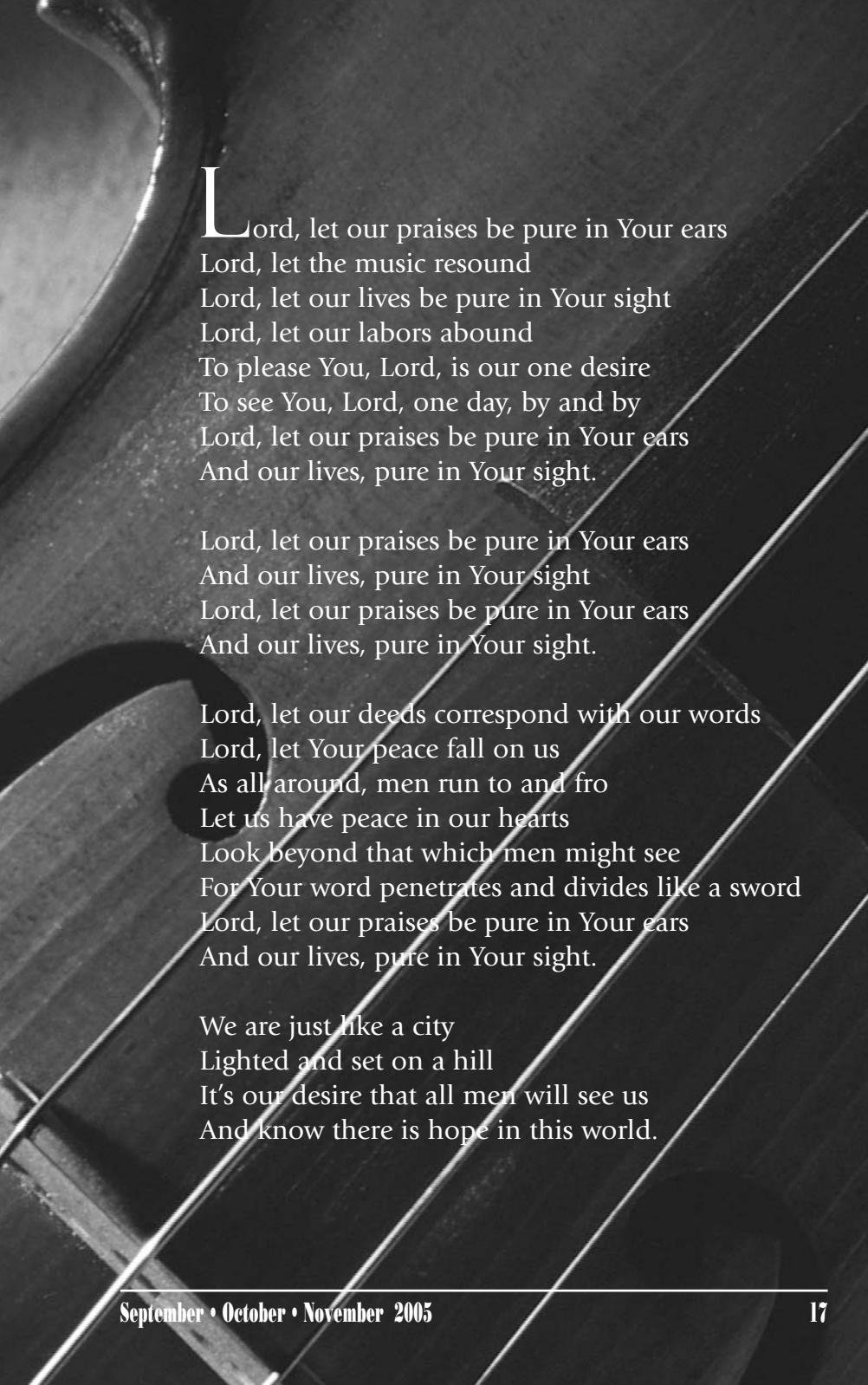
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*Let the words of my mouth,  
and the meditation of my  
heart, be acceptable in they  
sight, O Lord, my strength,  
and my redeemer.*

—Psalm 19:14

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Lord, let our praises be pure in Your ears  
Lord, let the music resound  
Lord, let our lives be pure in Your sight  
Lord, let our labors abound  
To please You, Lord, is our one desire  
To see You, Lord, one day, by and by  
Lord, let our praises be pure in Your ears  
And our lives, pure in Your sight.

Lord, let our praises be pure in Your ears  
And our lives, pure in Your sight  
Lord, let our praises be pure in Your ears  
And our lives, pure in Your sight.

Lord, let our deeds correspond with our words  
Lord, let Your peace fall on us  
As all around, men run to and fro  
Let us have peace in our hearts  
Look beyond that which men might see  
For Your word penetrates and divides like a sword  
Lord, let our praises be pure in Your ears  
And our lives, pure in Your sight.

We are just like a city  
Lighted and set on a hill  
It's our desire that all men will see us  
And know there is hope in this world.

## Miracles Do Not Motivate Right Choices

Acts 4:16 (NKJV)—*“What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem and we cannot deny it.”*

**M**any people ask, “What happened to the miracles of the Bible?” I say God got tired of performing them since they seem to have little or no affect on people to better serve and obey Him.

God has performed some notable miracles through me. Deaf ears could hear where the eardrum had been removed. Barren women have given birth several times. Cancer was cursed in the body of some who were mere skin and bones. Short legs and arms have grown out.

Where are the recipients of these miracles? I only know that they are not at RLCC or, in some instances, any other assembly.

What does excite me is the number of people in our church who seldom come forward to ask for a miracle but give praise reports about miracles accomplished by applying what they have been taught at RLCC and approaching God’s throne for themselves or loved ones in need.

A miracle can be like money, it will motivate only for a while. Then the question becomes, “What have you done for me lately?” People who get their needs met because of the message, and not a miracle, keep it.

Apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastors, teachers, and any untitled believer can do miracles in His name. More importantly, they teach others that they can have miracles themselves or perform miracles for others in His name.

That is the greatest miracle of all. To impart truth from His gospel to the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor, the black and the white, and any other category you can think of and watch them run with it.

Teach it and preach it because of its power. But please do not become disillusioned or dejected when the miracles at your hand do not motivate right choices.

The miracle for you is to remain faithful in what you are called to do.

## Obedience: An Investment for the Future

Deuteronomy 4:40 (NKJV)—*"You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time."*

**O**bedience is a responsibility. It is an investment in my future as well as the future of my children.

Moses was not making a request or a suggestion to Israel. He commanded them. When a command comes from God through one in authority, it pays to look closely at what is said and, at all costs, do it.

Obedience is not something to take lightly. Attendance in church, praising the Lord while there, and serving with every free moment you have does not guarantee prosperity and long life. Obedience to His Word and to His personal instructions to you must precede what you do.

John 14:21 says, "He who has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

Read verses 23-24, "Jesus answered and said to him, If any one loves Me, he will keep My word and My Father will

love him and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love Me, does not keep My word; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."

I wrote in my Bible, "Disobedience is a sign that your love of Jesus could use some work. And, that you can have love for Jesus without the love of Jesus." Love of Jesus results in obedience.

Where is it, and what is it, that caused you to fall short in obeying God?

"But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29).

Let's do it and now!

**"Disobedience is a sign  
that your love of Jesus  
could use some work."**

## Obedience Eliminates Body Guards

Proverbs 1:33 (NKJV)—*But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, and will be secure, without fear of evil.*

**I**t pays to pay attention to what the Lord is saying to you. I have never understood a Christian leader needing “body guards.” Jesus never had one and anytime His disciples attempted to get Him away from the people, He stopped them and, many times, chastised them. Jesus needed to be among people so the Father could tell Him who needed His help. For Him, it was all about ministering to the people and meeting their needs as directed by His Father.

I live in the middle of New York City but it would not matter where I lived. I have no fear about my safety because I listen to Him. I know there are people who are listening to the voice of the devil. Some do very injurious things to people but I am secure without fear of evil.

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**When you walk in a life  
of obedience, you never  
need to concern yourself  
with your safety.**

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When you walk in a life of obedience, you never need to concern yourself with your safety; you commit yourself to His care and keeping.

Why are you afraid to go places and do things because of the fear of evil? How effective can

you be cooped up in the house, be it a chicken coop or a palace? Fear of evil is keeping you in where God cannot use you to speak freely as you pass people in the mall or in the street.

Years ago I decided to assess the material things that the Lord has blessed me with, covenant to give them all back to Him emotionally, and He then could permit or do what He would with them. Glory!

I desired to be free, and the only way I knew to do that was tell the Lord that I appreciated all that He had provided to me. But too much of my thought life was spent either watching what I had or praying that nothing would happen to life's toys and trinkets.

Thank God I'm free to praise Him and not watch stuff.



## Some Things Require Your Attention

*Proverbs 27:25-27 (NLT)—After the hay is harvested, the new crop appears, and the mountain grasses are gathered in, your sheep will provide wool for clothing and your goats will be sold for the price of a field. And you will have enough goats' milk for you, your family and your servants.*

Someone told me years ago to “find a need and meet it.” That is a sure way to stay employed.

Our economy is based on producing, buying, and selling. One of the best ways I know to get this to work is not so much producing for your own profit but to help someone else produce his own crop. He, in turn, likely will help you get something of your own.

Jesus said, “If you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?” (Luke 16:12). There is nothing wrong with being an entrepreneur, but I have observed far too many failures because no one was committed to serve another. They wanted to be the boss and did not take time to get the wisdom of their successful boss on avoiding the pitfalls of being an entrepreneur.

Unless and until you are willing to help someone with his own business, God can't trust you with your own.

**Unless and until you are willing to help someone with his own business, God can't trust you with your own.**

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There are so many sparsely attended churches today because those who were assigned to assist a pastor with his work decided that they wanted the title “pastor” and did not wait for God to call them and allow the one they helped to send them out. Years later these same anxious people are still struggling, or worse, gave up on ministry altogether.

When you take the “hands off” or “that is beneath me” attitude, you are about to miss your call.

Get involved and stay involved as the Spirit directs you and never let someone else know more about your sheep than you do. After all, they are your future clothing and, to the degree you care for them, will be the measure God will provide for you.

## Rewarded

Proverbs 11:31 (NKJV)—*If the righteous will be recompensed on the earth, how much more the ungodly and the sinner.*

**I**t is wonderful to know that I do not have to wait until I reach heaven to be rewarded or recognized for my good deeds done while on the earth.

I thank God that whatever effort I make to further His kingdom is, for me, a privilege anyway. In other words, I'd serve the Lord because it is so right to do so, not for the financial reward involved.

Every trophy and reward that is a gift from my Father above is accessible to me while here in the earth. The earth is still the Lord's and the fullness thereof and He has given it unto the children of men.

Old satan and his representatives are constantly probing to find a weak link in my chain but the assurance of my Father's favor will plug every loophole the devil can find.

When sickness comes I reject it with what is written.

When poverty and lack rears its ugly head, I reject it with "It is written."

It does not give me any joy at all knowing the devil will be recompensed while here in the earth. But, it does give me great joy to know that at my weakest point no ungodly sinner can gain the victory over me.

The sad part is understanding that the course has been chartered for the devil and his cohorts and they can never change it. But those of us submitted to Christ can improve in our effort towards Him.

What are we going to do with our reward? Are we just going to accept it with no thought of how it can profit others?

The sinner and the ungodly cannot consider anyone but themselves. They can never experience the joy of sharing with another anything that is good and healthy because their natures have not been changed and ours has.

Part of the thrill of being recompensed in the earth is being robbed in His righteousness and going about doing good.

## Strong Substance Will Lead You Astray

Proverbs 20:1 (NKJV)—*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.*

**I**ndulgence in certain things clouds the wisdom of God in your life. No one and nothing should have control over your good sense.

One writer has said, "It is a shame that youth is wasted on the young." I say, "Worse than youth wasted on the young is wisdom being wasted on the young and the old."

A man recently attended a service at RLCC and came to the front almost before I completed the instructions for new converts. It turned out his "enthusiasm" to be saved was an assignment to interrupt the altar call. I had him escorted to the front door while I finished with the souls who were sincerely seeking Christ.

I later repented that I did not cast that spirit out of him. That was a disservice to both of us. He tried to operate in authority and power that he did not have because of strong drink. I did not operate in the authority and power I did have

**Sometimes it appears better  
to eliminate a problem  
than to deal with it.**

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which was to get him set free. Sometimes it appears better to eliminate a problem than to deal with it. Yes, it was important to get the sincere ones saved, but to God it was just as important to get that man delivered. I learned a great spiritual lesson in this.

Later, I was told that others in the congregation knew of this man, who referred to himself as Prophet So and So. There were eyewitnesses to the fact that when he opened his brief case to reach for his Bible, he moved his fifth of liquor aside.

Strong substance had led him astray because it was pretty clear that he once had known Christ.

I pray the Lord will send him across my path again so that instead of dismissing him and leaving him to the demons of strong drink, I can use the authority and power to go and really preach and live truth to others.

## Surprise, Surprise, Surprise

Psalm 52:7 (NKJV)—*Here is the man who did not make God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.*

**M**ost of us know or have read about men and women who make the society page or headlines and fit this verse. I certainly do not envy them because of what they can buy or places they can visit.

Aboard a luxury cruise ship recently the captain announced at the last port of call that we could not dock where he had intended and everyone was going to have to take a tender to shore. You could feel the anger and disappointment among the passengers as though he had said no one would be able to go ashore at all.

I thought, "That's so sad." The joy of the vacation for us was not the opportunity to make purchases, but the opportunity to read and write without disturbance, and, most of all, the excitement of leading a shoe salesperson and our cabin steward in the prayer of salvation. We also rested our bodies and waited for God to set up opportunities to tell others about Jesus.

It is not just surprising to those who have amassed wealth that their trust cannot be placed in it; it is also frightening. The tragedy is some of those who trust their riches and no longer are using their faith for daily bread are Christians. They tapped into the principles of prosperity but forgot that it is God who gives them the power to get wealth. (See Deuteronomy 8:18.)

Can you say today, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. ... I will praise You forever, because You have done it; and in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good" (Psalm 52:8-9, NKJV).

When we acknowledge God as our source of supply and abundance and wait in His name, we are saying, "God, You have a good reputation and You have never made a mistake or been wrong about anything." How can we not trust Him?



## Then I Want Out of Here

*Psalm 71:18 (NKJV)—Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come.*

**F**ive to ten minutes after midnight as the date ushered in my 67th birthday while doing the live call-in talk show, "The Choice Is Yours," "Crystal" called in crying and wanted to be saved. Needless to say, I immediately led her in a prayer to receive Jesus Christ as her Savior.

What a birthday gift from the Lord! I received some beautiful, costly gifts for my special day but none compared to being used of God to lead a soul to Jesus Christ.

It was near 5:00 a.m. before I drifted off to sleep. My thoughts were of how valuable we are to God and what we consider valuable. In a dream or vision, I saw myself offering a boiled egg to anyone willing to pay five dollars for it. Of course, there were no takers. Along came a man who had not had any food for several days. He was willing to pay the five dollars, in fact, he was willing to offer me whatever he had because what he had could not satisfy his hunger and need for food. He wanted that egg more than he wanted the riches of this world.

We need to stop looking at the occupants of the world and pitying them. In

our eyes they may be insignificant and, as mother would say, "Not worth a plug nickel." But when the Father remembered what He originally planned for them, before Adam and Eve transgressed in the Garden, and knew that His masterpiece still could be realized if He were willing to pay the price for their restoration, He not only was willing, but set the operation in motion. Thank God. We had not lost any real value to Him.

So, do not compare your worth with that of another human being. You cost God all He had and He was glad to pay the price.

**... do not compare your worth with that of another human being. You cost God all He had and He was glad to pay the price.**

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## A Clean Slate

Psalm 130:3-4 (NKJV)—*If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared [worshiped].*

**T**his verse says that God is worshiped because He forgives. Like our Father, we should develop the habit of forgiving. While we don't want anyone to worship us, we could certainly be used by God to bring out the best in others.

In the novel *Anne of Green Gables*, a boy messes up royally by playing hooky from school. Later in the day, the boy's parents and teacher come together by chance. Instead of highlighting the boy's wrongdoing, though, the teacher tells his parents how wonderful it is that he has volunteered to do some repair work at the school.

With this approach, the teacher accomplishes three things. She gains the student's respect, she makes his parents' hearts glad, and she gets some much-needed work done at the school.

God takes this same approach with us. The more He erases the slate of our sins, the more we learn to forgive others and the more we worship Him.

I have had to learn that everything of value involves risk. Just because I have chosen to overlook others' wrongdoing does not mean I am giving them license to sin. Wrongdoing is the fruit of wrong thinking. I don't want to miss helping people who are genuinely sorry for their sins by becoming rigid in measuring out punishment. I never want to forget that the same merciful and gracious God who is slow to anger, abundant in lovingkindness, and relents from doing harm (Jonah 4:2, NKJV) is also my Father and my Judge. I'd rather risk being wronged by others than misrepresent my forgiving Father.

*Father, I thank You that You wipe our slates clean of former sins. Thank You that Your tender mercies come quickly to meet us. Your habit of forgiving and restoring us is one we need to learn in our relationships with people. Your great power provides us with Your longsuffering and abundance of mercy. We need both, and we thank You for caring to the point of taking the risk that we may make the same mistakes and take part in the same sins again. We choose to obey You, and we choose to forgive as You do, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## A Confirmed Covenant

Isaiah 49:10 (NIV)—*"They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the desert heat or the sun beat upon them. He who has compassion on them will guide them and lead them beside springs of water."*

**Y**ears ago, drought and record heat were occurring all over the United States, causing meteorologists and those lacking understanding of their covenant some serious concern. In the midst of it, I was delighted to be reminded of promises like Isaiah 49:10 and Philippians 4:19, which hold me very steady when things in the natural are challenging. I never concern myself with having enough food or water, because God provides both to sustain me while I continue to be faithful and fruitful.

In the midst of the drought, I scheduled a family vacation for the following month in Palm Desert, California. Some said I needed my head examined for scheduling our vacation then, but I knew that the One who has compassion on me had guided me to schedule the vacation for that place and for that time. Therefore, I did not expect my family to be affected negatively by the heat or the sun while we were in the desert.

Lack in any area does not concern me. Confidence in my confirmed covenant is what I must stay focused on at all times. I am never sure where the food, the water, or the shade will come from, but I know beyond a shadow of doubt who provides and directs me to the provisions.

*Father, today I acknowledge that all my help comes from You, and You are always timely. I thank You that I can boldly say I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread (Psalm 37:25).*

*Famines, droughts, and disasters of all types come, but they shall not come near me. When I was seven years old, You promised to supply my daily bread, and You have for these many years. I am grateful.*

*Considering Your track record with me, to not trust You would be to insult You and to see You as an infidel who fails to provide for his household. But I know I can trust You, for I have a covenant with You. And that covenant is firm because You have repeatedly confirmed every promise You have made to me personally. Thank You again, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## A Dependable God

Psalm 130:5 (NLT)—*I am counting on the Lord; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word.*

I have been independent of others all my life. As I look back, I see three things that shaped my independent attitude.

