

Three Books in One

Salvation That Sticks

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

And

Such Were Some of You

© Volume Sandy Haga
2011

Book One

Salvation That Sticks

© 2005
Sandy Haga

Table of Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Introduction	2
2. What Does It Mean To Be Saved	6
3. Knowing The Shepherd's Love	12
4. Hearing the Voice of the Shepherd	16
5. Obedience and God's Love	22
6. The Righteousness of God	32
7. Cleaning My House	38
8. Walking in the Spirit	41
9. The Holy Ghost	53
10. The Dog You Feed the Most	58
11. Let Your Self Go	62
12. Taking the Yokes Off	65
13. The Weeds You Need to Pull	68
14. Prayer	71
15. God's Word	77
16. Faith	82
17. Learning to Lean	87
18. Expecting the Best	91
19. Winning the Battle	96
20. Looking Ahead	103
21. Procrastination and Justification And THE END	106
Closing	111

Chapter 1. Introduction

Salvation. There are fewer topics that are dearer to the heart of a Christian than the topic of salvation. It is why and how we are what we are. It is the reason we are able to receive all the blessings from God that His Word promises. It is the complete, ultimate expression of God's love to us. It is an experience that will last for forever. Where would we be without salvation? But as dear as it is, as important a subject as it is, there are few who really understand it. There are fewer still that know how to share it. I believe that this happens because so many people have knowledge of salvation that comes from their church doctrine, or how they were raised, or their pastors or teachers. They don't have knowledge about salvation that comes from the Spirit of God or the Word of God. If we aren't careful church theology, teaching, doctrine, and traditions can actually choke our salvation right out of us. It can hinder our growth in the Spirit. It can even cause us to be so bound that the devil uses those very things to hinder us.

Let me give you an example. I know someone well and have known them for several years. During this time they have never experienced total victory in a sold out relationship with God. All the years that I have known them, they have teetered on the edge of obedience, rocking in and out of total commitment. Because of that they are constantly like a yo-yo, up and down, up and down. Always going through some kind of crisis. I was praying and I asked God to show me what their problem was. He showed me that this person's salvation experience, his victory day to day, and even his relationship with God were hindered by traditions and teaching that he had been brought up with when he was small. This person was never taught that he could experience a relationship with God.

He never knew that he could have a personal one-on-one relationship with the Lord. He was never taught that he could be filled up to the brim with the Holy Spirit, and that through this he could find victory. He was never taught that he had to submit his will to God for God to be able to work in his heart and daily bring him to victory. He was never taught about victory, and how to find it in his own life. He was never taught that the Lord would work in his behalf. He was never taught that it was important to hear God's voice and obey. He wasn't really taught much of God's Word and how to apply it to His life, that the principles there were powerful. The sad thing about all this was that he grew up in church and in a Christian home. So how could he have missed out on all of this. He was taught church traditions and doctrines by people who had been taught church traditions and doctrines, who had been taught by the same, etc. They couldn't teach him to have a real obedient submitted relationship with God because they didn't have one themselves. They walked in the light that they knew, but that light was dim. They followed God, but they didn't walk with Him. They followed Him at a distance so far away that they could barely see Him. Then they taught about Him from what they could see. The world was a focus even in his church. So he grew up focusing on the world and glancing at God when things got rough. God became a spare tire, not the Lord of his life. The sad thing is that he really wants a closer walk with God, but can't see how to get there through all the junk that he has been taught. If he holds on to God, God can show Himself to be real and free him from all this. If he will just hold on and believe.

So many people are this same way. When you ask so many if they are saved, they pause a minute with a strained look on their face, then they say,

“I’m not sure. I think that I am”. They haven’t learned what salvation is. They haven’t learned that they can be sure in their salvation. Some people even say that they don’t think that you can be sure until you stand before God. I just want to add here, that is a bad time to find out. They aren’t sure what salvation means. Some people are constantly back and forth in their experience with God. They fall into temptation constantly and mess up. Then they are back in. Then out again. They haven’t learned what salvation really is. Some people are afraid that they might lose their salvation. They are afraid that the devil and the world will cause them to lose it. We don’t have to be afraid that something can steal our walk with God. Some people are so afraid that every time they make a mistake that God no longer loves them. They haven’t learned what salvation really is. It is my prayer that this book will help them to find salvation that sticks.