The first influence was fear. I feared that those I looked to for support would one day leave through death, divorce, or for any of various reasons. I became as independent as I could to avoid the sense of loss that would accompany the loss of another person.

The second influence was my observation of others becoming weak because a spouse, a parent, children, employers, or friends did so much for them. I remained as strong as I could by being independent of assistance from others.

The third influence was the controllers. These were the people who thought they could manipulate others' lives and choices to benefit themselves if they made people dependent on them. I remained independent to avoid being used by these people.

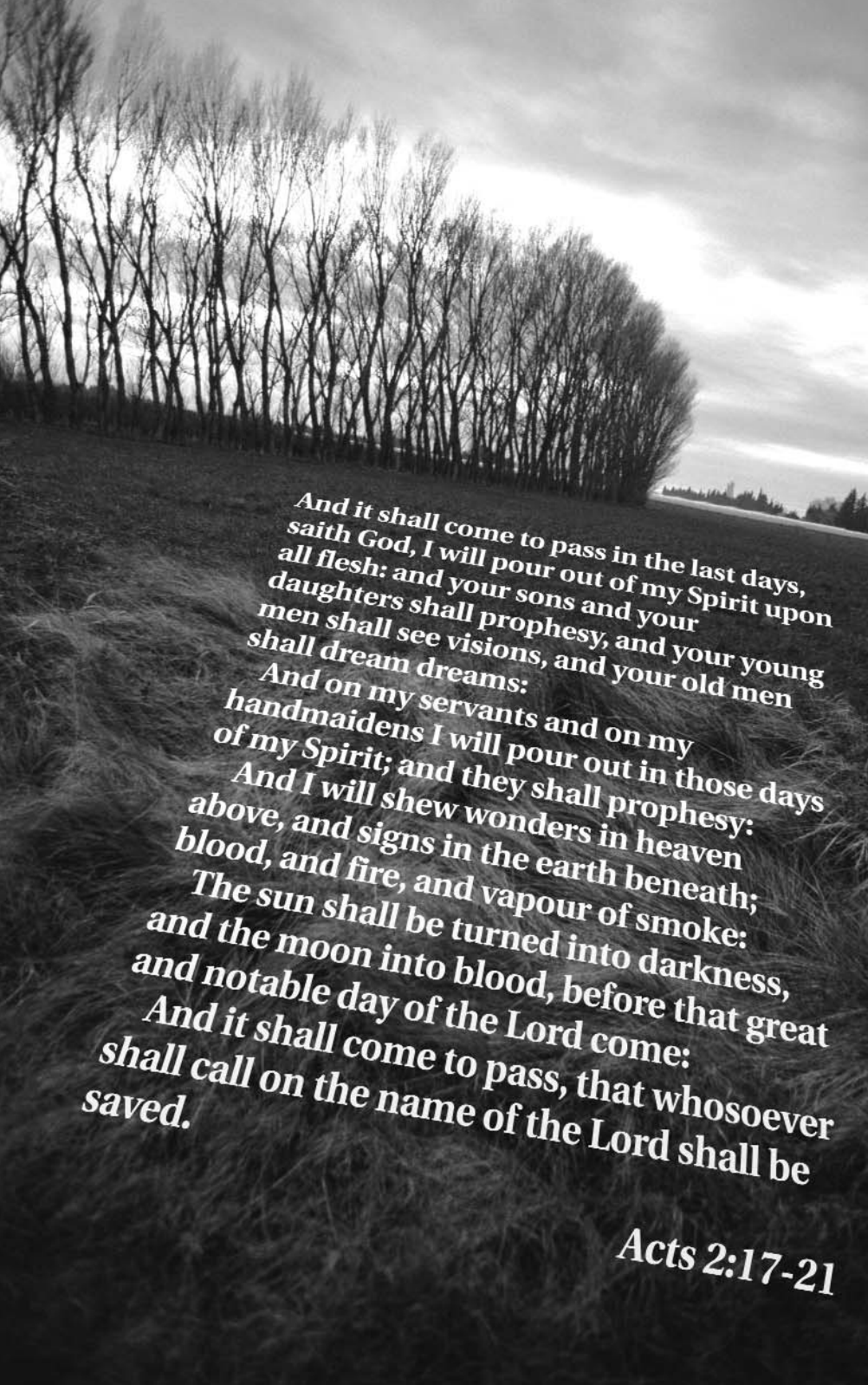
I am not a user; I am a giver. I enjoy giving and doing for others. It excites me to be used to light up another person's face. I like to give big gifts as well as small ones. I guess you might say I like to give what is needed or desired for the moment to help remind people that God knows where they are.

One day, as I was indulging in some inward pride for being under no obligation to anyone and being independent, the Spirit of God spoke to me. He reminded me that my future success was in remaining humble and coming daily to Him as a little child would come to her parents.

I will never forget when, at seven years of age, I questioned why God would not just give me a week's or year's supply of my bread. He said the reason He would only give me my daily bread was that I needed to confer with Him every day.

God had no problem with my being independent of others—as long as I became totally dependent on Him. I have put my hope in God's Word because it never changes, it never fails. God's Word keeps me walking in victory when destruction and defeat are playing their latest tune, trying to get me to march to their beat.





And it shall come to pass in the last days,  
saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon  
all flesh: and your sons and your  
daughters shall prophesy, and your young  
men shall see visions, and your old men  
shall dream dreams:

And on my servants and on my  
handmaidens I will pour out in those days  
of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

And I will shew wonders in heaven  
above, and signs in the earth beneath;  
blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:  
The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
and the moon into blood, before that great  
and notable day of the Lord come:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever  
shall call on the name of the Lord shall be  
saved.

Acts 2:17-21

## A Name You Can Trust

Psalm 9:10 (NIV)—*Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.*

**I**n my childhood, I often heard certain names which represented certain positions in life: Rockefeller, Dupont, Mellon, Rothchild, Mussolini, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin. I knew those names had no effect on my life personally, so to me they were just names.

Later in life, I met certain people whose names were also very popular. Many of them had a profound effect on me and my family, but I've learned not to put my confidence in any flesh.

My mother-in-law used to say to my husband, "All flesh is as grass, so learn to wear this world and everyone as a loose garment."

The day I became personally acquainted with the Man Jesus Christ, He introduced me to His Father God and His Holy Spirit. Though I knew all Three, it was not until I began to pursue a

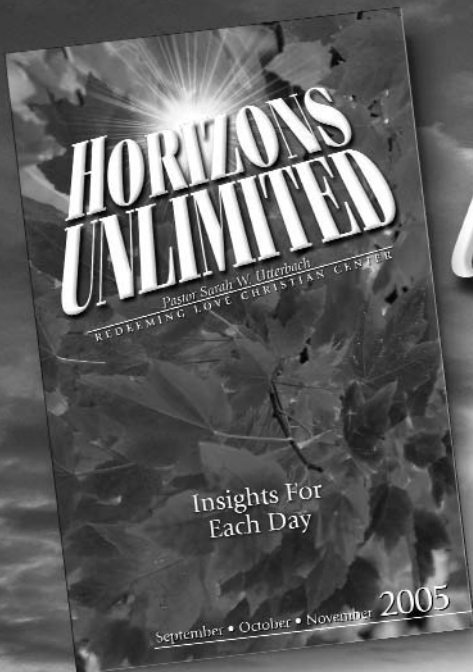
**God will never forsake  
those who seek Him.**

personal, intimate, and committed relationship with Them that I began to be secure in what we had together. The more I ran after Them, the more They ran towards me.

It worked the opposite of the way relationships in the world work. The more you go after the things and people in the world, the more elusive they become.

God is not that way. He will never forsake those who seek Him. The relationship begins when we are introduced to Him. Once we know Him and His name, trust enters the relationship.

*Dear God, there is one thing I know for sure, and that is who You are. I know the value of Jesus' name in my life. The Person of the Holy Spirit leads me and guides me daily. Because of this, my life is now a life of seeking You first—Your kingdom and Your righteousness. You do not forsake me, but You increase, add, and multiply much to my life that places me in a better position to serve others.*



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## A Scorecard Is Not Kept

Psalm 130:3 (KJV)—*If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?*

**I**f God kept scorecards or regarded our moral evils and personal faults, He would not be *the* God, Creator of the universe. He wouldn't qualify, because that is exactly what humans do to each other.

If God were to look narrowly on our shortcomings, our future would be about as certain as that of a snowball in hell. But instead, He awaits the sounds of our voices lifted up to Him in true repentance, asking Him to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We never have to ask God to forget what we have done. He automatically does that when we request forgiveness. That is what makes Him God.

Humans forgive also, but seldom do they forget the negative deeds others do to them.

**Because of Jesus, you have  
been made free and your  
record has been swept clean!**

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Therefore, I never ask or expect anyone to forget the wrong I have done the them. I only ask their forgiveness because I know that only God can and will forget. Only He has no record or score-

card against me. This is not all bad because it has made me recognize the long-lasting effect my negative tone, deed, or attitude can have on another. It has helped me assess what I am about to say or do so that even an innocent observer will not have to see me in a negative light forever.

Stop trying to force people to forget the wrongs you committed against them. They can't. The best you can hope for is that they will forgive you. Let it be consolation enough for you that your Father's forgiving and forgetful love has provided an avenue of escape from condemnation and guilt. Because of Jesus, you have been made free and your record has been swept clean!



## Acceptance Brings Illumination

John 13:7 (KJV)—*Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

**W**e must learn to accept the move of God. When we do, He illuminates our understanding.

Initially, though, He is not interested in our understanding Him. He is looking for us to have such an intimate relationship with Him that we simply follow. It is called faith. Without faith, pleasing God is impossible.

I used to understand less of what God was saying and doing than I do now. In fact, my opinion of what I thought He was doing was evident in my explanation of Him and His actions. Today, I seldom try to explain God's reason, and I rarely share my opinions about what He is doing. I know that He knows the complete story and that whatever He is permitting, He is using to work for my good.

God is not keeping any secrets from us, nor is He waiting for us to understand what He is doing before we

decide to obey Him and accept His actions.

**Obedience and acceptance can  
only follow trust's lead.**

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Obedience and acceptance can only follow trust's lead. It is just a lot easier to obey someone or something you trust. I am grateful for a reputation that causes some people to go along with a project that I am involved with, even when I have either not had time to fully explain it or my explanation was still somewhat hazy. For example, my husband didn't always understand my plans (nor I his), but we became so intimate and trusting of each other that often we simply accepted what the other one was doing just because of our track record with one another.

Surely by now God's track record with us is such that we can decide to accept first and understand later. Jesus promised us that we would indeed understand later. Therefore, I choose to wait for both my change and my understanding to come as I move out with Him.

## Act Justly, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly

*Micah 5:4 (NIV)—He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.*

**W**e certainly understand that Micah 5:4 is speaking of the promised ruler from Bethlehem, Jesus Christ. But as His body, we can also see this as a great example for pastors to follow as they shepherd God's people.

When my husband and I knew we were called to pastor, we said to God, "If You don't give us a supernatural ministry, don't give us any ministry at all." By that, we simply meant that we knew it would take God's constant involvement to shepherd His people. Without question, the sheep could only live securely and be at peace with themselves if they had the strength of the Lord and the majesty of His name to prove His greatness on their behalf.

No human qualifies to lead a congregation in his or her own strength. No matter how many gadgets, gimmicks, promotional plans, and schemes a pastor comes up with, it won't be enough to effectively care for God's people. It takes God's strength, through Jesus, by the Holy Ghost, to enable a person to stand and shepherd God's people.

The majesty of God's name proves His greatness in the earth. The name of Jesus, the person of Jesus, is all we need to do great exploits in the earth.

How do we do this? Micah 6:8 tells us: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

*Dear Father God, What we should do to please You is so plain and simple. All of our work, labor, and sacrifice are in vain if we fail to follow this very basic formula: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with You. Teach us to be fair in all our dealings with others. Show us how to dispense mercy whenever and wherever it is needed. May we never become puffed up with pride because of the mighty things You do for, in, and with us. When the final chapter is recorded, all that we will have done will be the result of Your strength and the authority You have given us in the majestic name of Jesus, Your beloved Son.*

## Admission Granted

Ephesians 2:18 (KJV)—*For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

**T**he shed blood of Jesus Christ has become my admission slip to the Father God. It is because His Spirit summoned me toward Him that I now have permission to approach Him. This same faith that justified me and gave me peace through my Lord Jesus also provided access, or admission, to His grace.

In His grace, I experience His divine influence upon my heart and its reflection into my life. His favor and benefit package is found in His grace. His joy, His liberality, and His pleasure are all found in His grace. God by His Spirit is wooing us to Him.

Before Christ abolished in His flesh the commandments and requirements that distinguished the Jew from the Gentile, I had no permission or access to God. Nothing you and I had would qualify us to be admitted to the presence of God, where everything we wanted or needed awaited us.

But once His shed blood provided for us His grace and favor, we could with confidence access Him and His benefits. Drawing near to the Creator of the universe as His child will cause your head to tilt but your spirit to rejoice.

Does approaching God with confidence, as Ephesians 3:12 suggests, seem far out? It should not stagger us at all. After all, the same Spirit wooing us to Himself is also sustaining us by giving us the spirit to trust Him. We can't trust God and His promises without His giving us His spirit of faith. Without that fruit of the Spirit we would be lost and without hope. Because we have access by faith into this grace, we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

*Father, for whom Your whole family is named, thank You for providing us with admission to You through Jesus. Our hope is in Your glory being manifested. For this we shout hallelujah. Our hope in You will not be ashamed or disappointed because this access is ultimately to Your love, which is spread throughout our hearts by Your Spirit.*

## An Established Heart

Hebrews 13:9 (KJV)—*Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established by grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

**O**ur hearts represent our thoughts, our emotions, and the core of our existence. It is our control center. Since Jesus is never-changing, the focus of our hearts must continually be on Him.

Jewish law allowed and also forbade various foreign and alien teachings about food or related articles that in no way benefited them; neither are such rules and observances advantageous to us, because they contribute in no way to divinely influencing our control center. Jesus Himself noted that what goes into a man's stomach does not defile him, but that which proceeds from the

heart is what defiles (Matthew 15:16-20).

Furthermore, merely external observances do not reflect in our lives what God has established for us.

**Jesus Christ is the same  
yesterday, today, and forever.  
His Word and the example of  
His life are to be our focus.**

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Apart from God's divine influence (grace) on our thoughts, emotions, and actions, we are not confirmed or stabilized by anything that could make us pleasing to God. His grace is not only sufficient: it is the protective barrier to ward off any forces that come against us to deter and detract us from the master plan.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. His Word and the example of His life are to be our focus. Don't allow yourself to become attracted to and follow strange observances and ceremonial rules that have no spiritual power to impart. Do not follow any observance or teaching you hear unless your "control center"—your spirit—confirms it with the peace that is only known by a believer whose heart is established upon the Word of God.



# ALL GOD'S CHILDREN ARE VALUABLE

One of the blessings of being a pastor is the opportunity to observe the growth and maturity of the sheep. However, one of the disadvantages of filling the role of a shepherd is the ever-present tendency to forget that the sheep don't belong to us but to God. One of the first things that we as pastors need to do is what Moses did: recognize our need to know God. The only way to know God is to have Him show us His way. But He will only show us His way when we find grace in His sight. Once I determined that the sheep we are called to shepherd belong to God, I made it my goal to consult with Him—first, to get to know Him; then to inquire regarding His ways. One thing I quickly learned was that I couldn't have any favorites. All God's children are valuable and precious to Him, and the rules are the same for everyone—regardless of appearance or personality.



## Apply the Principle, Reap the Reward

2 Peter 1:5 (NLT)—*So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral excellence. A life of moral excellence leads to knowing God better.*

God has done His part in our development and growth as Christians. Now we are to make every effort to apply what has been decreed and established. We need to add more to each of the virtues we have in Christ.

When we apply God's principles and promises to our lives, He produces excellence in us. This is just the beginning of what we are to put into our growth. A life of moral excellence will enable

**A life of moral excellence  
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us to get to know God better. Knowing God better allows us to control ourselves. This leads to patient endurance, which leads to godliness. Godliness leads first to love for other believers and, finally, to love and compassion for God's creation.

The purpose for all of this increased input is to make us more productive and useful in our knowledge of Jesus. If we neglect to develop these benefits and promises, we become blind or nearsighted regarding what is truly valuable and important in God's scheme of things; we forget that God has cleansed us from our old life and nature of sin.

Ridding ourselves of sin and increasing God's gifts in us leads to a life of holiness and attracts others to the same life. People are looking for leaders who have found their place in life and appear to be happy enough with it to make outsiders envious.

Seeking to live out God's promises is about being so like God that those without Him are attracted to Him in us. Why would I want to follow someone who has lost his own grip on life? I want a tried, true, and proven vessel to follow when I am facing challenges finding my own way.

## As Good As It Gets

Colossians 2:9 (KJV)—*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

**W**hen you and I accepted Christ, we got more than just a free ticket to heaven. We received all that God was, all that He is, and all that He will ever be. As if that were not enough, we also received all that the Holy Spirit was, is, and will ever be.

This is why Colossians 2:10 is so thrilling: "And ye are complete in Him." This is as good as it gets! The fullness of the Godhead lives in Christ, and He lives in you and me. Therefore, there is no more to come. Our hope is not for more of God in our lives. Our hope is not for more of Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Our hope is to one day see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit face-to-face. But in the meantime, we are to develop our position with them. We are to fine tune our relationship with them so that they can better operate in and through us.

**Our hope is to one day see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit face-to-face. But in the meantime, we are to fine tune our relationship with them.**

Imagine the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus bodily. That to me means that since I am His body in the earth, the fullness of the Godhead is operating in me with only the limitation that I place in their way.

Since you and I are already complete in Him, our purpose is to train ourselves to release the fullness of His presence that is at work within us.

God required circumcision for males beginning with Abraham's family. Today, both male and female are circumcised in heart with the circumcision not made with hands; we put off the old body of sin of the flesh with the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11). Christ Jesus is the Scalpel, the Surgeon, and the Surgery that cuts away the flesh, passions, desires, and appetites that are not God's plan for us. We have the whole package in Christ, and this is as good as it gets.

## Awaken Me, O Lord

**A**waken me, O Lord, for I will not step beyond Your call to the deep recesses of my heart. I must begin to start.

There is much to be done, and I know that You are searching for those whose commitment to You exceeds the comfort and care this world often provides. Beneath Your wings and within Your love I do hide—not from evil, for it is everywhere, but I hide myself in You to receive the strength and hope of knowing that You will give me direction and guidance unknown to those who have not yet had a glimpse of Your throne.

**“Tell one, tell all, they  
need to be saved from the  
clutches of satan before  
their day in the grave.”**

---

I believe the Lord is saying, “Rest is sometimes needed, but it should not be overdone. There are souls out there still needed to be won to Christ, who willingly gave His life.

“Tell one, tell all, they need to be saved from the clutches of satan before their

day in the grave. The enemy does not want them to know they are already made free. But, you, go tell them now of Calvary’s tree. I give you the gift of an evangelist’s tongue. Speak that which you know. Leave out not even one. Your path will cross many whom I have sent to hear My message of life. That message is meant to make corrections and changes they thought could never be. It’s not about them; it’s all about Me.

“So go forth in boldness, go forth in My power, go forth in faith, for this is the hour. I have called you to say what I have taught you and spoken to you each day.

“There has always been a purpose. There has always been a plan for My holy words to be shared with each and every man. The women and children, too, need to hear that the day of My coming is soon; it is near. Hesitate not any longer in what you must do. Go proclaim everywhere Jesus’ reflection in you. I charge you: Now go. Wait for no one to agree. Because you heard, you must obey, and you will see. I’m depending on you, so begin now. Today.”

## Bastard Is Not Your Name

Hebrews 12:8 (NLT)—*If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children after all.*

**F**ailure to submit to a particular minister will not make a person a bastard. Paul said that the discipline of God is what identifies a person as His children. How, then, can a born-again child of God ever be a “bastard”?

God becomes our Father when we receive His Son as our Savior. In Matthew 23:2-4 Jesus warned religious leaders of their responsibility only to act as official interpreters of the Scriptures. He then admonished the people to obey and practice every word they said but not to follow their example because they did not practice what they preached.

He further stated that everything they did was for show (verse 5). In verses 8 and 9 He taught us that we should not allow others to call us “Rabbi” because we have only one Teacher and all of us humans are on the same level as sisters and brothers. He continued with a charge to call no one here on the earth “Father” because only God in heaven is our spiritual Father. Don’t let anyone call you “Master” either, because there is only one Master—the Messiah.

Everything we have does not come from human beings; it comes from heaven. James 1:17 says that every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father above.

Don’t be deceived into thinking that your reward and your increase are the result of your associations with anyone except Jesus Christ. Quantity without quality does not equal value.

Keep your focus on Jesus. Keep your mind on Jesus. Set your affections on Jesus, and you will find that you are led by His Spirit, not driven, dragged, pushed, and shoved into activities and events that are not yet for the season God has you in.

Your Father God is not withholding any good thing from you that a human can supply. What is happening is that His will and pleasure are being worked in you to prepare you to go when He says “go.” You are His child. Bastard is not your name.

*Dear Father, thank You for making us Your sons and daughters and for preparing us with Your loving discipline so that we can go forth with the call You have placed on each of our hearts.*

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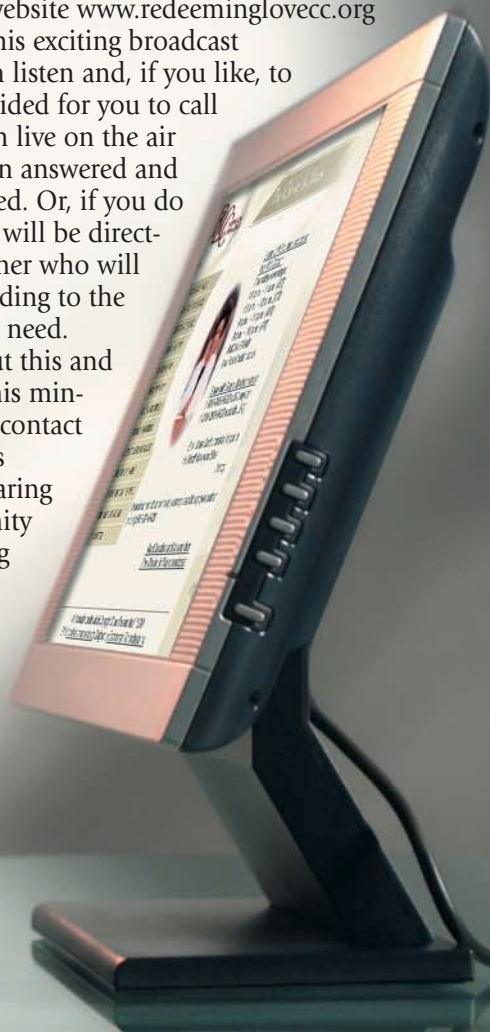
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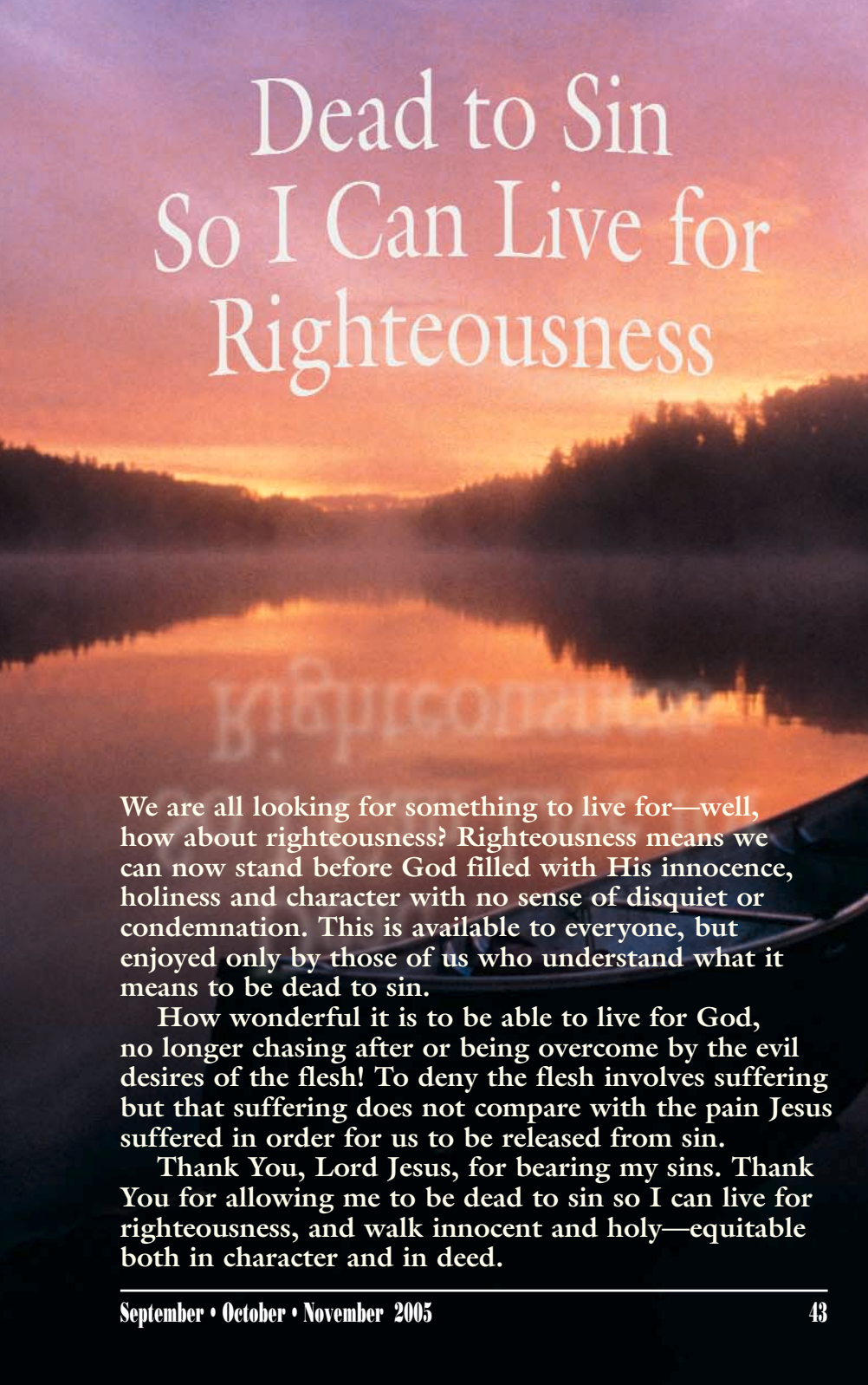
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# Dead to Sin So I Can Live for Righteousness

We are all looking for something to live for—well, how about righteousness? Righteousness means we can now stand before God filled with His innocence, holiness and character with no sense of disquiet or condemnation. This is available to everyone, but enjoyed only by those of us who understand what it means to be dead to sin.

How wonderful it is to be able to live for God, no longer chasing after or being overcome by the evil desires of the flesh! To deny the flesh involves suffering but that suffering does not compare with the pain Jesus suffered in order for us to be released from sin.

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for bearing my sins. Thank You for allowing me to be dead to sin so I can live for righteousness, and walk innocent and holy—equitable both in character and in deed.

## Be Single-Minded About Spiritual Choices

Deuteronomy 25:13-16 (NIV)—*Do not have two differing weights in your bag—one heavy, one light. Do not have two differing measures in your house—one large, one small. You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. For the Lord your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly.*

**M**any years ago, before I was converted as a sanctified born-again Christian, I still provided my houseguests with some of the finest liquor available. I sensed that God was not thrilled with this, but most of the Christians I knew drank (including the pastor and the church officials).

The Spirit of God spoke to me one Saturday as I was attempting to do what I often did when I did not want to deal with a matter: I would go to sleep. Only this time, sleep was not cooperating. God asked me about all the opened and unopened alcoholic beverages in my home bar. I responded, "But Lord, I don't partake of that anymore. Are You suggesting that I pour it all out? After all, it represents lots of dollars." He reminded me that He had given us that money, which we had spent on the bar, and He showed me that I should not offer to someone else what I would not want for myself.

The conversation ended there, and I made my choice. The next voice I heard was my son Kyle's as he came to see what was going on. You see, the aroma from the numerous bottles of wine and champagne being poured out had permeated the entire house. My comment was "Hush and bring me some more bottles." This thing needed to be done—and quickly, before my head calculated the cost.

Since that time, I have understood the importance of being single-minded about every spiritual choice. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways and can expect nothing from God (James 1:7-8). God wants us to live long in the provisions He has made for us. He knows that the enemy will cause us to stumble when we fail to rid ourselves of negative options.

Having a plan B is an abomination in God's eyes. We must rid ourselves of idols as an affirmation of our love and commitment to the only God we will serve. Stop lying to yourself that you are strong enough to have other options and not be affected by them. Make a choice to eliminate choices. Go with God.

## Blind to the Truth

Revelation 3:17 (KJV)—*Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

**T**here is nothing wrong with wealth and increase, as long as we don't brag that because of it we have need of nothing. If we say these words from our hearts, then our hearts need to be cleansed.

Jesus essentially said to the angel of this "we've-got-it-made" group, "I know you inside and out, and I find little to my liking. You brag, saying, 'I'm rich; I need nothing from anyone,' but you are oblivious to the truth that, in fact, you're pitiful, blind, beggarly, and homeless."

How could they not know? "The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, entering in" had choked the Word in them, making them unfruitful (Mark 4:19).

We can clearly see from these verses that we can have great riches and accumulation and yet be oblivious to the truth. Sadly, we can become oblivious to the truth of God's Word, which has been choked, and oblivious to the truth that Jesus sees us as wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

That's a tough state to be in naturally speaking. But it is a worse state to have wealth and increase covering up the truth that we are like that in the spirit realm.

The Holy Spirit makes things transparent that we hoped no one would ever see. Imagine thinking the world sees us as being blessed of the Lord, while the Lord allows them to see what we really are in the spirit. If we rely on our wealth to make us self-sufficient we are not blessed, we are miserable.

*Precious Father, God of all truth, help us see who we really are and what we are really doing in Your kingdom before it's too late. Lord Jesus, the price You paid at Calvary is higher than anyone else can pay; yet, because of Your grace, You have truly cancelled this debt. The empty tree and tomb are the proof of that. Continue to work in us what we must work outwardly for Your glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Then I Will Command My Blessings on You

*Leviticus 25:21 (NKJV)—Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year and it will bring forth produce [fruit] enough for three years.*

**G**od's command of anything, especially His blessing, will do what He commands it to do.

One of these days we are going to mature enough to accept that He orders our steps, He works all things together for our good, and He supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

The Bible teaches that if we don't work we don't eat. Most people think that means going to a particular place of employment each day, laboring for a certain number of hours, and receiving one or two or several weeks off annually.

Personally, I believe it is making yourself available to respond to the voice of the Lord at any time and then watching Him command His blessings on you. I further believe that obedience to what He tells you to say or do always results in Him blessing you.

Surely if God will require you to do something, as He did the Israelites, He will provide for you while you are obeying Him.

Some people act as if God is an ogre or demanding human being only interested in extracting and who is never a considerate, caring giver. I am here to tell you that no one can or will ever give like our God. It matters not what you are asked to do. It does not matter what you are asked to leave or give up. God will provide.

How can I be so sure? I no longer just have His written Word, I have years of experience as evidence to prove that He is the covenant-keeping God. He is my provider even when I have a job earning finances. He is the one that provided the employment and the matching skills or gift to perform it.

I have news for you, He commands His blessings on us when we have no particular skill or talent or opportunity to show what we can do.



# Eliminate Your Options and Go With God

**I**n Deuteronomy 25:13-16 (NIV), the Bible tells us, "Do not have two differing weights in your bag—one heavy, one light. Do not have two differing measures in your house—one large, one small. You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. For the Lord your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly."

Do you deal with people or situations one way one time, and another way another time? Do you have one standard for one group or yourself, and a different standard for another group or yourself? Do you fluctuate according to how you feel at the moment? That is double-mindedness. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways and can expect nothing from God (James 1:7-8). God wants us to live long in the provisions He has made for us. He knows that the enemy will cause us to stumble when we fail to rid ourselves of negative options or escape routes from walking in definite obedience to His definite commands.

Having a Plan B that is contrary to God's plan is an abomination to the Lord. We must rid ourselves of idols as an affirmation of our love and commitment to the only God we will serve. Stop lying to yourself that you are strong enough to have other options and not be affected by them. Make a decision today to eliminate your options and go on with God. The choice is yours. Do it today.



## Those Against the Lord Increase Continually

*Psalm 74:23 (NKJV)—Do not forget the voice of Your enemies; the tumult of those who rise up against You increases continually.*

**L**awlessness is loose in the earth like never before. The body of Christ is stronger than ever, but make no mistake about it, the detractors of all that God is about also increase continually.

How is the spirit that is motivating them going to be addressed? The same way God always deals with everything. Love, mercy, and truth will win over anything the enemy throws at God or His people.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4). If it is in God, then it will be impacted by love because God is love. Anything that proceeds from Him or comes in contact with Him is influenced by His love.

God does not change because those rising against Him are increasing in numbers. They cannot increase in strength though their numbers increase. Imagine increasing continually against the One who created all things. All they are doing, besides demonstrating they are of another spirit, is showing they are void of His wisdom, His peace, and, certainly, His power. Who in their right mind would come against God? He loves them anyway.

God does not need us to defend Him. He needs us to pray for those who are increasing against Him for they know not what they are doing.

Say this with me, "Lord Jesus, everyone that increases continually against You is blinded and are heathen that we claim as a part of our inheritance. We break the power of satan from over them and pray that the eyes of their understanding be enlightened as to who You are and that You love them. Show us ways to demonstrate Your love to them. Prick their hearts to be receptive to the truth about You, then send the perfect laborer across their path with the Good News of the Gospel which will result in their salvation. I thank You for this in Your precious, powerful, and majestic name. Amen."

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## Too Late

Deuteronomy 1:41 (NLT)—*"Then you confessed, 'We have sinned against the Lord! We will go into the land and fight for it as the Lord our God has told us.' So your men strapped on their weapons, thinking it would be easy to conquer the hill country."*

**G**od does not work on our time clock. He does not move at our will. He will complete what He said with or without our cooperation.

When the people of Israel left Egypt, they were free to possess the land. But refusing God's work and discouraging the hearts of others cost them and delayed what God intended. Delay is not denial. Disobedience is deadly. Samson revered God, confessed his sin, and humbled himself before the Lord, but his lack of obedience and respect for the call on his life cost him his life.

God told Moses to tell Israel to take off their weapons and stay put because, though He carried them in the wilderness as a man carries his son, He was not going with them at their convenience. They would be defeated in battle if they went without Him. Their

enemies whipped them and caused them to retreat.

This will help to answer the questions for some as to why they are not making

**Obey God when He speaks  
and you will always sense His  
presence to help you perform.**

progress in the promises God has spoken to them. The fault is not in God. The devil has no device or defense against an obedient child of God. God is looking for those who believe and obey when He speaks.

To this day I am influenced by training I received at IBM over 25 years ago. Part of what I learned there was "anyone can do revisions but it is productive to do First Time Finals." Do it right from the beginning and you become an asset to the company. I say obey God when He speaks and you will always sense His presence to help you perform.

Never choose to do anything your way once the Lord has spoken to you. And, don't delay doing it because you think you can choose the time to obey Him. It may be too late.



K

NOW YE NOT THAT  
they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth  
the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is  
temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a  
corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I,  
not as one that beateth the air:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into  
subjection: lest that by any means, when I have  
preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

## You Have Skirted This Mountain Long Enough

Deuteronomy 2:2-3 (NKJV)—*And the Lord spoke to me saying: "You have skirted this mountain long enough; turn northward."*

**A**re you tired of making tracks and going nowhere? That happens to many of us. Skirting anything means you are circling it. You just keep doing the same thing over and over. It is a road that leads nowhere.

You may need to change some people in your life. Check them out. Are they making any progress with their own lives? If not, you can believe hanging out with them will also stunt your growth.

There may need to be a change in the neighborhood you're living in. The best way I know to change the neighborhood you live in is to move out because usually the neighborhood becomes the people who inhabit it.

The Lord may be telling you that you have skirted your mountain long enough. He may want to help you get out of the circle that is taking you nowhere.

Do you know why we skirt our mountains too long?

Often we are waiting for people who never were intended to accompany us on our journey. Sometimes we try to hold on to family property only to have it become an albatross around our necks. That dream house or car can keep you repeating the same things.

When you leave here, and you will one day, you are not going to be able to take anything with you. When you go, you will be separated from anything here.

The Lord recently spoke to me and shared that He could not give me everything at once because it would overwhelm me and cause me to stumble. But I could depend on Him to provide what I needed each day to be successful. So I chose to take success one day at a time, enjoy it, and be excited knowing that tomorrow is going to come with its own share of success.

*Thank You, Father, for showing me that I, too, was skirting the same mountain and it was time for a change.*



## You Shall Not Listen

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 (NLT)—*Suppose there are prophets among you, or those who have dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, and the predicted signs or miracles take place. If the prophets then say, "Come, let us worship the gods of foreign nations," do not listen to them. The Lord your God is testing you to see if you love him with all your heart and soul.*

**H**ow often we have said, "You'll know if someone is a true prophet or a dreamer if what he said or did comes to pass." That fact is true providing they are not demonstrating signs and wonders with the purpose of turning you away from what you believe and in whom you believe.