Have you found yourself sliding away from what you once had in your relationship with God? Have you found yourself doing things that at one time, you never thought of doing? Have you gone back on a lot of promises that you once made God? Have you wished that you had something in your life that you once had? Do you constantly feel that there is something missing in your life, and at one time you never had that feeling? Do you see a concerned look in the eye of those that love you because they are worried about you, but you aren’t sure why they should be? Are you confident in your salvation experience, or have you had doubts lately because of the way things are going? I pray that this book helps you through these things.

I wasn’t taught about the Holy Ghost until I was in my early twenties. The Spirit of God wasn’t involved in our church services. I hadn’t even heard the word “anointing” until then. It wasn’t a part of services.

We rarely got emotional in church. We didn't want to become fanatical. I didn't know when I was young that you could know God and He could know you. I didn't really know that He could walk with you as close as those around you and be your best friend. I didn't really know His love, not personally. I didn't know His Spirit the way that He can pour it out in a Holy Ghost filled service. I didn't know that He could fill me up to the brim with His Spirit so that I could barely stand it, a touch of heaven. I thought that you did your plans and God helped you to work them out. I didn't understand how to submit to God so that He was Lord of my life. I didn't know that He could move through me to work in the lives of others. I missed out on so much.

So I knew what my good friend was going through. The one I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. I knew how that the way he was raised could hinder him in his walk with God and in his finding victory in his salvation. We have promises abundant in God's Word, but if we can't see that they are for us, they won't ever be ours. We can have a close relationship with our heavenly Father that is as real as our relationship with those around us, but if we can't see that is for us, we will never find it. We can be filled with the Spirit of God so much that He pours through us and splashes out on everyone we come into contact with, but if we don't believe that we can ever have that experience, we never will. How we have been taught and how we see ourselves can hinder us from experiencing the wonderful treasures that God has for us.

I know someone who grew up in a household that was really dogmatic. They had a lot of rigid rules. These were a doctrine, part of the teaching of their church. They were taught if they did this or that, they would go to hell. These rules were man made.

They weren't God-made from His Word. She grew up in fear of God and in rebellion against Him because she didn't like His rules. Sad thing was, they weren't even His rules. It took a long time for her to figure out God's love and it took even longer for her to open up her heart to accept it. She grew up in church and in a Christian family, but still she didn't understand salvation. Knowing God's love is the first key to unlock our salvation. Until she got hold of God's love she couldn't rest and trust in her salvation and in her relationship with God.

Salvation is a lot like an ocean. So is God's love. You can't understand salvation without God's love, you can't know one without the other. We can stand with one toe in the water and everything else out. We can go from there and tell everyone what that experience is like, and think that we know everything there is to know about the ocean. Someone else may walk in to where they are standing knee deep. And go out and tell everyone that they know all about that ocean. Then there are those blessed ones who say, "I am not quitting until I find about the depths of this experience." They walk on in until they are submersed. They are the ones who know what it is all about. We may think that we know all there is to know, but we are only standing there with our ankles wet. Or we may be running chasing the waves trying to keep from getting wet while we are fooling ourselves into thinking that we are all the way under. Until we get all the way out into it, we don't know fully what it is all about. Until we experience it ourselves, we won't know what it is all about. We need to get so curious and hungry for this thing called salvation that we go all the way. Until we do, we won't even know what we are missing.

This book is written with my prayer that you learn more and that you find out what you are missing.

If there is an empty spot that you feel in regards to your salvation experience, it is my prayer that empty spot be filled. If you have a hunger for something more, then this book is written with the prayer that you be filled. It is written to help you to dive in all the way into God's love. That you can find out what salvation is in its fullest sense of the word. I won't be going outside of God's Word for any of this. Matter of fact, just thumb through this book before you start reading it. There aren't many pages that lack scripture references. More often than not there are several to a page. You see when we go to God's Word we can find out what salvation is all about. When we go to traditions and doctrines, that is all we know. God's Word will change your life.