**Signs and wonders can be performed by the devil and his crowd.**

Apostasy is the renunciation of your faith. It is abandonment of a previous loyalty. Anytime someone attempts to get you to defect from the truth that Jesus is the Christ, He was born of a virgin, He died on a tree, He went into hell, He rose on the third day, and He is coming back again, he may be a prophet or a dreamer but he is a false one. Never allow signs and wonders or even miracles to hinder you from believing that Jesus Christ is God having come in the flesh.

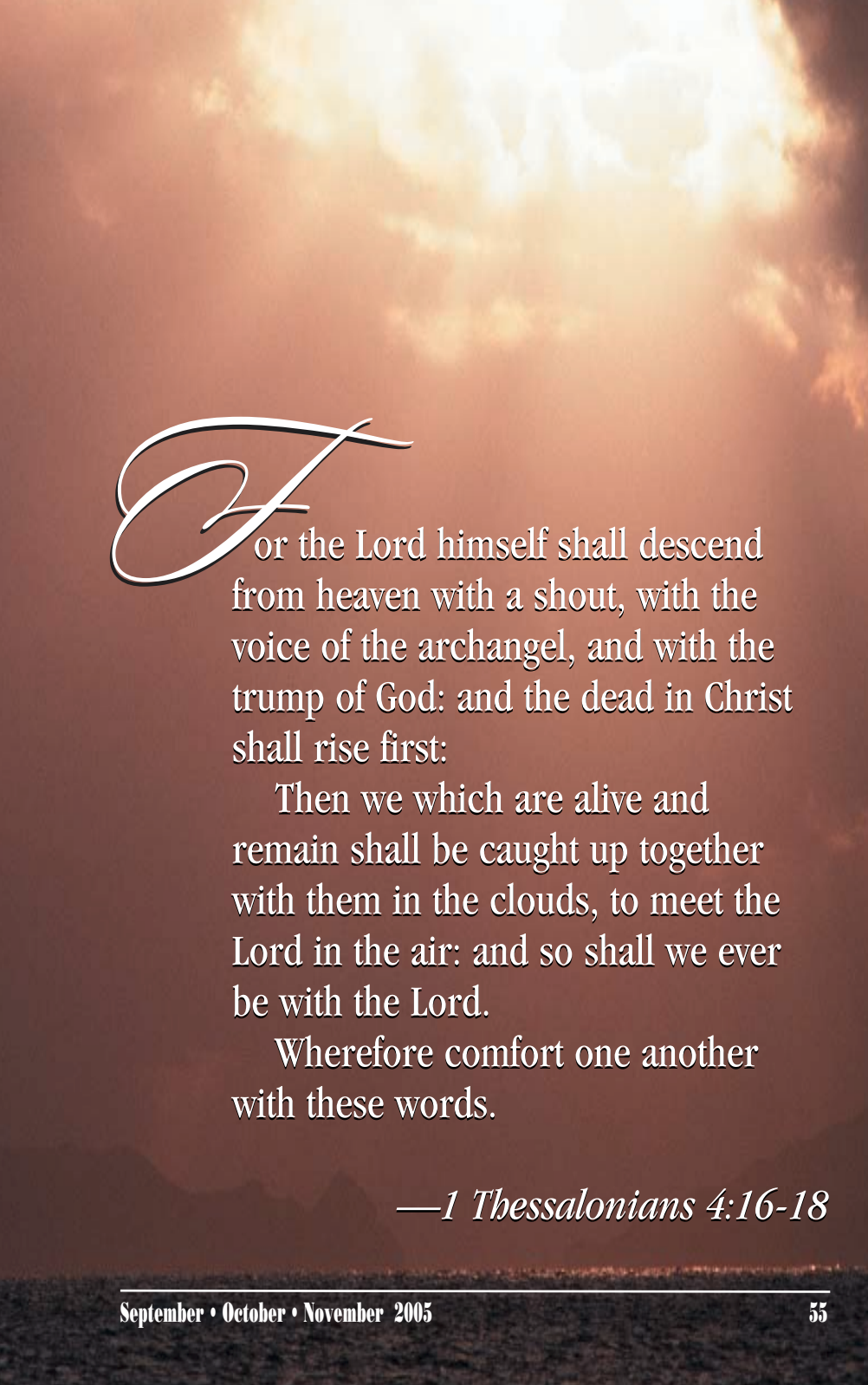
Signs and wonders can be performed by the devil and his crowd.

How are you going to know? Listen to the rest of his message to hear exactly what he is saying and, then make a choice not to listen if what he is saying is a lie. "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world" (1 John 4:2-3, NKJV).

The time has come for the believer to grow up and be aware of antichrist deceivers because many false prophets have gone out into the world.



*God guides the eagle in its flight  
to ascend far above both mountains and  
storms. God directs the eagle's course  
to soar high and, at times,  
to soar alone.*



*F*or the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

—*1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*

## Your Hand and Your Purpose Determined

Acts 4:27-28 (NKJV)—*For truly against your servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever your hand and your purpose determined before to be done.*

**T**he crucifixion of Jesus was a setup. God's hand and His purpose determined long before Gethsemane, long before Golgotha, what was to take place with Jesus.

The crowd, used to execute God's hand and God's purpose, consisted of Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the Jews. But it was God's hand that determined when, where, and how Jesus would die. It was God's hand that determined to nail Him to the cross. But because God is spirit, He used them in the natural. God determined to do this so He would not have to determine that it would happen to us.

They did not know that they were doing the will or purpose of God the Father. Had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But God knew what He was doing. Often we condemn things because we do not understand God's purpose.

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) reads, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross." What was the joy? (1) That He was going to please His Father by redeeming us. (2) He was again going to set down in a position of authority, not sit down.

He was appointed to a position of designated authority at the right hand of God so that He could be the strength we need to approach His Father. To be set at the right hand of the throne of God is not talking about reclining or resting on a chair or bench, or even a couch. Jesus, because of His obedience to death, was set by His Father in a permanent place of authority not only to worship Him but to approach Him on our behalf.

Jesus is the appointed power of God in the Universe. Receive Him and you'll receive the Father.

## Heaven, Home of All Saints

James 4:14 (NKJV)—*Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.*

I recently had to repent for some plans that I was making for a year from now.

I believe the Lord had asked me to invite a certain person to speak to us at the 25th anniversary of the church and I did.

What I forgot to do was say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that" (James 4:15).

Too often we set aside the truth that all of us are like vapor, the morning fog, and we forget that

none of us has a guarantee that we will be here tomorrow, let alone next year. It is His will to regulate our departure or our continuance. To make plans for tomorrow is both arrogant and evil, and is considered by God boasting (James 4:16).

That kind of choice clearly is a sign we have abandoned consulting with the Lord concerning His plan for our future and are leaning to our own understanding.

Psalms 39:5 reads, "Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state is but a vapor."

It grieves me when Christians become so distraught over the passing of a loved one. Death begins at birth and the only way I know to avoid death is to never be born. Since death is more sure than taxes, each of us should ask for the grace of God to live each moment and day as though it were our last.

The important thing for us to remember is to try to encourage others to believe, as with Jesus, they have a season here and a work to be done during that time and there isn't any need to stay once their task is complete.

Don't spend your life heaping up riches and not knowing by whom or how they will be spent. Keep your hope in the Lord who hears every prayer.

**... each of us should ask  
for the grace of God to  
live each moment and day  
as though it were our last.**





**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 AND BAPTISM SERVICES:

Every fourth Sunday

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 new facility  
in the Poconos!

## Directions to REDEEMING LOVE CHRISTIAN CENTER at the VILLAGE

**T**ake Route 80 West across the Delaware Water Gap (\$1.25 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.)





# Turn Your Life Around



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

## Father in Heaven,

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

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

## I Keep My Word

Psalm 89:34 (NKJV)—*My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone forth out of My lips.*

**T**his is my spiritual insurance policy from the Lord.

Since I am clear that He cannot lie, Titus 1:2, I rest in whatever proceeds from His mouth. He is never going to change what He said. Why should He? He cannot improve upon it and it was truth when He uttered it, so why would a change be necessary?

Don't you wish that you could depend upon the words of others to that degree?

We have Christian young women saying marriage vows solely for the purpose of having a legitimate baby, for they also are saying that after the baby is born they plan to divorce their spouse. That is spiritual immaturity and the Lord will not be pleased.

We need to include Psalm 89:34 in our marriage vows and stay with it. God keeps His Word. We must learn to do the same. Words are never frivolous and unimportant. That's why Mama always said, "Think before you speak."

**Never make a covenant until you understand the importance of keeping it.**

God does not deal falsely with us concerning His righteousness, His faithfulness, His love and mercy, or anything else He has promised us. Part of our growing up spiritually is to imitate Him in our character and let our word be our bond.

Train yourself not to be a covenant breaker. Never make a covenant until you understand the importance of keeping it. Let the words that proceed from your mouth mean what you say and say what you mean, then stick to it come what may.

May the God of all creation help us to know that our words are much more than sounds uttered from our mouths. They have power to accomplish and they never cease to exist until they have done what they were sent out to do.

What are you saying and do you really want what you're saying as a part of your life on a permanent basis?

Say this with meaning, "My covenant I will not break nor will I alter the word that goes out from my mouth, in Jesus' name."



## It Is Important to Recognize His Voice

*Job 33:14 (NLT)—But God speaks again and again, though people do not recognize it.*

**T**his was a statement by Job's friend, Elihu.

Elihu knew enough to be dangerous. He, like so many, convoluted Scripture by mixing truth and philosophy, truth and tradition, truth and culture, and, most of all, truth and opinion.

Truth does not need any support. It is pure and peaceable. Therefore, anything that we misuse or add to it makes it error.

What Elihu said in verse 14 is truth. God does speak again and again though people do not recognize it.

Failure to recognize the voice of God could be costly.

Failure to recognize the voice of God is a sign of immaturity and lack of discipline in spiritual things.

God's love and compassion do not allow Him to stop talking to us. He must continue to speak until His sound is as familiar to our hearing as our own voice. A part of our problem is that we compare God with anything or anyone, which means that we have our ears tuned to hear when, in fact, He is speaking to our hearts.

Our inner man hears every word that the Lord is saying and comprehends. But getting that understanding from the spirit realm to the natural takes more training. Unless and until we develop the ear of our inner man, we will often miss the still small voice of the Lord.

I often say if the voice you are hearing is driving you to do something it is not of God. However, if the voice you are hearing is leading you by gentle suggestions and your spirit man or your heart feels good about it, most likely it is the Lord. His Spirit leads you; the devil drives you.

The only time I have known the Lord to go silent on me was when I neglected to do what He had already spoken to me. After all, what is the point of Him talking if I won't listen and obey?

That is usually resolved by me repenting and agreeing to obey what He said last. Are you there yet?

# We believe the following:

**THE ONE TRUE GOD:** A triune being: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (*Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29*).

**THE VIRGIN BIRTH:** Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, was buried, was resurrected, ascended into heaven, and will return again. He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father, and is true God and true man (*Luke 1:34-35; John 1:14; Matthew 1:23; Acts 4:10; Acts 1:11*).

**THE SCRIPTURES:** The inspired, infallible, revealed written will of God (*2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb. 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23-25*).

**MAN:** Also triune: spirit, soul, and body. Created good, upright, and in the image and likeness of God; voluntarily transgressed and fell. Redemption for him is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (*Gen. 1:26-31, 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12-21*).

**THE SALVATION OF MAN:** The shed blood of Jesus Christ, grace through faith, believing in the heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and confessing that with the mouth, will result in man's salvation (*Rom. 3:24, 10:8-10; Eph. 2:8*).

**WATER BAPTISM:** An ordinance of the Church symbolizing to the world that one has died with Jesus and has been raised with Him to walk in newness of life (*Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47, 48; Rom. 6:4*).

**ETERNITY:** *Rev. 21:1-7*.



# TENETS

**THE LORD'S SUPPER:** An ordinance of the Church symbolizing the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ as the new covenant between God and man (*1 Cor. 11:24, 25, 28*).

**THE TRANSLATION OF THE CHURCH:** "Awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ..." (*Titus 2:13; 1 Thess. 4:14-18*).

**THE EVIDENCE OF THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY GHOST:** As a fulfillment of the promise of the Father by the initial physical sign of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance; for the purpose of spiritual power in public testimony and service after the New Birth (*Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8, 2:4, 10:44-46; 1 Cor. 12:1-31*).

**THE CHURCH:** The body of Christ, the home of God through the Spirit. Each believer born of God's Spirit is an integral part of the general assembly and Church of the first born which is written in heaven (*Eph. 1:22, 2:19-22; Heb. 12:23*).

**WOMEN IN THE MINISTRY:** Women are a part of the one body of Christ, which is neither male nor female with gifts differing according to the grace that is in them (*Acts 18:24-26, 21:8, 9; Gal. 3:28; Rom. 12:4-6*).

**TOTAL PROSPERITY:** Spiritual: *John 3:3, 11; 2 Cor. 5:17-21*;  
Mental: *2 Tim. 1:7; Rom. 12:2; Isa. 26:3*; Physical: *Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 8:17*;  
*1 Peter 2:24*; Financial: *3 John 2; Mal. 3:10-11*; Social: *Prov. 3:4*.

**THE MILLENNIAL REIGN OF JESUS:** *Rev. 19:11-16; 20:1-7*.

**THE LAKE OF FIRE:** *Rev. 19:20; 20:10-15*.



**O F FAITH**



## It Shall Be Blessed Forever

1 Chronicles 17:27 (NKJV)—*“Now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever, for You have blessed it, O Lord, and it shall be blessed forever.”*

**T**hat is a promise I can live with. But it was part of His covenant with David.

What is the difference? Why are some more blessed than others? What did they do that you didn't?

Most of the time, when I ask myself these questions, the usual response is that it is not because of me; it's a God thing. It's about His plans and purposes.

You and I seldom qualify for the goodness and blessings of the Lord. In fact, often when people find out what is required to experience and enjoy His goodness, some disqualify themselves.

“To whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48, NKJV). This is one of the verses that stood out to me when I became serious about my life with Jesus. I instinctively knew that the Lord's blessings toward me would not be “just because.” I knew that there would be moments when I would have to make tough choices and be willing to go it alone in Christ Jesus as my Lord.

Luke 12:41-42 (NLT), “Peter asked, ‘Lord, is this illustration just for us or for everyone?’ And the Lord replied, ‘I’m talking to any faithful, sensible servant to whom the master gives the responsibility of managing his household and feeding his family.’”

Read the verses right up to verse 48. Though the evil servant had the same opportunity as the faithful servant, he made some unwise choices. The Lord is not interested in doing more for one than He does for the other.

Our house is blessed forever when we submit to the teachings and lifestyle of Jesus. The Lord's desire is not to bless just a physical house; His desire is to bless our spiritual house where He rules and reigns.

The physical structure you live in is a building to shelter and house your real house, the new person that you have become because of Jesus. Give attention to Him.

## Jesus Rules and Reigns Forever

*Daniel 7:14 (NKJV)—Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.*

**F**olks, this is talking about none other than Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

It matters not who is in charge or how bad things get, Daniel 7:14 gives us the conclusion of God's story and it is always for our good and His glory.

This verse is for you and me but it does not exclude others. We will all serve Him. We don't have to speak the same language with our tongues as long as our hearts are the same toward Him.

His place of authority is a gift from our Father and He will rule forever. His area of authority shall not pass away or be destroyed.

I don't know about you, but I intend to be in His camp and on His team.

The election of the President in the United States occurs every four years. Elections occur at different times in other countries. At best we can have the same president for eight years which, depending on the devil's activities, is not a long time. It may be prestigious but when every day you have to deal with terrorists and wars and lack of vaccine for the elderly, it surely cannot be glamorous.

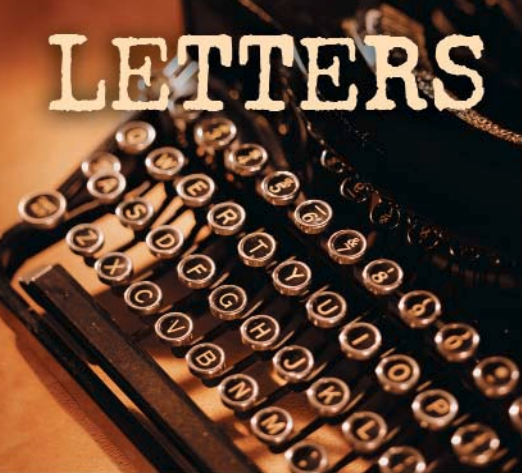
Jesus, however, was not elected. He was approved by the Father and given a government that would encompass the whole earth and it was going to be upon His shoulders. No one ever was going to displace Him and He was going to run things forever His way.

Every time I read this I get excited. The media only reports what they see and think they know.

We have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and we get it from God's Word. Since it says Jesus is going to rule and reign forever and His dominion would never be destroyed, I made my choice. I vote for Him. He makes my calling and election sure every time.

# LETTERS

# from YOU



God called me because He loved people and He wanted someone to take the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation for all who will believe. I want you to know

that I love and care about you. Most of all, please know that I am here, doing what I'm doing just because God Himself loves you.

One of the most satisfying aspects of producing this devotional, as well as continuing the various other outreaches of this ministry, is to hear the testimonies and praise reports of readers like you whose lives have been touched and transformed by the Word of God while reading what I have shared.

Each week, letters and e-mails come to my office with accounts of how people have received salvation, healing, deliverance, financial provision, and an assortment of answers to prayer as they dared to step out and act on the Word of God that they heard and received. Their letters have encouraged and inspired my heart so much, I wanted you to experience the same joy they brought to me as you read about their victories and triumphs. As you do, remember that God is no respecter of persons. What He did for them He will do for you.

Enjoy the following testimonies and don't forget to write in and share your testimony with me also.

*Pastor Sarah Utterbach*

**T**hank you so very much for the Horizons Unlimited that you send to our facility. The ladies love them.... Thank you for being a personal blessing to the ladies who are incarcerated here. To have a role model like yourself and to be able to embrace the Word that God

has placed in your hands to impart is an immeasurable blessing to them as individuals....

--K.M.

Correctional Center Chaplain

**I** listen to you every day on the radio. I am truly blessed to be

able to have a copy of Horizons Unlimited. I truly love listening to you [because] you give me hope when I feel things are at the end....

--A.G.

**I** want to be like that leprous man who came back to thank Jesus for his healing. Please accept this letter as a thank you for being obedient to your calling. Your radio ministry is penetrating through bars of iron and walls built by man. But the Word is sharper than a two-edged sword, penetrating even to divide soul and spirit.

--E.M

**I** believe the Father used you to assist me in my spiritual growth. Therefore, I thank you for your consistency in teaching the Word as well as your diligence as shepherd of RLCC. Much of what I have gained through the years came by observing you as well as listening to and doing what you shared. Thank you for being a significant part of my walk in the Lord. Your life continues to have a direct impact and influence on mine, ad all to the glory of God!

--D. F.

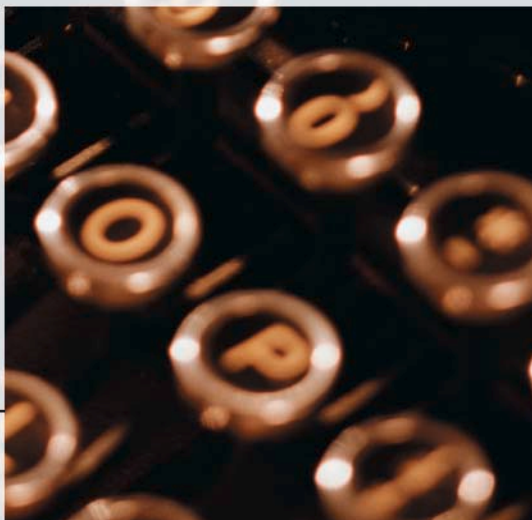
**R**eading your Insights for Each Day was a blessing to me.... We have

been so blessed reading what God has placed on your heart to put on paper; so many of the insights [shared] were very timely for my life. Thank you for your obedience to God [because] it has blessed many people in my life.

--G. E.

**A**s you can see, I'm writing you from my prison cell, where God is changing my life every day. I strongly believe that God has blessed me with this book, Horizons Unlimited, Volume 3, #2. It has been a very large part of my walk with God from day to day, and for that I am grateful for Redeeming Love Christian Center. God has anointed your ministry to reach the broken hearted as well as to restore hope to inmates, that were once lost in sin. I prayerfully ask you to send me the next book and may God continue to bless you and keep you in His love.

--D. B.



## Just Be Ready When He Comes

Mark 13:35 (NKJV)—*Watch, therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning.*

**T**he Scripture tells us that no one, not the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father, knows the day or hour when Jesus will return. My choice is to live in such a way that when

He returns I can be found ready to go with Him.

**The devil knows that he cannot stop us so he tries to delay us as much as he can.**

Think about it. If God the Father did not reveal to His Son or to His angels when He is going to return, it is

silly for you and me to speculate. I recommend that since He is coming suddenly that we be found doing our assignment.

Jesus is not suggesting that we abstain from physical sleep when, in verse 36, He says, "Lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping." Never allow the necessities or the distractions of this world to dull your sensitivity to spiritual things. Be alert to what is going on so you can stay prepared to receive Him when He comes, and, at the same time, be so detached that you are ready to go with Him, because we are the only reason that He is coming back. He is boldly and compassionately saying to all, "Watch."

I used to ask the Lord to fix, change, or correct everything and everyone that was on assignment to impede my spiritual progress.

I now realize how amusing He must have found my feeble, little prayer when, in fact, He was allowing (not causing) these things to help me flex my faith and prayer muscles in order to grow more to meet every challenge that life would bring my way.

Stay alert to what the enemy is trying to do to steal the Word sown in our hearts and, thereby, hinder God's plan in our lives.

Wake up and pay attention. The devil knows that he cannot stop us so he tries to delay us as much as he can. Make sure you say "yes" when you mean yes and "no" at other times.

## Justice Delayed Is Not Justice Denied

Psalm 94:15 (NKJV)—*But judgment will return to righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow.*

One of the major mistakes people in the United States make at election time is to vote for a man or vote by party. In this country we have the blessed privilege of voting our heart. No Christian should ever go into a polling place, close the curtain, and pull the lever without first having heard from God.

Anyone with the Spirit of God can and should discern the time we're living in. Wicked men and the spirit of lawlessness are running rampant in the earth, just as the Bible said. But that is not the conclusion of the matter, righteousness and justice will return and God's people, those who have purposed in their heart to follow Him, will follow Him and all that He stands for.

Never confuse delayed justice with denied justice. God, through His precious Son, Jesus, will deliver us. He will make the crooked paths straight. He has given us a future filled with hope in His Beloved Son who is our Savior. Make Him your Lord also.

Look at Psalm 94:21-23 and rejoice in the God of your defense.

"They gather together against the life of the righteous, and condemn innocent blood. But the Lord has been my defense and my God the rock of my refuge. God's own judgment has brought on them their iniquity and shall cut them off in their own wickedness."

This is a promise of our protection and the destruction of the wicked. We should not rejoice until or unless they come to Christ. God does not want anyone destroyed. The day of God's judgment is not a day He is looking forward to. But it will come to pass for those who will not walk the path He laid out for them or who devise ways to hurt His children. He will protect us, and reward our enemies accordingly.

Today is the day to make the right choice. Accept His Son, request His help to turn from what you have been doing and become one of His.



## Measured Forgiveness

Luke 6:38 (NKJV)—*“Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

**T**his verse is used often for financial gain but it goes much deeper than that. Seed, not just deed, is what grows and multiplies.

Seldom do we think of forgiveness as seed to be sown, but with the same degree we forgive, we determine the degree that God will forgive us. (Luke 6:37)

All of us need to be forgiven. All of us need to forgive. Think of it as investing in the future. My flesh never wants to forgive and it gladly will help me focus on and rehearse all of the ugly done to me for as long as I want to indulge in it. The same is true of you.

Jump on unforgiveness immediately with both spiritual feet and refuse to entertain an offense. You can't do it in the natural. The ill deed becomes a monster in your life that only can be killed by the Spirit of Christ. He does not go away or die except by love and forgiveness.

Colossians 3:12-13 must become our way of life, “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on [dress up in] tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you must also do.”

You would not have been asked to do this if God, who is in Christ, had not equipped you to forgive. He, in Christ, forgave you and me, now we are obligated to forgive others. (See Ephesians 4:32.)

God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, invested in us when we were not deserving of it. But He sowed the seed of forgiveness first which, once we received, we were able to reproduce toward others in need of it. Do it now so your growth will be hindered no longer. Don't forget to ask for His help.

## Next to God, Who Is the Greatest?

Matthew 18:3 (NKJV)—*“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

**T**here is no question that salvation is the first step back to God. But without a conversion experience, you can never fully appreciate what your salvation really means.

Matthew 18:4 reads, “Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” God is looking for people who will humble themselves so that He can exalt them.

We get letters daily from ministers wanting to reach the world for Christ, yet they miss the opportunity to speak to the people they work with every day. Are they not important also?

I happened to mention to a friend the possibility of her daughter marrying someone of a different race. It was one of those “Holy Blurts” because it had nothing to do with what we were talking about.

The mother said, “It’s funny you would say that. I mentioned that possibility to my husband the other day and he said, ‘God would not do that to me. He would not give me a son-in-law of that race.’” I wanted to cry because I want to believe that this father would do anything to get a person of any race saved into the kingdom, but when it came to a son-in-law he had some deep-seated emotions without realizing it.

It helped me to understand why there is little growth in him and his ministry. The gospel of Jesus Christ is for everyone and any form of prejudice is a “no-no.”

Many of us have some form of prejudice that we must deal with daily. We just need to stay honest with God and ourselves and ask for His grace to make the right choices. What are the right choices? Whatever is pleasing to Him and not our personal preferences.

Unless you humble yourself as a little child God will find limited use for you in His plan and scheme for humanity. It is examination time. I believe you can pass the test.

## Gifts With Strings Attached

Psalm 103:3 (NLT)—*He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases.*

**F**orgiveness and healing are gifts. God does not give cheap or defective gifts. He paid a high price for each of them, and they are lasting, effective, and full of power. They are valuable.

All of us know that there are certain things money cannot buy. These gifts, especially forgiveness and healing, have no price tags for us. Why? It's because once something is purchased, the price tag is removed and it is no longer for sale.

Our forgiveness and our healing are no longer for sale. They were bought with such a high price that only God could afford it. Through Jesus, God bought them, removed the price tag, and gave them as gifts to all who receive eternal life by accepting His beloved Son (John 3:16).

I don't ever recall questioning my salvation. Oh, how I needed to believe that I was saved because I had been such a first-class sinner. Therefore, I readily accepted that I was a cleaned-up, forgiven offspring of God.

When I later understood that the same price was paid for my healing as was paid for my salvation, I became blessed to live in divine health without question or doubt. I have continued to live in health for close to thirty years.

I do not doubt my healing any more than I would doubt my salvation. However, if the voice of the Lord said to me to go for medical assistance and I knew it was He who said it, I would confer with no one and obey the word to seek out help. Once you understand that it is Jesus who forgives and heals, you are not concerned about how He does it. The important thing in all of this is to become so familiar with His voice that all doubt and concern are immediately eliminated as you follow the plan of God for your life.

God has strings attached to His gifts. Yes, He gives to us freely all things. But He requires us to abide in Him as He abides in us. Our obedience to abide in Him is the string to His promises.

Obey God, and accept your healthy and eternal life today.

## Glorify God With Your Gift

1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)—*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

I have no doubt that God's pleasure is to bless His people, and He does it in so many different ways. Evidently He does not give to everyone the same way, because some receive blessings based on their faith in His promises to them and others receive gifts from Him when they do not use faith for them at all.

Of course, all of us must use our faith to continue to use and develop our gifts. And 1 Peter 4:10 says that we are to use these gifts from God to serve others. We must become administrators of His grace. We are not to hoard that grace or the other gifts He gives us, but we are to use them to serve others. We are temporary containers who continuously distribute an ongoing outpouring of His grace. So many people we encounter need to experience God's grace, and He saw fit to use us to disperse it.

Some of the most precious moments in my life were not when I was receiving. I am grateful for those times, but they do not compare to the thrilling moments of observing others' joy when I am obedient to God to bless them with what He has given me. You have to know that the gift came from God before you will be comfortable with giving it away.

Never view a giver as more spiritual than someone else. Never decide that people operating in the spiritual gifts are always in God's presence.

God can use the shallowest believer to operate in the gifts of the Spirit and perform miracles. These people may be undisciplined and out of control when it comes to denying themselves, but when the anointing is flowing they are an explosion going to happen.

Then I have seen others with the fruit of the Spirit growing and operating and manifested to the point of putting the rest of us to shame, yet with the fruit gifts in full form they never operate in ministry gifts.

What I have learned is that it matters not which gifts you have or how many. What matters most is that you administrate your gift in obedience to His direction and to the glory of God.

## Go To the Word First

1 John 5:14-15 (NKJV)—*Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

**N**o one wants to be rejected when making a request. Yet most, if not all, of us have never received all that we have petitioned of God.

What is the solution? First, we must find out what God's will is. And we find it in His Word. Second, we must know beyond a shadow of doubt that God never denies Himself.

The Father never says "no" to Jesus because Jesus never asks anything not in accordance with the will of God. We need to learn this principle to receive our desires from God. Knowing this provides us with an assurance, a confidence, and an elimination of doubt.

Third, we must rest in the fact that requests according to God's will always get God's attention. Fourth, because we do not doubt that He hears us when we ask of Him what He has already willed, we confidently know that what we requested is on its way to us. Our Father never denies Himself.

One of the wisest decisions I ever made was to stop going to God with every little thing that came to mind. Most of it was never realized, and it was affecting my faith. I thought, "Surely if I cannot get Him to give me the little stuff, there is no chance that He will give me the big request." With that kind of attitude, one could find oneself no longer making petitions. Satan knows that when we don't ask God, He is probably not going to sovereignly give us what we don't ask for.

The key for me in changing this attitude was to go first to the Word of God, locate His will regarding what I desired, and then boldly march into the throne room as a child of the King and say, "You said when we as natural parents are reminded of what we said, we seldom, if ever, do not honor our word. Father, I know You always honor Your word, so I thank You in advance for giving me what I need."

## God Knows Best

*Daniel 10:12 (NLT)—Then he said, “Don’t be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer.”*

**W**hat thrills me about this verse is that the angel gave a pattern for you and me to follow in order for our prayers to be heard. Knowing that I am heard comforts me and encourages me to believe that my heard prayer is also my answered prayer.

Even when the answer may be different than what I had hoped for, that does not bother me. If God does not answer my prayers in the way I wanted, that simply says to me that He knows something about the situation that I don’t know. Or that what I am asking for, if answered that way, could limit His plan for my life. His plan is always better than what I can see or know.

What I have learned is that God’s plan and thoughts for me are often higher and better than what I thought possible, so I have chosen to pray to understand what God knows is best.

That is how I humble myself. I used to think I knew everything that would make me happy. Now I rest in His setting the pace and the goal.

David sang a song of victory to the Lord when He delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, including Saul (2 Samuel 22:1). I have made the next two verses from that chapter my confession for the present and the future, and I believe and act like they are mine now. David essentially said of the Lord, “He is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer; in Him will I trust. He is my shield, the arm of my salvation, my high tower, my refuge, my Savior, and my rescuer from violence” (2 Samuel 22:2-3).

Daniel prayed in humility for understanding, and God heard him immediately. I believe that my prayer of thanksgiving for the manifestation of God’s presence in my life is mine now by faith in what He has already done.

Please join me in believing and trusting in the one true God who wants only His best for you.



## God Specializes in Things Thought Impossible

Luke 1:37 (KJV)—*For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

**T**he word “impossible” does not appear in the Old Testament in the *King James Version* of the Bible. Yet, the people of the Old Testament had as many challenges with their trust in God as we, the Church, have.

When the angel told Mary of Elizabeth’s pregnancy in her old age and shared “for with God, nothing shall be impossible,” Mary believed Him. She grabbed ahold of “shall be” and ran with it, claiming that what had been and was with Elizabeth “shall be” unto her also.

Never think because you have a negative condition or circumstance that you have a covenant to keep it. It didn’t matter to Jesus if a man was born blind, if a woman was bowed over eighteen years, or if a young girl died: He delivered them all. In fact, He raised Jairus’ daughter, the ruler’s servant, and Lazarus from the dead. God specializes in things thought impossible. What difference does it make to God’s ability whether you are crippled or barren, have a fever or a hangnail? *Nothing shall be impossible to God.*

Is your history so sordid and seedy that you would not want anyone to ever know? Give it over to Jesus along with yourself, and watch God restore to you the years that the locusts have eaten (Joel 2:25).

Because of your unbelief and lack of mustard-seed-sized faith to speak to the mountain-sized challenges you are facing, you think things are impossible to you. Jesus said, “Not so.” Nothing is impossible to you. When you exercise faith and speak to your mountain, it will move and nothing shall be impossible to you.

*Father, the time has come for Your children to take their rightful place in the earth, walking in all of the authority that Calvary’s sacrifice provided. It is time for us to stop thinking that anything that is in Your will for humankind is impossible to do. Without faith, it is impossible to please You. Everyone of us who names the name of Christ is empowered by Your Spirit to know what is pleasing to You, so we can please You by speaking out Your will and expecting it to be so.*

## God's Faithfulness to a Little Girl

Isaiah 40:28-29 (NKJV)—*Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.*

**T**hough as a child I could not brag about my earthly father, as some children could, I know now how proud the other children were, because my heavenly Father is the biggest, the best, and the most powerful Daddy there is.

This was not always clear to me. In fact, when I was a child, He was just “God”—and that didn’t mean much to me. I had heard very little about what was written of Him in the Bible. Unfortunately, the picture of Him others painted for me was one in which He stood looking over the banister of heaven to see whether I was good (in which case, He never bothered me) or bad (in which case, He swatted me like a fly). This painting would not have been so harmful if its artists had just told me how I could live to please God, but they didn’t. I was left with a bunch of do’s and don’ts.

Sadly, I didn’t know of the God who had no end, who had created all things, and who was not weak, weary, or worried about anything. I didn’t know that He loved and delighted in me.

When I had moments of weakness, no one ever said that God would empower me with His Holy Spirit. When the tempter’s snares were set to entrap me, I didn’t understand that God provided a way of escape. When I thought I could no longer put one foot in front of the other, I didn’t know that His mighty strength was a gift to me.

I’m still amazed today that, at that point in my life, I had heard enough to cause me to accept His Son as my Savior. Even so, I thought salvation was simply my insurance policy for the future. I wish someone had told me that His grace was sufficient for me to live holy while I was here in the earth and that He would keep me from the evil that was running rampant all around me.

*Father, thank You for Your love and Your grace. My life today is truly a manifestation of Your faithfulness to a little girl. Help me share with the children I meet that You are there for them now.*

## Gratitude Is an Act of Worship

Ephesians 5:20 (KJV)—*Giving thanks always for all things....*

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (KJV)—*In every thing give thanks.*

God is not asking us to worship Him for all the bad things that come our way. He does not do bad things to His people, and the time has not come for His wrath to be released against the wicked of the world. He wants so much for as many as will receive His Son to do so before the opportunity is shut down and His irreversible decision on their behalf is released.

God wants to find His people in an attitude of gratitude that says, "Regardless of the adversities, circumstances, and conditions pressing me beyond belief, I choose to allow my words to be a grateful language as an act of worship to Him."

Once you know the nature of God and His will for humankind, and once you know that the reason the devil has not been able to eliminate you is that God is on your side, you begin to praise Him in everything, not for everything.

Another way to look at life's negatives is to say, "Father, though You did not cause or create that awful thing in my life, I want to thank You for allowing it to take place. Because of it, I have learned a new level of endurance and perseverance that I never knew before."

A grateful language is one of the greatest weapons we can have for both offense and defense. A Spirit-controlled, Spirit-directed life is priceless because it declares His divine influence upon our hearts and His reflection in our lives.

*Dear Father God, in Jesus' name, I want to say thank You for every experience and every exposure that I have had. Each one has either drawn or pushed me closer to You. It has helped me to learn Your plan for my life and that I can rest in my relationship with You as I move about my daily tasks.*

*You have not assigned more to me than You have provided grace and strength for me to perform them in excellence, with integrity, by the power Your love working in me. May I never attempt to achieve or accomplish anything ever again without Your love as the motivation.*

## He Trusted in His God

Daniel 6:23 (NIV)—*The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.*

**M**anmade rules often cause bondage for the children of God. However, those who remain faithful to God's Word and His plans for them will be at peace in the midst of turmoil, strife, and every evil work.

On our own, we may not be able to change legislation or resist the attacks of the enemy against us. This is why we cannot depend on our earthly position to protect us. In fact, the people who really care about us may be the ones to pronounce sentences on us. That's okay because, at the same time, they may pronounce a blessing on us, as the king did for Daniel: "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" (verse 16). When they do, their agreement with God's plan is enough to cause our deliverance.

When it appears that God is not going to deliver you from the enemy's clutches, don't despair. He may get more glory by allowing you to stay in the enemy's camp awhile as he renders the enemy helpless against you. Then when others come to observe what has happened to you, they will discover no wound on you and will know that God delivered you.

The wound that guaranteed my protection was placed on Jesus at Calvary. There is no point in both of us being wounded. He was wounded for my transgression. How much more was He wounded for my deliverance?

*Dear heavenly Father, praise be to Your name forever and ever. You change times and seasons; You set up and put down kings. You give wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. You reveal deep and hidden things. I thank and praise You, O God of my fathers. I can enter into Your rest because I trust in You. I need not fear because of who the enemy is, for the battle is in Your hands. I have no personal wars to fight, for You have accepted responsibility for my care and keeping. Because Your Holy Spirit is in me, I have a keen mind, knowledge, and understanding. The ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve difficult problems is mine to help others in the state of confusion. Thank You for these gifts to help others, in Jesus' name.*

## The Highway to Holiness

Isaiah 35:8 (NIV)—*And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.*

Often people say that it's hard to be a Christian. I disagree. The hardest part of being a Christian is making the choice to be one. From that point, it becomes the work of the Holy Spirit in us to back every choice we make to obey the Word of God.