Now you may be thinking to yourself, "Salvation, that is the basics. I want to study something deeper than that." Or you may be thinking, "Everybody knows about salvation if they have been saved." All I can say is bear with me just a few chapters. If you don't get a blessing out of hearing about this most wonderful gift from God, then you can quit reading. I want to hear about it over and over and it gets sweeter and sweeter every time I hear it. Besides that, you may find out you had a few traditions binding you from a good dose of God's love.

You don't have to be afraid to read this. You don't have to be afraid to turn loose of some of those traditions and doctrines. Sometimes we hide behind those if we aren't careful because we are afraid of getting messed up in something that isn't true. Problem with that is, we may be messed up and God wants to set us free and get us tied up and tangled up in Him. You don't have to be afraid. He is your Shepherd. He'll lead you. He'll bring you into right understanding. His Spirit will lead you. As I said earlier, I won't be saying a lot that you can't find in God's Word.

I pray before I write every chapter that He use me. That His Spirit flows through me and helps me to write what I need to write. I know I am just flesh, but what a difference His Spirit can make when He uses us. No, I am not perfect, but God can use the imperfect too. It is the willing, not the perfect, that He wants to use.

Be hungry for God's Word. Check it out. Don't just take my word for it. If I say something, go check it out in God's Word. When I give a scripture reference, get out your Bible and read it. Don't just read that one particular verse, but the others around it as well. God's Word will change your life. It is my prayer that when you read this book, you find yourself far from shore, resting in the sweet water of God's love. That you find the depths of what salvation means. And that you find a salvation that sticks.

Chapter 2. What Does It Mean To Be Saved

I was first saved in a church service when I was about in the fifth grade. An altar call was given and I knew that people expected me to go. You could say that the pressure was on. I went up to the altar and did what they told me to do. I prayed what they told me to pray. I confessed my salvation before the church. I really didn't know anything about what I had done. I kind of knew. But I didn't have a salvation that sticks. How do I know? Several years later I went away to college. Boy, did I learn a lot. It all wasn't in the books either. I got into everything bad that there was to get into. I totally wrecked my life in just a matter of a couple of years. What happened to my salvation? I forgot about it for the most part. Except for those brief intervals when the Lord dealt with my heart. I never forgot the Word of God that I had been exposed to.

The sin that I was doing perverted the Word of God. I had so long made excuses for what I was doing that I had a weird way of looking at God's Word. I had so long self-justified myself that I had a weird version of the scripture. That is what we do when we excuse ourselves of our sin. We often "rewrite" the Bible. It didn't leave me though. Proverbs 22:6 tells us, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." I never forgot the Word of God that I had been exposed to as a child. That is one promise that my mother and mothers down through time have held close to their hearts as they watched their children take off down the wrong road. God's Word didn't leave my heart. My salvation, though, just didn't stick.

Yes, I was a Son of God because of my confession as a child, but I was being totally a disobedient Son.

(No, I'm not a boy, but the Bible calls us all sons.) Would I have gone to heaven if during that time in my life I had wrapped my car around a tree in one of my drunken stupors? I'm not here to argue about that. Some say yes. Some say no. I am saying that you are a fool if you gamble that way with your eternal soul, taking the chance that you can do whatever you want to after you have been saved and still make it to heaven. You have to agree with me on that.

Praise God, I don't have a definite answer for that one myself. Why do I say it that way? Because I didn't have to find out. God through His mercy kept His hand on me protecting me until the day when I turned around and stopped running. That day salvation became real to me. I met the One whose nail pierced hands reached out for me. I found that love so rich and real. I learned that He died for me as much as He died for the whole world. I got filled up and baptized with the Holy Ghost. I found the victory this brought to my life. I found salvation, and praise God this time it stuck. It is still sticking after 25 years. It will be sticking for the next 25. It won't rub off. Now if I turn my back on God and I choose to disobey Him. If I do not repent of my sin, and die in that unrepented sin, then I walk away from my salvation. As long as I have a hold of God, He will surely hold onto me.

So what was the difference between those two times of my life? Some may argue that I really didn't get saved the first time. I believed. I confessed. That is what the Bible says to do in Romans 10:9-10 tells us, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Didn't I confess and believe. Yes, I did.