For me, the hard part was never being a Christian; it was finding other Christians to be an example for me. I had no problem running into people who would gladly tell me Christianity was the way to go, but then I would observe that they weren't going that way.

Jesus did not promise the Holy Spirit to me so that I could witness to others. He sent the Holy Spirit to me so that I would become a witness. My lifestyle—my works and deeds towards others—is to be the witness.

When I found Isaiah 35:8, I knew it was more than a great idea for a song ("It's a highway to heaven; none can walk up there but the pure in heart..."). I also knew that if holiness were the only way to walk on this "highway" and the wicked fools would never walk it, then evidently God was providing His people with what it took not just to start the journey but also to finish it.

"...Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). It's very easy to go to hell; the path is wide and appealing. But heaven and all that Jesus has provided for us are worth the discipline it takes to attain them.

*My Father God, the Creator of heaven and earth, I praise You for caring so much that You made heaven possible for those of us who were on that wide path of destruction. Thank You for allowing us to hear Your truth, which caused us to make some wise choices. Now please equip us with the necessary skills and abilities to tell and show others what You have provided for them, in Jesus' name.*

## The Holy Spirit Is Our Seal

Ephesians 1:13 (KJV)—*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

**W**hen I think of something being sealed, the first word that comes to mind is “protected.” I believe we receive protection when we receive the seal of the Holy Spirit. How does this happen? First, we hear the word of truth. Someone who is already sealed testifies of this protection. Second, we trust what we have heard. Third, our trust results in salvation—our submission to being snatched out of darkness and placed in Christ, the light and life of the world. Finally, we can only believe, or become believers, when we ask God to forgive us and then receive His forgiveness as a sign that we trust Him.

When we have done our part to trust, become saved (or voluntarily submit to Him), and believe, the Holy Spirit then comes and does the part that we can’t do. He seals us. He stamps us with God’s personal signet of security and preservation. He stops the enemy from further access to our spirits.

Oh, the devil will ring your doorbell once in a while; in fact, he may even show up in your physical house. But when he does, ask Jesus to answer your door. Then invite the Holy Spirit to bring into focus His personal signet to identify whose you are. Walk in your God-given right to kick the devil out if he has gained access through others in your house.

The most important thing you can do as a believer is to believe. Trust God as He reveals Himself through the preaching of the gospel, and expect the Holy Spirit to seal you, secure you, and preserve you. When life deals you a blow, rejoice for having been counted worthy to be tested. When you get a lemon, don’t get sour; ask the Holy Spirit to help you make some cool lemonade or a rich lemon pie. When others see that you are unaffected by the negatives that happen to everyone, they will want a drink from your glass and a slice of your pie. You set the pace.



## Insight and Understanding

Daniel 9:22 (NIV)—*He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding."*

**S**ome things God has decreed are set in motion and will not be changed, regardless of how much or how long we pray. We see in Daniel 9 that God did not change what was going to be because Daniel prayed. What He did was send a messenger to give Daniel insight and understanding of the future. Today we have the Holy Spirit to do the same thing for us.

I have accepted that there are some things I can change because of my words, but there are others that I have no power to change. I simply want to know the difference.

Insight and understanding remove the fear that often accompanies future events. Most of us do not fear the past and can deal with what's current, but the future sometimes causes our hearts to fail us.

My mother used to say, "Never cross a bridge until you get to it." In other words, deal with a matter when it's present. Many things could occur before then to alter the circumstances, and you may not have to go the way your head is taking you in advance. Why cross a bridge twice when once may be enough?

At times, God will speak to us to prepare us for future events that cannot be changed because they are part of His plan and purpose for the future of humankind. Other times, He alerts us about future events to prepare us to take our authority concerning them. Both revelations come from the Holy Spirit, and He brings us insight and understanding to distinguish between them.

*Heavenly Father, I thank You that although You are in control and aware of all things concerning Your people, sometimes You act in Your sovereignty and other times You assign Your offspring to take action.*

*We desire to grow up spiritually to operate with Your mind, Your compassion, Your interest. May our prayers not be contrary to Your plan for humankind and the future. Help us live in such union with You that nothing takes us by surprise. We believe we receive divine insight and clear understanding of all that we need to know, in Jesus' name.*

## Kept by the Power of God

Psalm 119:9 (KJV)—*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

**W**hen we speak of “kept” men and women, we usually mean someone else is the provider of their needs. Well, the Bible tells us that we are *kept* by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5).

God is our Provider; he supplies all our need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. However, God can’t keep our ways pure. That is our responsibility. We are to do it from our youth as we live according to His Word.

Parents need to emphasize to their children while they are still young that the Word of God is a roadmap and a survival manual. It is all anyone needs to live a pure and holy life. Recently the Lord said this to me: *I don’t own a library. In fact, I have only one Book, and that single Book has answers to all your questions.*

Before I did some negative things in my youth, I wish someone had asked me, “What does the Bible say about what you are about to do?” Too often we say and do wrong things because we haven’t consulted the Bible, but the choice is ours.

There are a lot of excuses being made today concerning the unacceptable conduct and lifestyles of our youth. But it is wrong not to make people accountable for what they say and do. We are not helping our youth by being tolerant of sin and wrongdoing. Sin has been around from the beginning, and the end results are still the same—distress, disturbance, discouragement, and finally death.

*Father, help us see our part in imparting truth to our youth by both word and example, in Jesus’ name.*

**Parents need to emphasize to their children while they are still young that the Word of God is a roadmap and a survival manual. It is all anyone needs to live a pure and holy life.**

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## Liberty Requires Me to Love

1 Corinthians 8:2-3 (NLT)—*Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much. But the person who loves God is the one God knows and cares for.*

I used to think my liberty in Christ Jesus was the ultimate success. I thought I could do anything I wanted to that was according to God's will and Word, and I had no responsibility to those still in bondage.

That's how I lived until I read this chapter. Verse 6 says, "But we know that there is only one God, the Father, who created everything, and we exist for him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom God made everything and through whom we have been given life."

Verses 7-9 say, "However, not all Christians realize this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated. It's true that we can't win God's approval by what we eat or avoid eating, but you must be careful with this freedom of yours. Do not cause a brother or sister with a weaker conscience to stumble."

When I found out that I was responsible for others in the body of Christ, I suddenly remembered the day I looked at our month-old son many years ago and realized that he had the potential of being a six-foot-tall, two hundred-pound human, and I was going to be largely responsible for how he developed!

While we are responsible for the development of every child given to us—spiritually and naturally speaking—at some point, regardless of what we have said or done, they have to assume responsibility for their actions. We can only trust that what we have trained them to do will continue to guide them in the future.

Never allow your knowledge to cause a weak Christian for whom Christ died to be destroyed. When we fail to focus our liberty properly for the freedom of other believers, we sin against Christ.

Today, thank God for your liberty, your life of freedom, and your knowledge. Then, thank Him for His love at work in you. Ask for His wisdom to both enjoy it as well as disperse it to other believers.

## Love Was His Purpose

1 Peter 3:18 (KJV)—*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

**A**s a parent and grandparent, I try to imagine my family loving and respecting me so much that they would submit even to death to bring me the very thing that I would have the greatest joy in. I cannot imagine that kind of human love, yet the man Jesus expressed it toward His Father in His death on the cross.

People in the world today do not want to suffer, even when they are guilty. How much more do they exhaust every avenue of appeal if they are innocent?

However, as children of God and representatives of Jesus in the earth, we should be learning the other side of God's blessings. We are to develop such a love for Him that pleasing Him becomes our primary purpose for living.

The Bible certainly requires us to do some things. But what joy, what freedom, what comfort there is in loving God not out of duty but because of the sheer ecstasy we experience! It is so easy to do what the Bible requires of us when pleasing the One we love is greater than the thrill of being pleased.

Second Corinthians 5:14 says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." The love of Christ preoccupies me; it compels me; it makes me a prisoner of His love.

*Father, please continue this marvelous work of love that You have begun within me. I would never have thought to request this kind of love on my own because I thought it was out of control and would make me vulnerable to abuse from others. I was so wrong. The truth is that Christ Jesus' love in me protects me from abuse. I have never been more in control than when I have chosen to ignore a wrong done to me. Psalm 119:165 (NIV) says, "Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble."*

*My days of offense are over because of Your deposit of love in me. Help me keep my dial tuned in to Your frequency so that the signal is not weak under attack.*

# Lust Will Make You Lose Your Footing

1 Timothy 6:6 (KJV)—*But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

**G**od did not save us through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, for our focus to be on the world's wealth.

I used to think that my personal wealth was going to finance the furtherance of the kingdom. I have since discovered that God is going to fulfill His promise to humankind whether I have money to support it or not. He may use money, but He's not limited to material wealth.

Holy living with an attitude of sufficiency translates into a devout life, which certainly does bring wealth. But it also makes us ready to be just before God. That makes us rich. God is not impressed with our personal wealth. He's not giving out any special awards for oaths of poverty either. He is looking for obedient people to cooperate with Him when His Spirit prompts them to do something.

The wealth of this world found in the hands of His people is not just for their personal pleasure. He allows them to be blessed with wealth so they can give as He speaks to them.

Leaders who see the ministry as only a means to get rich will be self-destroyed. Money is useful, but lust for it is an avenue for trouble. Some who take this lustful path lose their footing in faith completely and live to regret it bitterly.

*My Father and my God, inspire me to keep my trust in You and not in uncertain riches. You did not say that without wealth it is impossible to please You; You said that without faith, You would never be pleased.*

*I am grateful for all the finances that You provide for me to do the things that are necessary to do, but keep from me anything that could interfere with my dependency on You. I came into this world penniless, and I'll take none of this world's finances with me when I leave. Help me to appreciate the value of living a holy life in the midst of this corrupt and immoral world. I choose to be content with what You provide as I love and worship You and am used by You to serve others. I thank You for this, in Jesus' name.*

## Make Prison Productive

Genesis 39:21 (KJV)—*But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*

**A**re you in prison? Know that you are loved of God and special to Him. Consider this: He allowed you to be caught because the path you were on was leading to disappointment, depression, despair, destruction, and possibly death, and your temporary layover in prison can cause you to become productive.

Prisoners are in good company. Joseph, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Jesus were each in jail. The apostles Paul, Peter, and Silas were also prisoners with a purpose. All of these biblical people were innocent of the charges that caused them to be imprisoned. However, instead of griping and complaining, they decided to make their time in prison productive. In Acts 16:25-32, we see that Paul and Silas praised God in prison until the power of God descended and not only loosed their chains, but also those of the prisoners around them.

**Choose today to become productive. Declare yourself a prisoner with a purpose.**

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We have the freedom to make choices about what we do wherever we are. Some prisoners may be innocent. They may have just been in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong people. Since their steps are ordered of God and He promised to uphold them with the right hand of His righteousness, their prison uniforms only cover their outer beings and will be discarded one day. But while in jail, they can become robed in His righteousness.

Prisoners can choose to make their jail time misery, or they can decide to make it meaningful. Since all of us have the same twenty-four hours, seven days a week, what we choose to do with them determines the effect of every experience.

Today you may be in a prison of some sort, with no end in view. While in that prison, you can't change anything or anyone except yourself. You can make prison life a lifestyle or a learning experience. The choice is yours. Choose today to become productive. Declare yourself a prisoner with a purpose.



## Nothing to Compare It With

Hebrews 11:7 (NKJV)—*By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with Godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

Noah had nothing to compare what God was saying to him in this warning. A boat this size was never built before. There had never been a gathering of animals like this before. Rain of this magnitude had never fallen before. All he had was faith. All he needed was faith.

God seldom asks us to do the familiar and the comfortable. Obedience to what God asks you to do could benefit your entire household.

Noah accepted by faith this divinely inspired word from an invisible source because he had Godly fear or reverence for God. One of the many challenges in the world today is lack of Godly fear. I truly believe that everyone who reverences Him and truly understands who He is will have a degree of fear of Him.

For me, it was not fear of what He would do to me if I did not obey Him. It was fear of not knowing and not experiencing His benefits and His blessings.

So what if you have never seen a thing like it before! What is the Lord speaking to you? What is He trying to accomplish through you for the benefit of others?

Are you being asked to do something unique and contrary to what is the "norm"? Pay close attention, it is probably God.

Will it spare you and your family? Will others benefit from your obedience? Most of all, will God get glory from it?

The fact that a thing has never been done before does not disturb God. His grace is new every morning. He delights in taking the foolish things of this world to confound the wise and the mighty. When He wants to create something, He often starts with nothing.

Do that thing now and you will be known as an inventor or a co-creator. Are you getting the message?

Unless we make a choice to operate in the mind of Christ and to exercise the gift of wisdom He brings, we'll be no better off than any other "village idiot." Make a choice today to exercise your gift of God's wisdom. When you do, the guarantee of His promises is yours—all the time.

—Sarah W. Utterbach

## SKILLFUL AND GODLY WISDOM

*Wisdom is more precious than rubies; and nothing you can wish for is to be compared to her.*

LENGTH OF DAYS *is in her right hand, and in her left hand are riches and honor.*

HER WAYS ARE HIGHWAYS *of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

SHE IS A TREE OF LIFE *to those who lay hold on her; and happy (blessed, fortunate, to be envied) is everyone who holds her fast.*

—Proverbs 3:15-18, *The Amplified Bible*

## Obedience Stabilizes Your House

*Luke 6:46-47 (NKJV)—“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like.”*

A person obedient to God’s Word builds his “house” having dug deep into the Word and laying a foundation that will take him back to the Word for the challenges life brings. And life brings them to all of us.

I was fortunate to learn early that obedience carries with it rewards and disobedience carries with it consequences. We often blame the devil for some things that happen to us when, in fact, it

**Jesus is not impressed with us calling Him “Lord, Lord,” then refusing to do what He teaches.**

is disobedience to what we know that creates the problems we have.

Luke 6:49 reads, “But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth

without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of the house was great.”

I realize now that during the time of physical attacks on my husband’s body the stability of our lives and ministry was demonstrated because we had laid a solid foundation in tranquil times. We did not just hear the words of Jesus, we did them. When the storm, flood, and stream arose, they were not a match for the foundation that we laid on the Rock, Christ Jesus. We had not allowed His words to be something superficial that tickled our ears. We dug deep in peacetime. It is a whole lot easier to dig when things are quiet than it is when they are vehemently beating against you.

Jesus is not impressed with us calling Him “Lord, Lord,” then refusing to do what He teaches. He knows that He is our Lord when our lives show His teaching as the things around us fail and fall into a collapsed state. Years of experience have taught me not to expect to grow apart from having God’s Word as my foundation.

Obedience stabilizes your house and prolongs your life. Why? God can use you and your obedience.

## Provisions Come from the Provider

Hosea 7:14 (NKJV)—*They did not cry out to Me with their heart when they wailed upon their beds.*

**M**ost of the desperation in our lives is allowed to move us closer to God. Instead, we often turn to others for help forgetting that God, and God alone, is our only source.

God may use people to relieve us, but they are never to be confused with God, our help. Thank God for every person He uses to aid us in getting us to where He wants us to be, but never allow the focus to be placed on them. Then when God moves them on or wants to use someone else we're not so attached that we cannot release them or so blind that we cannot see that He is including others to complete His work in us.

The same is true if you are the one being used of God. Never allow yourself to become so attached to anything or anyone God is trying to improve that you see yourself forever involved with them. We all have a season when God uses us concerning others and we need to know when that season is over.

Respect and honor should be to anyone that God uses to help us, just remember not to leave Him to follow them and all will be well. Our cry must always be to Him with our whole heart and He will always respond. He is the provider and our prayer to Him will be answered the closer we get to Him.

God is always interested in blessing the body of Christ. He wants to provide, extend mercy, show compassion, and direct us along a path that is lit to show us the stumbling blocks trying to prevent our progress. He is not going to remove the stumbling blocks and obstacles. He is going to provide His Word as the lamp to our feet, showing us His way.

God gave us the power to be led, not by our flesh, but by His Spirit. Fix, with God's help, what needs to be fixed in your life, but never pray for His provision then remove yourself from the provider.

## Seed Sown Is Not Always Fruitful

Luke 8:5 (NKJV)—*"A sower went out to sow his seed."*

**T**he God-given purpose of all seed is to be fruitful. It is to reproduce but it has to be sown first. Seeds are not to be hoarded or sown where they are in danger of being trampled, devoured, withered, or choked. Seeds need good, rich, moist soil to be fruitful.

The sower has the responsibility of knowing something about the soil prior to sowing his seed. Failure to get proper information can result in wasted seed, and this includes ministries. Seed that falls on rocks produce for the moment but will not produce lasting fruit. Fruit that benefits others provide additional seed for future reproduction.

Seed will grow in the midst of thorns. However, the thorns will continue to grow and eventually strangle perfectly good seed meant to produce.

According to Jesus the seed is the Word of God and will produce when properly used. However, anyone who hears the teachings of God's Word and does not seek for the understanding of what they heard is what we call "wayside" Christians. They hear it but do not know what it means.

The devil robs them quickly before they can believe it in their hearts and be positively affected by it. He knows that if you ever get an understanding of what God is saying to you in His Word, he, the devil, will have no further influence over you.

Spiritual immaturity is a sign of natural immaturity. Some Christians hear the Word of God, believe on it, and begin a fruitful life but they get waylaid along their journey because they become flesh-led instead of Spirit-led. Things happen in their lives that cause them to forget that Jesus is their burden bearer and they try to handle it themselves.

Testing helps to determine what you are all about and is not unique to a few Christians. God's Word was never intended to prevent stuff from coming. It was given to prepare you to better deal with it when it does come.

## The Battle

Galatians 1:6 (NKJV)—*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel.*

**T**here is a fierce and ongoing conflict between our lower nature, the flesh, and our recreated spirit. Our flesh has to be trained or retrained to follow the indwelling Spirit of God. Our lower nature is comfortable with sin and our recreated spirit is awaiting our submission to His control so that we can learn to walk in the Spirit pleasing to God.

We cannot kill the flesh because it is where we live. However, we can die to the flesh and its influence, and to its passion to satisfy what we want for the moment. The flesh cannot be satisfied for more than a moment before it drives you to look for something more. Big is never big enough, good is not good enough, and whatever we thought we needed to make us happy is always the next thing or another person. It is Jesus alone that is our satisfaction.

When we became born again and with our mouth accepted Jesus as both Savior and Lord, we hooked up with the supernatural.

Our lives cannot be content with the weak, natural, or carnal things of the present age we live in whose dictator is satan.

Christians often speak of how hard it is to walk the Christian walk. I agree. It is hard if you accept the call without the commitment. There is nothing more difficult for a Christian than to be still dabbling in sin. There just isn't a mix.

The aim of sin is to destroy the move of the Spirit of God in His children that will provide life and life more abundantly. "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10, NKJV). The battle in the spirit realm will always exist because as long as we are in the flesh we cannot please the Lord.