Was my salvation real that first time? It was as real as I knew how to make it. I walked in the light that I had, but it wasn't light enough to light up my life and heart. Why didn't it stick? Haven't you wondered why it seems some people's salvation just doesn't stick? This book is about finding a salvation that sticks, a relationship with God that will stick through the thick and through the thin. It is about how to find an experience with God that will last through the fire and the flood. It will last through the battles. It will out last the storms of life. You can find this same salvation. The experience that never says quit. The kind that grows sweeter and sweeter every day. If you have that kind of relationship with the Lord, then keep on reading. Rejoice and read on. Maybe it will help you to be able to share that experience with someone who is new to this. Someone who is just now standing at the edge of that ocean ready to dive in. Whether you are standing on the edge, or just starting in the water. Read on. We are going to get wet in God's love.

Now you can't jump all the way into something that you can't see. If you have been saved, why didn't you get saved before you were saved? Have you ever wondered about that? Because you didn't see what salvation was until then. When you really understood it, you hungered for it. God opened it up to you and it became real. We can't understand salvation or any of the things of God until the Spirit of God reveals it to us. We can't see it because it is not a natural thing. It is a spiritual thing. We can't see it unless God shows us by His Spirit. Do you remember how it was when you tried to read God's Word before you got saved, and it just didn't make any sense to you. All those thee's and thou's. But it was more than that. The whole thing seemed so confusing. You just couldn't understand it at all. Then you got saved.

God's Spirit came into your heart. Then you read it. All of the sudden things started making sense. I John 2:27 tells us, "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." This verse is not saying that we don't need any man to teach us. There are too many other scriptures that say that God anoints preachers, and teachers to teach us. What then is it saying? It says that the anointing is what will open up God's Word to us when we abide in Him. How many times have you opened up the Bible, and that particular verse to encourage your faith leaped off of the pages to strengthen your heart? How many times have you needed guidance and picked up God's precious Word, and that section of scripture opened up your eyes to the direction you needed to go in? How many times have you needed God's love to pour through you? When you read of His love for you, you were able to love that one that was crying out. They saw God's love in you and were able to reach out to Him because of that love. How many times has satan wrapped a chain of bondage around you that you couldn't see, but God's Word opened your eyes and you were able to cast it aside? The anointing of God will open God's Word to us. Without that anointing we can't understand it. Unless God reveals what salvation is to us, we can't even see it or understand it. It can't be seen through teaching of doctrines and traditions. It can't even be found in the salvation of others. We can't see it unless God Himself reveals it to us and leads us to receive it. Praise God for His anointing. Without it God's Word has no life.

Salvation is a wonderful experience. Remember when you first got saved. You were so excited.

So excited that you couldn't understand why everybody in the world didn't want it too. I know I was. We started a revival everywhere we went. We had a group of teens that hung around Hardees on the weekend. We'd witness to people out in the parking lot. Hardees was the big hangout spot in our town for all the young people. We'd pass out tracts. We'd kneel right down at the booths to lead people to the Lord. Young people would come through the drive through and yell out for us to pass them some more tracts. They wanted to pass them on to their buddies so that they could find what they had found. The police that was stationed at that Hardees (it had been a really rough Hardees) told us that they had never seen such a change in a place. The whole atmosphere changed. They asked us to keep on coming.

I had found a salvation that stuck and boy had it stuck this time around. It was so rich and real and full of love and joy that I wanted to share it with everyone. We never had a thought like, "What if someone rejects this? What if they make fun of us? What if it takes up a lot of my time? I have such a busy schedule. What if we run into an uncomfortable situation? What if it takes time away from some of my other activities? What if it costs me something?" We didn't even think any of that. We had no thought of not having time to do this. It was the joy of our lives and the focus of our being, to be able to reach out for the One Who had reached out to us.

Remember those days. If when I said this and you sadly shook your head and agreed that you remember those days, then here is something to think about? Why is this a memory and not a reality? Has something happened to your first love? Has Jesus changed any from the first time that you met Him? Is He less wonderful than He was then? Does He love you any less than He did when you first met Him?

What has changed? Have you lost your first love? Isn't salvation just the same then as it is now? Has something changed with your experience with the Lord?

Remember those sweetheart days with your honey, your husband or your wife? Praise God for those who still have them after years of marriage. Never lose those sweetheart days. Those google-eyed-red-faced-hungry-just-for-the-sight-of-that-sweet lover feelings. In 20 some years of marriage, there have been times when I took my husband for granted. There have been times when I did my own thing and he did his own thing. There have been times when situations such as financial problems put a strain on our marriage. There have been times when personality differences and misunderstandings drove wedges between us. There have been times when we'd say or do things that we would have to make right. But we are still sweethearts after 20 years. I love him more than I did when we first had our first set of starry eyes for each other. We've been through a lot together. We are growing old together and believe me as you do that you know it isn't all based on our looks or what is on the outside. I know he will be there for me no matter what we have to go through because he has been there for me through what we've already overcome. I know he is the one that sees me at my ugliest outside and inside, but still loves me. He will be there when I need him, because he has always been there. I can trust in his love for me. The love that has been through the fire is the love that will last. Amen? Isn't God the same way? That salvation that sticks is that relationship with God that lasts. It is the salvation that has been through the fire. You know that when the storms come, you will last through them as well. You know He's been there, so you know that He will be there to hold you through tomorrow.

It isn't that your salvation will stick because everything will be perfect from there on out. That isn't what salvation is all about.

Some people teach that because we are children of God, we have a right to have a perfect life. One day in heaven that might be true. Down here though, if you are having a perfect life, I might go so far as to doubt your salvation experience. Why? Because you are a child of God, you have a ready-made enemy who hates you because he hates God. The devil is out to get God's children. If you don't have any battles, there must not be enough evidence in your life to show him that you are a child of God. Sure you will have battles even if you are saved. You will have to live in this world that is definitely far from perfect, right in the middle of people who mostly aren't saved, and don't care about doing anything good. You will have battles. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love you. It does mean, praise the Lord, that you will have someone to hold you and keep you through whatever this old world and the devil that is its prince brings against you. It does mean that you can find victory.

Without God, all you would find would be sure defeat. He loves you even though He has seen your ugliest. He has waited when you had your priorities all out of whack until you got it together enough to focus on Him. He has been the anchor that held you even when you sailed way off course. He loves you. He will keep you. My how He loves you. John 3:16 through 17 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through Him might be saved." Jeremiah 31:3 says, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore

with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” I John 3:1 tells us, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.” You are Beloved. You are beloved and longed for. Here is a prayer that we all need to pray. It is found in Ephesians 3:17-19, “ That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

How big is His love? What can separate you from it? Romans 8:35 and 37-39 tells us, “ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God loves you. God loves you. God loves you. That is the key to understanding what salvation is all about. Without knowing that, how can we find confidence in our salvation? We need to wrap ourselves in that great big love. Get all the junk out that separates us from God and gets us tied up and tangled up in other things and bound from His love. What does God expect from us in return for that love? Deuteronomy 6:5 tells us, “ And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 10:12 tells us, “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and

to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.” Fall in love with the One who loves you so much. Get googly eyed over Jesus again. Go back to your first love. That is how salvation sticks.

Now I can just hear some of you men. “We can’t get that way?” You know, I agree that it is harder maybe for some of you than it is for women. I have heard our pastor say after his being in the ministry for over 40 years, that it is easier for a woman to have a relationship with the Lord than it is for some men. It is harder for men to let themselves go enough to fall in love with Jesus. They have to think too much about it. They don’t just go ahead and jump in. Sure, salvation isn’t all just based on our feelings. Sure it is based on what we know and how we think. But a relationship with God is also based on our love for Him and His love for you. Let Him love you. Fall in love with Him. Your salvation will be much stronger than it is if all you have is what you think. Some of the manliest men I know have fallen in love with Jesus. Think of Paul, David, many of others in the Word of God. God is your father. Some of you know what it is like to be a Dad. You know how you want your children to love and respect you. You know how you want your children to respond to your love. Should you love your heavenly Father any less and respond less to His love. We need to never get too “manly” to receive love and to love. Sometimes we get as much of God’s love as we are able to receive from the people around us.