God will never allow you, as a Christian, to be happy or comfortable with sin, so give it up NOW.

**There is nothing more difficult for a Christian than to be still dabbling in sin. There just isn't a mix.**

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## The Immoral Woman

Proverbs 7:4-5 (NKJV)—*Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call understanding your nearest kin, that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words.*

**T**he devil could care less how many love affairs you get involved in or how much you allow yourself to be seduced with flattery so long as you refuse to accept that he is the "immoral woman," the liar whose words will prevent you from walking in the truth of God's promises to you.

The devil and his deceit can only be discerned by the wisdom of God in us. Calling understanding our nearest kin means simply that without understanding of the God-given wisdom in us our choices will be wrong and off.

How many wonderful, successful, educated people do you know who once served the Lord with zeal, but allowed themselves to listen to teaching and flattery that fed their egos, and today their lives are shipwrecked with some not even serving the Lord?

Repeating the words, "Wisdom, 'You are my sister and understanding, you are my nearest kin,'" keeps these forces stirred up in you so anything contrary to the Word of God and plan of God for your life will be rejected immediately.

There would not be a need to talk about the necessity for wisdom or understanding to keep us from immoral companions if women were the only immoral and flattering people in the world. Men often allow themselves to be used in this way. Satan influences both genders; therefore, God's Word is for both. God wants His wisdom and His understanding to influence both His male and His female offspring and the devil knows that. Both genders are to keep His Word and treasure His commands in us.

We get the best results when both male and female pay attention to His promises. When our fingers turn the pages of the Bible continually, to read, understand, and apply it, then our hearts, which are no longer made of stone, will find that each word is indelibly impressed and imprinted there to activate His wisdom and His understanding.

## The Wisdom of God Is Better than Money from Man

1 Corinthians 2:4 (NKJV)—*My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of the power.*

**E**very evangelist, prophet, or prophetess that comes to town will use this verse to get you in position to receive when they lay hands on you. Some do receive, but what Paul is saying is that the demonstration of the Spirit and the power are in you taking God's wisdom, not man's, and applying it consistently to your life. When you do this, you can lay hands on yourself and your loved ones, and healing will take place.

The laying on of hands is scriptural and many receive healing, deliverance, or release. But they can only retain it when the wisdom of God's Word is their foundation.

When you recall the promises of God spoken and preached to you and you get relief and deliverance, God's Spirit and His power are at work and you become persuaded that it is His Word in you that gets the job done.

There are those in the ministry who want contracts signed before they agree to come to you. They want guaranteed monies and attendance or they won't come. This is not scriptural and eventually will cost them their anointing.

Money is needed and should be used to spread the Gospel and bring relief to the poor; it is never to be reserved and hoarded in the hands of those who teach and preach the Gospel.

Paul never charged or refused an opportunity to preach. In fact, it was the Holy Ghost who forbade him to go into certain places. What he did was teach the church their responsibility toward visiting preachers.

We, as spiritual leaders privileged to be anointed and called to preach, need to stop building empires that, it seems, can't trust the Lord to support. I am not suggesting we accept every invitation. I am suggesting we do not refuse to go where the Holy Spirit leads though not a penny may be given. Man has kept money intended for men. God has met every need of our ministry and personal lives.

## Though They Saw My Work They Tested Me

Psalm 95:9 (NKJV)—*When your fathers tested Me, they tried Me, though they saw My work.*

**A**t some point, God should not be required to prove Himself to us anymore. We threaten our own security and safety by refusing to believe God's promises to us.

The devil gets blamed or accused of a lot more than he is capable of doing. We give him too much credit for the activities of our lives.

God, not the devil, is ordering our steps because He is the only one with the plan for us to succeed. Don't find yourself in the enemy's territory because you followed your flesh and not your spirit. Refusing to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit is not the devil's choice, it is ours.

God was grieved forty years with the children of Israel. This means that He was disgusted with them because they would not accept the physical evidence of His love and faithfulness toward them. They were not required to live by faith as we are. They had the Red Sea experience, the manna in the wilderness, the Jericho wall to fall without a single person leaning against it. I could go on and on but you get the picture

How many times does your spouse have to prove his love or her love for you until you believe it?

God said, "It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways" (Psalm 95:10, NKJV). He did not kill them but in His disgust He became angry and declared that they would not enter into His rest. (Psalm 95:11)

Entering God's rest means:

- He gives me sanity among the insane.
- He gives me sense in the midst of chaos.
- He gives me patience in the middle of anxiety.
- He gives me love among the unlovely and the evil.

Today, if you hear His voice, pay close attention, and purpose to perform. Do not allow rebellion and a desire to do your own thing cause the callus of disobedience to form a hard crust around your heart which is testing Him. The results are costly and deadly.

## What Did I Say?

Proverbs 22:17-21

**I** am Wisdom! Every word that I utter to you will make you wise when you listen intently to me. Because of my love and my plan for you there is no need to beg me to speak to you, you merely need to pay closer attention.

*I am Spirit, therefore, I relate to you spirit to spirit. My voice is distinct from the voice of your flesh. Your body will take you in the opposite direction from where I want you to go.*

*Your mind is your responsibility. I would not have told you to renew it if it was not in need of attention and construction.*

*Train your heart to hear my truth. You will find what I say to you agreeable and delightful.*

*Revelation is your daily diet. I keep nothing from you that you need to know on any given day. I will never withhold from you what is needed to make your day successful.*

*The advice I have for you will make you cunning so that I can make you know that my words are truth. They are stable and solid and every one that you share will provide the hearer with what they need for every circumstance.*

*Listen not to anyone else nor be moved by the fads of today. I am the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

*Your past is behind you and it did not defeat you because of my words to you. Your future is not in my hands. It is in your mouth. What you utter today will become your habitation for tomorrow.*

*Guard well your heart. Never allow bitterness or unkindness to enter because those things quickly accumulate, and the abundance of them will proceed from your mouth and your words will determine your future.*

*I have more for you to do and because your words have power to create and to destroy, I have waited to see if you understood what you could cause in life.*

*I am convinced that I can release to you more things because, as your trust has grown in my truth, my truth has grown in you.*

*Always ask yourself ahead of time, "What did I say?"*

## Who's to Blame?

Proverbs 5:14 (NKJV)—*"I was on the verge of total ruin, in the midst of the assembly and congregation."*

**A**ttending church faithfully is not a guarantee for victory, prosperity, or divine health, if you fail to adhere to and apply to your life the Word of God that you hear.

It is important to attend the assembly and fellowship with the congregation because they can be used by God to encourage you in your Christian walk. All of us need that. But anyone who does not adhere to the Word of God taught cannot succeed in spiritual matters because they are rejecting God's Word. One either rejects God and listens to the devil, or rejects the devil and listens to God. Those are your only options.

It is easy to blame the devil and others when we find ourselves in circumstances that are less than favorable. The truth is we are to blame for not choosing God and His best for us. It means giving up some things we thought we enjoyed. It means changing relationships and refusing to go places and looking at things our eyes should not be observing. Salvation is free but living the Christian life will cost you and, if you know what I know, you will gladly pay.

Like many of you, I had to come to the brink of disaster before I yielded to the promptings of the Lord. I was in the assembly and I fellowshiped with the congregation thinking that what I was doing would keep me safe from the enemy's influence.

I prided myself on being able to take care of myself and do for myself whatever I thought needed to be done. I was strong and intelligent and treated others as I wanted to be treated, but I was spiritually deformed and empty. I failed to apply the Word of God to my life that I had been taught.

You do not have to arrive at the verge of total ruin before making the right choice to serve the Lord. Today, say this with me, *"Dear Lord, I am a sinner, please forgive me. Lord Jesus, come into my heart and live Your life through me. Amen."*

## You and Me, Lord

Hebrews 12:13 (KJV)—*And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

**D**oes the path you are on sometimes seem barren? Stop looking for a crowd to join you on your journey. Jesus ministered to multitudes, as well as individuals. The Lord spoke to me one morning and said, "It is not so much the direction that you are going; it is being on the right path."

Your right path may take you in many directions, but it will always lead you to where you are supposed to go. There have always been those on assignment from God to do the unique and unusual. We never know if and when we are to step out into a path never before trodden. Safety is not in many numbers; it is two in one: God in you.

There is nothing worse than trying to include in your call someone who is not assigned. God has never needed crowds to fulfill His plan. John the Baptist was the only one on assignment to be the voice crying in the wilderness with the message "Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." Yes, Jesus worked with the disciples, but John was the only one assigned to get the ball rolling.

Most people would rather be echoes than a voice. However, moving forward with God may mean taking a different track than those around you do. Frances Roberts was divinely inspired to write, "Others may actually be going forward on the very path that would be for thee a retreat. They are not responsible to give me the kind of service I ask of thee."

To some, it would seem that you are in a rut. I pray that you are because this course of conduct is so superior to what the masses are doing. Please don't imitate what others are doing because it appears to be popular for the moment. For you it could be compromise. Never let the lack of a crowd sway you from the path that God has chosen for you. For you it is not lonely; it is simply uncrowded. Learn to be grateful to the Lord for helping you to see that at times it will simply be "You and me, Lord. You and me."



# Salvation Through Faith in Jesus Christ

Galatians 3:26 (NLT)—*So you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

**S**ome teach that everyone is a child of God, period. They do not teach that the only way to the Father is through faith to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Satan and the love of money have blinded them to the nonnegotiable Truth of God's Word and His plan of salvation.

In his letters to the brethren at the church in Ephesus, Paul says, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14-15, KJV). This does not include unbelievers or the unsaved. The same is true of Ephesians 4:6, which says, "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." This is written to Christians and not to people who are unwilling to accept Jesus Christ of Nazareth as their Lord.

God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4, NKJV). "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9 NKJV). This is the will of God, and it will never be different.

His will is to allow men, women, boys, and girls to make the choice. We must choose to be His children, or we must choose to be lost forever.

Whatever you do, tell everyone—especially those under the impression that all of humankind are children of God—that the only way is to accept His Son and to become His child by faith. We are all His creation, but we are not all in relationship with God as sons and daughters. The goodness of God leads us to repentance. Repentance is reversing your thinking and your deeds. Right now, make the choice to reverse any thinking that does not line up with the Word of God. Your eternal future depends on it.

## Satisfaction Doesn't Cost A Dime

Genesis 43:1 (NLT)—*But there was no relief from the terrible famine throughout the land.*

Since money is no more than a medium of exchange, it has no value if what we need or desire is unavailable. When Israel sent his sons to Egypt the second time to purchase corn to eat (Genesis 43:2), he also asked them to tote double money in their hands, as well as the money previously returned to them on the last try (verse 12).

Israel's sons obviously were not lacking in funds. However, in a severe famine, money does not feed the hungry. In fact, in this story, Benjamin—not money—was the medium of exchange.

The weekly news usually tells how many millions of dollars new movies have brought in. I always smile and say, "Even in this 'slow' economy, people have this excess money to attend films."

No, the famine in our land is not for food. It is as Amos 8:11 (KJV) says: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord."

Looking around, I see money everywhere. Awhile back, a cruise ship left New York harbor for a trip around the world. The minimum cost per person for the trip was \$25,000, and the maximum was \$375,000. While I would have enjoyed the trip, I longed more to tell the passengers on board that if they were not believers, they would still have a hunger for something when they returned—and His name was Jesus.

I live well, but it is not because of where I live. It is because of "Who" lives in me. The one who lives in me will go wherever we go.

I never have to run to and fro, seeking to satisfy the spiritual famine I once experienced. Money certainly did not satisfy what I needed, only Jesus did. God gave Him as a free gift to everyone who believes, and He is alive forever.

I still enjoy many creature comforts, but my famine was over when Jesus became my all in all. I simply sought first His kingdom and all of His righteousness, and I did not spend a dime to get Him.

## Seek the Lord and See a Turnaround

2 Chronicles 33:12 (KJV)—*And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.*

**M**anasseh was made king at the young age of twelve. He ruled for fifty-five years, but not in a manner that pleased God. Israel never would have gone into exile if Manasseh had listened to God, but he led the people to do more evil than did the pagan nations that God had destroyed (verse 9).

When the people in the Old Testament ignored God's warnings, God sent powerful enemies against them. In the New Testament, because of Jesus' intercessory prayer in John 17, He no longer sends enemies against us. We are the body of His Son, and He will never allow Jesus to be injured or wounded again.

Of course, when we willfully disobey, our faith to believe is not activated to appropriate the Lord's blessings and benefits. But our never-ending covenant with God always brings us back to Him.

Things changed for Manasseh when, in deep distress, he sought the Lord with a humble heart. God always hears prayers from humble hearts, and He will restore your losses so that you will know and realize that the Lord alone is God (2 Chronicles 33:12-13).

Don't see your profession or position as your achievement. God has given it to you. In order to maintain it, you must honor Him. Don't be a hardhead and refuse to heed God's warnings. He does not make requests. He commands us so that He can bless us.

Thank God, even though we mess up and ignore His words, His unfailing love will restore everything when we humble ourselves, pray, and acknowledge Him as the one and only.

Are you tired of counting your losses instead of your blessings? If so, then give due respect to the Almighty God. It doesn't matter how much you've blown it. What matters is that God loves you too much to let you succeed without Him.

Are you comparing your situation to others'? Don't look at the world's wealth. You don't see their tears and torment over trying to keep it.

If you are in deep distress, seek the Lord—and see a turnaround in your life.

## Servants Stay With Their Master

John 12:26 (NKJV)—*If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.*

**I**n this verse, Jesus very clearly makes a promise that no one can revoke or prevent. However, it is conditional.

Yes, the Father honors anyone who serves the Son, but servants stay with their Master. Don't call yourself a servant of the Son if you spend all of your time attending to someone else's demands. A housekeeper does not show up for a paycheck at one home if she keeps another house.

Jesus said, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also...." Jesus was essentially saying, "If you serve Me and you are where I am, then when I need you, I will not have to go looking for you to serve Me."

We need to ask ourselves this question: "Do I want the Father's honor?" If we answer "yes," then the next question is "Where am I spending my time? Am I serving a human who never seems to be satisfied, or are my efforts for Jesus uppermost in my thought life?"

My housekeeper does not wonder what I want done or the way I want it; she knows because I have specifically communicated these things to her. She does things exactly as I ask her to. In addition, she is willing to make changes as I request them.

Consequently, I not only pay her, but I also reward her above and beyond her salary. If I can do this as a human "master," how much more will God the Father reward anyone who serves His Son?

The "here and now" benefits I have received from the Father since committing to serve, follow, and be with His Son are almost more than I have room to contain. And the hope of the future reward is beyond my ability to fully comprehend. However, I don't serve His Son for the reward He promised. I serve His Son because He first loved me and taught me how to apply His love to others. Indeed, loving and serving others is one of the best ways to serve the Lord Jesus.

Human recognition and honor do not begin to compare with honor from the Father. Will you serve Him today?

## Sincere Words Are Priceless

Jeremiah 15:19 (KJV)—*Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.*

I am occasionally amazed at the multi-millions of dollars people will spend on what is deemed rare.

He who has the most toys does not win. He who understands one's authority and the power of one's words wins.

God said to Israel, "Stop speaking with a forked tongue. Stop speaking faith and fear from the same mouth. Stop creating and destroying with your words."

The rare, the prized, and the valuable are not the things we possess; they are the words we speak and believe. The things we purchase or receive as gifts from humans may have a dollar value placed on them, but their value is subject to change.

Our spoken, faith-filled, sincere words are priceless. They are powerful and creative, and not one of them is without significance. This verse is telling us that we can only speak for God when we speak the rare, the prized, and the valuable words rather than those that shake in the wind. We cannot have morally loose, worthless words in our vocabulary.

In the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons" (Luke 15:11). However, verse 24 reads, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again...." The world called him a prodigal because of his actions, but his Father never called him a prodigal. His dad called him *dead*, then he called him *alive*, but he never ceased to call him son.

When we speak what God has said, we are His children with the treasures and wealth of our Father. When we speak that which is wasteful, unfruitful, and causes to scatter, we are still His children but we lack understanding of what we say, which is without profit.

*Father God, help me stay sensitive to what proceeds from my lips. I remove worthless, vile, and morally loose words from my vocabulary, for I am justified or condemned by the words of my mouth. Forgive me for all the words I have spoken that are contrary to Your written Word. I call them down now, in Jesus' name.*

## Spirit-Controlled Energies

Romans 8:9 (NLT)—*But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you.*

**A**s believers, we are not to be driven by our human emotions, desires, and energies. We are to allow the Holy Spirit in us to control them.

Had I known and been taught the meaning of this verse as a child, I could have avoided a lot of garbage in my life. For me, accepting Jesus as a seven-year-old simply meant that I would go to heaven when I died. I had no immediate plans to die, so I thought I didn't need to be concerned about my new experience for some time to come.

No one told me that the new birth provided me with the power to resist temptation or to handle the challenges that life brings both the saved and the unsaved.

I'm not saying that anyone gave me a license to sin or do wrong. What happened was worse, in my opinion. The spiritual leaders I looked to for direction either did not know for themselves or were unable to put into practice the principles of being controlled by the Spirit.

Energy out of control is destructive. Credit card abuse, substance abuse, lingering lust, anger, fear, and even human love are all energies that must be submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit. No one can earn, inherit, or illegally gain enough money to pay for credit card abuse. Substance abusers can become murderers without ever intending to be so. Allowing lust to linger in your thoughts will result in action leading to death, unwanted pregnancy, or dissolved marital relationships. Anger out of control is like a speeding car with no brakes, driven by a blind person. Fear will cause you to hurt innocent people, as well as yourself. Love without limitation will create idol worship and stifling relationships; this kind of love turns people against God when the object of their affection is suddenly absent or removed in death.

*My Father and my God, keep me mindful of Your Holy Spirit in me to help me stay balanced in the energies that each of us is presented with. You alone can be trusted with controlling my emotions. I release my unrestrained love only for You at all times, in Jesus' name.*



# You'll Take Care

## SONG POEM

Blessed Jesus, we are waiting just to hear  
Your voice

As we've grown in grace and love we've learned  
to make the choice

To wait until direction comes, then let You lead  
the way

We won't worry, we won't fret

We'll take a little time to pray

While we're waiting, we will feed upon  
Your blessed Word

Psalms, the Gospels and the Prophets,  
Paul's letters and Proverbs

When we see Your perfect will in those old  
hallowed lines



# of Me

*by Clinton H. Utterbach*

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We will obey each single word and complete  
Your grand design

We remember that the lilies toil not,  
neither do they spin

Somehow You always provide for them again  
and again

So, Father, since You are concerned about the  
least of these

I have assurance that You'll take care of me  
I have no doubt that You'll supply my need  
And on Your loving kindness I'm going to feed  
I will ever offer praise to Thee  
I have assurance that You'll take care of me

## Stop Robbing God

2 Chronicles 31:10 (NIV)—*"Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the Lord, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the Lord has blessed his people, and this great amount is left over."*

**I**t would be foolishness to walk up to me, stick a gun in my ribs, rob me, and then ask me to bless you. Yet people do this to God all the time.