If we are shut up and can’t easily receive love from others, it’s a given fact that it will be hard for us to have a loving relationship with God. I John 4:8 tells us, “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” I John 4:12 tells us, “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in

us, and His love is perfected in us.” There is a lot of truth in those two verses. If you want to find a deeper relationship with the Lord, then love His people. Sometimes, too, we can shut ourselves up, closing ourselves away from people because we have been hurt. We are afraid of making ourselves vulnerable to being hurt again. That will also shut us away from God’s love. We get only as much love as we open ourselves up to receive. Open up wide to God. Open up wide to Jesus. I have seen that picture of Jesus on the cross that says, “Jesus said I love you this much, and then He spread open His arms wide and died.” You are loved. That is what salvation is all about.

So what am I saying in this second chapter? I am saying that we all know how to be saved. The Bible tells us in Romans 10:9-11 how to be saved. But we all know that there is much more to salvation than just confessing. We have talked about several different people and how their salvation didn’t stick. One of the first things that you need to have to have salvation that sticks is the knowledge of what you have. That knowledge has to come from God’s Word, not from the doctrines and traditions of man. You also have to know the depths of God’s love for you. You have to personally receive His love and love Him in return. That love will change your life. We talked about how important it is to return to that first love that you once had. Salvation is finding that personal relationship with God and wrapping yourself in His love. When you do, your salvation will stick.

Chapter 3. Knowing the Shepherd's Love

I John 4:16 tells us, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." This is only one of the many scriptures that tell about God's love. John 17 is one of the most beautiful scriptures about God's love. Please read the whole chapter. I won't put it all here. This is Jesus' last prayer before His crucifixion where the words were recorded. He knew what He was about to face. He would not only face the torment and beating, the crown of thorns, the pain and shame of the cross, He would also have to face the rejection of His Father when our sins were laid on Him. He would have to face the shame of our sins. He would have to face death crueller than any we will ever have to face. Why did He do all these? Read why in John chapter 17, in His own words. I will sum it up by writing here verses 22-23, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." That is what salvation is all about.

I knew a man and a wife that for years had a terrible time in their marriage. He was an "against himself" kind of fellow. He always dwelled on his weaknesses. The enemy could easily slip him into self-condemnation. He didn't think that he was worth loving. He loved his wife dearly. What was the problem with their marriage? It took years for him to accept that she loved him. He just would not see that he was loved as much as he loved her. She did love him, but he couldn't see it. He didn't think he deserved her love so he didn't think she could love him. That led them to having a very rocky marriage.

Consequently his relationship with God was just the same. Those same hindrances carried over to his relationship with God. He loved God, but never really submitted himself to Him. Why? He saw himself as a failure. He thought to himself, why would God need someone who was just a failure. He was content to follow God at a distance because if he got too close to Him, God wouldn't love him. He felt like he was a failure and couldn't obey God, so he rarely tried to.

God's love is the rock that our relationship with Him is built on. It is hard to follow God at a distance, yet so many of us try to do that. The further away from God we are, the easier it is for the devil to pluck us away from His love. Just like with a shepherd and his sheep. The sheep that aren't close to the shepherd, listening and obeying His voice, are the ones that are easy prey to the wolves. God is love. We established that at the beginning of this chapter and earlier in the previous chapter. We can know that with our head, but we have to do more than that to receive it. To follow a shepherd, the sheep have to do more than think that the shepherd is a good shepherd. They have to trust the shepherd's love. They have to yield to the shepherd so that they follow him. You see a shepherd doesn't drive the sheep. Sheep herding is a lot different than cattle herding. Cattle herders drive the cattle. Shepherds lead the sheep. They go before them. They will pick out the green pastures and still waters. They go first so that they know they aren't driving them into dangerous territory, or over rocky cliffs. The shepherd leads them. Jesus is our Shepherd. He leads us. He doesn't drive us. His love for us leads us. It beckons us to follow. If we can't see His love, then it is very hard to follow Him.

In a natural flock of sheep there are often shepherd pets. There are the sheep that follow close.

Those sheep that love the shepherd so much that they are always under his feet. Every shepherd has those few precious little sheep that soak up love like a sponge. Then there are those sheep who are independent. They don't want to submit to the shepherd. They want to prove to the shepherd what they can do. They wander away just to show that they can do it. Then there are those poor little sheep that in the past have had a bad shepherd. Maybe they had followed the wrong shepherd. They had learned not to trust the shepherd. They are afraid to follow him up close. Then there are the dumb sheep, the dull-witted ones. They are too slow minded to follow the shepherd. They can't catch on to where he is going. Why? Because their eyes and minds are on everything else but the shepherd. Half the time they don't even see the shepherd, they are so occupied with everything else around them. Which of these sheep are the most protected? Is that the fault of the Shepherd? Now stop for just a minute and think about this question. Answer it honestly? Which of those sheep are you?

The devil's main job is to blind us from seeing the shepherd and His love. He wants us to fall behind Him so that he can destroy us. He wants us to become so occupied with everything else that we can't even see God to follow Him. Then he can destroy us. Like the husband in our first illustration in this chapter, when we can't see love, we can't see it. The enemy will bring all kinds of circumstances, people, hurt, and battles against us. He will do all this to convince us that we aren't loved at all. He will cause us to fail so that we see ourselves as a failure. Then we fall into condemnation and forget that God could love us. He will do anything he can to separate us from God's love. He will do everything he can to cause us to be separated from the love of God's people, too. He specializes in getting us separated.

The devil wants to separate us from the rest of the folks at the church. He will cause us to imagine offenses that they are doing. He will cause us to have hurt feelings, and really rub salt in the wound. He will cause us to have a bitter spirit so that we don't forgive, and in so doing drive a wedge that can last for years. He will cause you to think all kinds of things that people are doing, when they really are wondering what is going on with you that you are distancing yourselves from them. He can stand between two people and cause a fight between them that will wind up dividing an entire congregation. He is a master in causing us to be separated from the shepherd and from the rest of the flock. There is safety in numbers. It is a lot harder for the wolves to get to the sheep when they are all clustered together in the flock. When that lone little sheep gets off to the side, though, there can be trouble.

The church should be a picture of the love of God. It is supposed to be the bride. Sometimes the church isn't a bride, in love with Jesus and in love with one another in His love, as far as the world's churches go. What do I mean by that? There are churches that are just there. Then there are churches that are doing their best to let God's Spirit move. They are teaching God's Word. They are trying with all their hearts to fit the scriptural accounts of what a church is supposed to be. In the true bride of Christ, the Spirit-walking, Spirit-led church worldwide, there is a unity there that gets stronger and stronger as the day of our groom's appearing draws nearer. The real bride of Christ is uniting in Spirit in God's love as the wedding date approaches. You can feel it when you meet someone who is born again, filled with the Spirit of God, obedient and spirit walking. You can feel it in the way that you hate to leave their fellowship when it is time to go. God is drawing His people.

He is drawing them together. This has nothing to do with physical church buildings. It has nothing to do with denominational differences. It has something to do with the bride of Christ. A lot of church people will still be sitting in their pews, stuck in the denominations wondering what is going on, when the bride of Christ leaves. It has nothing to do with denominations. Most denominations were hatched in the flesh and out of God's will. They will still be here after the bride of Christ takes to the skies. God's love is the power that brings His people together. God's love is the glue that sticks His church together. God's love is the force that draws us to the Shepherd in unity following Him, flowing together. If we can't submit to the love of the rest of the sheep, it is hard to be a part of the flock. If we can't be in the flock, we can't be under the Shepherd's care. Don't let the devil separate you from the flock.

What do we find when we follow the shepherd, and walk in His love? David, the shepherd, knew more than most about his heavenly Shepherd's love. Why? Because he knew what it was like to be a shepherd himself. Psalms is filled with glimpses of a Shepherd's love. One of the most famous is Psalm 23. Please go back and read it now after having read this chapter about a Shepherd's love. Let's go back and make a list of what we can find when we are in our Shepherd's care:

1. We won't want. We will have all we need.
2. We will lie down and rest in peace.
3. We will find those green pastures. The best pastures.
4. The Shepherd will lead us.
5. Our thirst will be satisfied.
6. Our soul will be restored.
7. We will be led in the right paths, the upright way, the righteous paths. We will be led in His paths.