Failure to give God His dime on every dollar (not just salary), is equivalent to robbing God. Lack in your life is not God's will, but unless you sow what already belongs to God, your harvest is blocked. The measure we sow is the measure we will reap.

God does not even extract our seed: He gives us seed to sow, then gives us bread to eat (2 Corinthians 9:10). Too many of God's children are eating the seed along with the bread. Never eat your seed, especially the last of your seed. When God's children bring their contribution to the temple, these verses say there will be enough to eat with plenty—not just a little, but plenty—to spare. Why? Because God blesses seed brought to the temples as well as the carrier of the seed, and He blesses them to such a degree that great amounts will be left over.

### **The measure we sow is the measure we will reap.**

Join me today in a commitment to obey what God requires of His children. Then watch Him do what He loves to do: to manifest Himself to us in the form of continued blessings to us. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father above (James 1:17).

Make a decision to stop robbing God. Give Him His dime, and watch your ninety cents go further and last longer. It works, but it starts with a commitment. I encourage you to make that commitment today so you can cross the line of having enough and move over into a position of having plenty to spare.

## Trust God in Everything

Daniel 3:18 (KJV)—*But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

The day is quickly approaching when we will be tested so that what is in our hearts will be known. Now is the time to settle in our hearts how we will respond during that test. We should daily rehearse our response and call on the Holy Spirit to assist us with everything so that approaching Him in the midst of disaster will not be foreign to us. God our Father is concerned about everything that concerns us, so we can cease from trying to figure anything out in our own heads.

Stop waiting for what you consider the “major stuff” to happen; it’s all minor to God. However, He considers it a major thing when His children bring everything to Him in prayer.

Aren’t you pleased when your children love and trust you enough to talk to you about whatever is on their hearts and minds? Sometimes we parents are able to do it, and sometimes we’re not. Yet our children keep on believing in us; their love does not wane. How much more should we be able to believe in and love our Father, who is able and willing to respond to our faith in Him? He is the good God.

*Dear Father God, I know You are able. I also believe that You are willing to keep me from the evil in this world (John 17:15). Therefore, if You decide that for Your plan deliverance is not the order of the day, then know, my Father, that I love You and will love You and will never bow down to worship or serve any god except You, the one true and living God.*

*I sow the seeds of these words this day because I have within me the Greater One to cause it to be so. The Hebrew boys had a measure of Your Spirit on them, and You did not fail them. I have You in me; I am Your body. Since “no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it” (Ephesians 5:29), how much more will You love Your body, Your church? Thank You, Father, for Your love and faithfulness to me. In Jesus’ name I say and pray it. Amen and amen.*

## Unauthorized Vengeance Will Destroy You

Psalm 137:8 (NLT)—*O Babylon, you will be destroyed.  
Happy is the one who pays you back for what you have done  
to us.*

A natural human reaction is to be appalled at inhumane acts against anyone; such acts go crosswise to our spirits. When these things happen, our pain is real and what we feel is not wrong. We must be sure, however, that when we call out to God for His will to be done, we leave the weapon of revenge to Him to wield.

A person may have been highly trained in the martial arts. Another person may have awards for being a sharp shooter. No one, however, has been trained by the Spirit of God to wield the weapon of vengeance.

God fulfilled the prophecy of Babylon's destruction because of His vengeance on behalf of His covenant people. However, Calvary and the shed blood of Jesus are the new prophecy that we are to experience.

I don't like violent acts and pain any more than anyone else, but I dislike hatred, bitterness, and anger even more. I don't believe I have the right to ask God to destroy anyone. I do believe, however, that I have the right to request His defense and protection.

How He defeats the work of the enemy is none of my business. I just know that He will make everything right. My prayer is for His grace and mercy to sustain me as I wait on Him to fix everything for me. We don't have to pray for the wicked to be punished; God has already promised that. He will be happy to pay the wicked back for what they have done to us. I am willing to be happy with what makes Him happy. He will do what is just for all concerned.

Thank God that we have not been given weapons of revenge to use against anyone. Unauthorized vengeance will cost us dearly. Just look at the conclusion of those who threw the three Hebrew boys in the furnace, and the final punishment of Daniel's enemies.

Put down any tool that is not going to dispense God's love, for it will ultimately destroy you also.

## The Wait Will Be Worth It

Habakkuk 2:3 (NLT)—*But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, wait patiently, for it will surely take place. It will not be delayed.*

No promise of God has ever been late. God has used this verse to stabilize me over the many years that I have had to exercise my faith for various things. I don't recall exercising my faith for personal things, but God has had to remind me of this verse for the work He has called me to.

Everything God has planned for you will not occur instantly, but it will not be delayed or denied. His is a good plan for you, and good things take time sometimes. As *The King James Version* says, "Though it tarry, wait for it."

The waiting will be worth it. Each day of your life, you are closer to this promise to you and His plan for you. It may seem as if the winter of your life is longer than usual, but it is not. It is simply an opportunity for you to enjoy the diamond ice and the ermine snow of this season that is covering your springtime fulfillment of tomorrow.

God would not have promised you something that He did not plan to fulfill for you. Wait. Did it ever occur to you that the slow, steady, and sure work that is taking time is not being performed on the plan but on you? Wait. God cannot waste the vision by giving it to you too soon. You must be ready to receive it when it arrives. Wait. It will surely come, and it will not be behind time.

Stop watching the clock, the hands will appear to never move. Stop staring at the pot, a watched pot never boils. Focus your eyes on Jesus.

Remember where you were; then look at where you are. You are being positioned so smoothly that you are not aware of the gradual change that has already occurred. As you submit yourself to His schedule and patiently wait for the fulfillment of His plan, you will find that you are closer than when you first began. His promise to you will never be late. Wait.



## What Are You Working For?

Isaiah 2:17 (NIV)—*The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day.*

**M**an's arrogance allows him to get involved in superstition, divination, and idol worship (Isaiah 2:6), but it will not matter in the end. The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all who are proud, lofty, and self-exalted. He will arise to shake the whole earth, and anyone not anchored in Him through Jesus Christ and according to His Word will be humbled. Verse 20 says, "In that day men will throw away to the rodents and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship."

I grieve for believers who have little or no time for God. They rely on their *relationship* and miss the refreshing of *fellowship* with Him.

You may live in a mansion, a castle, or a palace. You may drive a luxury vehicle or fly in your private jet—yet not realize that you are being driven, not by the light and Truth of God's Word, but by the desire for increasingly more. Yes, be willing to work, but what are you working for?

One thing worse than not knowing what you're working for is to have desires and be lazy. Proverbs 21:25 says, "The sluggard's craving will be the death of him, because his hands refuse to work."

The Day of the Lord is near, and God will require an accounting. Who and what are you trusting in? Isaiah 2:22 says, "Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?" Human beings are limited to the very breath in their nostrils. Everything being made today is subject to rust, corruption, decay, and destruction tomorrow.

Make a decision that this is the day of the Lord. He has made it, and we must rid ourselves of all things that hinder our walk with Him. Promotion comes from the Lord to those who humble themselves and trust in Him.

## Withhold Nothing

Genesis 25:5 (KJV)—*And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.*

**W**hy did Abraham favor one son, Isaac, over the seven others he sired? Isaac was the child of promise, the covenant child. While the others were children of the flesh, God had spoken Isaac into existence and had confirmed His promise through the bodies of two people who, naturally speaking, could not produce a child.

God, in His mercy, blessed Abraham's firstborn son, Ishmael. He also provided gifts for the other six children. However, there was no mistake about which son was God's chosen one to fulfill His plan for humankind.

Today, we usually equally distribute our abundance among our children. This is certainly appropriate, unless they demonstrate disrespect for the God who provides us with the abundance.

Yet if we will watch closely, we will begin to see the ones being led by the Spirit of God. We will see that certain ones are operating in His wisdom and allowing God to establish their works as they commit all to Him.

Romans 8:32 says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." And 2 Peter 1:3 says that, along with His Son, God gave us "all things that pertain unto life and godliness."

As parents, we must choose how we will distribute these gifts. We need to link up with God so closely that we even write our wills according to God's perfect design. God knows what our loved ones will do with what He has blessed us with. His provision for us is not solely to benefit our individual families. God wants channels to work through to fulfill His plan for all of humankind, so seek His wisdom before signing a will. Then freely give as God designates, for He will anoint and multiply that which He has ordained!

*Father, too often we make choices based on our emotions and not on Your leading within. You have provided absolutely foolproof and fail-proof assistance in our making choices through the person of the Holy Spirit. Forgive us for leaning to our own understanding. Teach us to be led by Your Spirit. It's not about favorites, partiality, or pressure from peers and family. It's about working with You so that we can please You and bring You glory, in Jesus' name.*

## Without Permission or Promise

Matthew 4:22 (KJV)—*And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.*

**W**hen Jesus told James and John to follow Him, He was truly testing their loyalty. Sons didn't just walk away from their fathers to go with anyone in those days. And the ship they sat in with their father represented their livelihood and their future. But there is nothing quite like hearing the voice of the Lord for yourself to cause you to make out-of-the-ordinary, culturally incorrect choices!

Notice that Jesus made no promise of what He would do for James and John. Neither did they ask their dad's permission to go. Likewise, there must come a point in your life that you take that step of faith, unconcerned about another's permission or promises.

No one can tell you when it is right to obey. You just know you can't do anything else until you have obeyed. That kind of obedience and trust draws you into the inner circle with Jesus. When God speaks, there are no alternatives.

In Genesis 12 we read that Abram, fearing Egyptians would kill him if they knew beautiful Sarai were his wife, asked her to tell the Egyptians she was his sister. Sarai didn't need to lie to save the man to whom God had already promised his best! Genesis 12:17 says the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house because of Sarai. God already had a plan for what He would do if someone blessed or cursed Abram.

How quickly we, like Abram, forget! Look around you! Has God spoken a word to you? Are you following it, or is your emotional involvement influencing your choice and then are you justifying it in the name of the Lord?

Yes, you may appear cold and indifferent to others when you obey God, but that goes with the territory. Is it better to do it God's way or to lean to your own understanding?

God so looks forward to His children trusting Him beyond any doubt. Today, examine your choices. Have you held on to things and people that you were to leave behind? Don't try to rationalize your disobedience. God is not interested or impressed. Lying is the result of failing to follow God's message in the first place. Fix it before it's too late.

## Worry Is Misdirected Energy

Matthew 6:34 (NLT)—*"So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."*

**Y**ears ago, when the Lord showed me that He would only give me daily bread as I requested it so I would establish a habit of coming to Him on a daily basis, He also told me that worry was misdirected energy.

Jesus said, "So, I tell you, don't worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food, drink, and clothes. Doesn't life consist of more than food and clothing?... Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? Of course not. And why worry about your clothes?... So don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing" (verses 25,27,28,31).

The reason Jesus wants us worry-free is that worry is what the pagans and heathen do. They are deeply concerned about things (verse 32).

How should the children of God look at their needs? Jesus stated, "...Your heavenly Father already knows all your needs, and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern" (verses 32-33).

Many times, the Lord has asked me to do some rather costly, unusual things for others; but He has always supplied what I needed to obey His command.

In the past, I have done things for others because they were nice things to do, but they were not God-ordained or Spirit-directed. What happened was that then I expected the recipients to be appreciative and grateful. I expected them to be there when I needed them. I expected God to honor my nice gesture. However, I discovered that He only supports what He authorizes. He multiplies the seed He tells me to sow. He meets my need from day to day if I live for Him and make His kingdom my primary concern.

I used to worry about many things that were not my business in the first place. Now I live for Him, teaching others about the profit in doing the same. God's kingdom is my primary concern, but I sure don't worry about it. One day I heard a wise friend say, "It is not my concern, even though it concerns me." I have been worry-free ever since.

## Worsen the Devil's Worst Nightmare

John 10:10 (KJV)—*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

One day I was standing at my kitchen sink, meditating on a letter I had recently written for a book for college students, encouraging them to pursue their dream. As I stood there, the Holy Spirit spoke to me: "There is a level beyond that. Did you ever dream you would be doing what you are doing?" My response was, "Never for a moment."

Then He said, "There was a time when you had dreams and personal aspirations and you pursued them relentlessly and with a passion. But the time came when you began to set them aside, and so subtly you began to confer with Me daily, consecrating yourself for My use. You obeyed me as though you had no other option. You desired to do My will and bring pleasure to Me by obeying what I required you to do with and for others. The thief never ceased to come, but because of your obedience he was prevented from stealing from you. He was unable to kill your spouse or your children or to destroy what I had provided because of your faith. The seed you had sown and your absolute obedience to do things My way stopped him in his tracks toward you and yours. You became his worst nightmare. Once you found that he had been given more credit than he deserved, you looked for ways to demonstrate his defeat in your life. Now you are on a roll. You are deliberately pursuing what disturbs his tranquility and pleasure.

"Remember when, at five years old, you fell down a well? What about when the car you were riding in, along with two others, ended up on the grass in the traffic circle center because the driver was drunk? Of course you remember all of the opportunities the devil had to steal, kill, or destroy your life. His nightmare started when he found out that not only could he not have you, even when you were playing on his turf, but that you were now playing on God's turf. You were making it a lifestyle. Never keep this to yourself. Go tell everyone what the Lord has done for you, for doing so worsens the devil's worst nightmare."

## You Don't Have to Beg for God's Attention

Psalm 145:18 (NLT)—*The Lord is close to all who call on Him, yes, to all who call on Him sincerely.*

I am reassured to know how close God is to me when I need to call on Him. I have no concern about static on the line or the signal fading out in the middle of a sentence when I'm conversing with God. I know with certainty that I have His full and undivided attention when I "call on Him sincerely."

What does calling on Him sincerely mean? Instead of using the word "sincerely," *The King James Version* uses the word "truth," which is another way of saying "trustworthiness." When we call on God using His written and spoken promises, He hears Himself speaking. And we know He always listens to what He has to say because everything that He has spoken has come to pass or created a new thing.

When we refuse to look at what is in the natural to see what is in the spirit and we allow our faith to speak, God's attention is not only focused on what we are saying, but He is also prepared to call together all of Heaven to bring it to pass in the earth through us.

Don't just chit-chat with God. Say what you want based on what He has spoken to you, not only from His Holy Word, but also from His personal words to you that can be supported in His Word.

Today, stop for a moment to recognize that God is near. He is close to you and to me. He does not distance Himself based on our situations. We do not have to beg, squall, or grovel in the dirt to get God's attention. The attention deficit is our failing to speak forth His Truth, for when we do, God is aware that we are truly trusting in Him to bring a thing to pass.

Nothing moves God quite like our trusting Him. Quit holding back. Quit holding on to the little stuff you don't want to bother God with. To Him it is all little stuff. Get smart and roll the whole of your care on Him. (*All of it.*)

Why try to do it when God can and is willing to take care of everything that concerns you? God never tries anything. He does it—period.



## You Don't Have to Sink

One day my granddaughter, Sarah, fell out of a paddleboat we were in together. The Holy Spirit said, "Hold on to her." Since He knew that neither Sarah nor I could swim, and that I was taking 241 people to Israel two days later, I obeyed. We went well below the surface and rose immediately. I knew enough to not struggle. Having learned to float, I thought I could get Sarah to safety by floating until she got help. Thank God, His right hand of mercy got me to a boulder and literally fastened me there until I obtained enough breath to help God help me up.

Through that experience, I learned a great lesson. When your faith does not allow you to walk on the water of your situation and life has not taught you to swim, never resort to struggling in the waters of life; you might sink. Instead, fill yourself so full of His promises in your time of fellowship with Him that when the flood comes in, it will not drown you. In fact, to your surprise, you will find that God's faith-filled words will cause you to float. Most people can float longer than they can swim anyway; it certainly takes less effort.

Did that recent telephone call or unexpected letter nearly send you into a tailspin? Don't struggle with it. Listen on the inside of you. If you have filled yourself up with God's Word, you will hear your message of how to float. Help is on the way.

If you have not been in the presence of God consistently through His Word, stop what you are doing right now, ask for forgiveness for spiritual neglect, and plead for direction, wisdom, and strategy to purposefully seek Him first on a daily basis.

Did you say, "I don't have time"? Rethink that. You don't have the time not to. The waters are rising and a dam is about to burst. You may not be able to prevent the flood, but you don't have to sink from struggling either.

Gear up for some Holy Ghost swimming lessons, or at least take some courses on the fine art of faith floating. It is preparation time. Get on with it, and avoid the struggle.

## Your Call

1 Corinthians 12:28 (NKJV)—*And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.*

**I**t is so sad to see the body of Christ struggling with the same issues that confuse the world. We are to know what we are called to do. Many Christians wish they could do what someone else is called to do. They minimize the gift, talent, and call that God has given them. Imitation is not the best form of flattery, unless you are imitating the nature and character of Jesus. I don't want others to imitate me, unless they are imitating Christ and the Spirit of God in my life.

Don't bother putting on that outfit that looks like the one you saw your pastor or pastor's wife wearing, especially if you don't bother to put on the robe of righteousness and the garment of praise with it.

You are not God's first mistake. He had an original thought in mind when He made you from the foundation of the world. Imagine that: God planned your life before He created the world! Thank God we do not all have the same gifts and talents. How limited we would be!

Make no mistake about it, there are times that I'd be willing to give almost anything to be able to sing and play like my husband did. I don't know if I'd ever be quiet. While I wish I had his gift, I never take for granted or despise the gift God has given to me.

When you start to appreciate yourself and your own uniqueness, the world around you is not going to thank you. Instead, they will probably call you strange, weird, and even self-centered. Do it anyway; they'll get over it. Besides, they need the unique gift of God's grace that you are called to express.

I know my call and the One who called me, and I'll never get over that.

**I don't want others to imitate me, unless they are imitating Christ and the Spirit of God in my life.**

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## Your Choice Determines Your Reward

Psalm 32:10 (NKJV)—*Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him.*

I gratefully accept the latter part of this verse as another promise from my Father as He expresses His love for me. But something is happening inside me that no longer allows me to revel in my benefit package while the wicked suffer. I am sensing a desire

to present the wicked with the truth that has made me free to trust in God, so His mercy can surround them as well. My heart no longer allows me to accept that the wicked are wicked by choice. I

**My heart no longer allows me to accept that the wicked are wicked by choice. I have found that many are wicked because of ignorance concerning the things of God.**

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I have found that many are wicked because of ignorance concerning the things of God. Whose fault is the ignorance? I don't always know. Sometimes it has to do with the lack of truth shared from pulpits. Sometimes it is the result of a person's choice to not follow what has been shared. Since I don't know where the fault lies, I look for every opportunity to lead people to accept Jesus as the One sent to redeem them and restore them to a relationship with their Maker.

That's why I find no joy in the wicked's suffering. I know that my Jesus also died for them and that it isn't God's desire that any should be lost. He wants all to come into the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). I have also learned that all wickedness carries with it the reward of sorrow, even when the wickedness is done by God's children. But you don't ever have to receive that reward of sorrow. You can choose to trust God, knowing that the reward for trusting Him is to be surrounded by His mercy.