8. Even when we face death we won't have to fear.
9. We won't have to fear any evil.
10. God will be with us.
11. We will be comforted.
12. Even when enemies come we can feast in God's goodness.
13. We can be anointed.
14. Our cup will run over.
15. Goodness and mercy will follow us all of the days of our lives.
16. We will dwell in God's house forever.

Praise God! Praise God! What a wonderful shepherd. Let the great Shepherd love you. Run to His love. Don't let anything or anyone separate you from His love. Get sin out of the way. Sin separates us from His love. You can't open up your arms wide to love someone when your arms are full of things that the person you are reaching out to doesn't want. You can't open your arms wide to love Jesus when you are holding on to other things you shouldn't be holding on to. Don't let this world keep you from following the Shepherd. It is so easy to get caught up in everything else that we neglect the One who died to love us. If you have started drifting away from the Shepherd, let Him draw you back to Calvary. Back to His precious love. You need to stay close to Him and in His fold. The wolves out there are many and they are all around you to destroy not only your life, but also your soul, and the lives and souls of those you love. Stay in His love. Stay in His care.

When we know the Shepherd's love we can know His voice. He can lead us. We can trust Him enough to submit our will to Him and do it His way instead of our own way. Then we can obey Him. There is no greater joy and peace than knowing that you are walking in obedience to the Lord. Peace of mind is one of the most valuable things you can find.

When you find His love and get filled up with it, then you want to do all you can to please Him. You want to make a difference to others lives by doing what He leads you to do. It will become more and more important to you to hear the Shepherd's voice.

Chapter 4. Hearing the Voice of the Shepherd

I had a battle that I had gone through for some time. I have had times when the devil would come against me battling me with condemnation, using people around me to make it worse. Now when the devil is lying to you, you might not realize it at first. It seems like it is just thoughts in your head. For a long time I listened to those thoughts. Then God started delivering me from this bondage. I was able to pull back from these thoughts and identify that this wasn't me. This was the devil. He had brought this spirit of fear against me that was making me not only hear his lies, but fall for what he was saying. Then I heard the voice of my Shepherd. He told me that this was not Him. I knew then that these things were not true. They weren't even real. This was bondage from the enemy. If I would not have identified this, would have continued to listen to those lies, and receive them in my spirit as true, I would have taken all that on for real. When I heard the voice of the Shepherd, I was set free from all this. It took me a while to hear Jesus through the rest of the voices: the enemies, and my own condemnation and doubt. Then I was able to put the devil in his place and rise up above him. To be able to overcome the enemy is just one reason why we need to hear God's voice.

We need constant direction. Any more, it is dangerous to even go out of our homes without God's direction. Especially when you live in dangerous places like what is happening more and more in our country and abroad. We have friends in India in the region that was hit by the Tsunami. They later told me that they had intended to go to the coast that day. The Lord had spoken to them not to go. They heard and obeyed His voice. Later when they saw the devastation there, they knew that He had spared their lives.

How many of those folks killed in that destruction were in a listening and obedient relationship with the Lord? How many of them heard God's voice, but let flesh take over and went on any way? How many did God try to warn, but they were so out of practice with hearing His voice that they ignored it, just like they had the day before, and the day before that? How many didn't even know Him enough to hear His voice, even though they said they were His children? We need to hear and obey the voice of the Shepherd. If my friend had not been in the practice of hearing and obeying, what would have happened to him and all of his family? Their dead bodies would have joined the thousands of bodies floating up on that beach line. That sounds abrupt, but life and death, and reality often are. We need to let God speak and tell us when and where we need to go. If He says don't, then we need to stop. If we constantly let flesh have the rule in our life, then when that time comes when it is crucial that we hear God's voice, flesh will get in the way. Our families' bodies flesh or spiritual, will be washing up on the beaches of this life. We need to practice hearing the voice of the Shepherd. Here are some more reasons why.

One of the most amazing testimonies that I heard that came out of the 9-11 crisis was this. There was a woman who had spent time praying before she went to work that day. She was prayed up as we call it here at the ministry. She was already in tune with the Lord and had taken Him to work that morning. She worked in one of the twin tower buildings. When the first plane hit, she naturally prayed. That was what she was in the habit of doing. She didn't just go off on her own with her own thoughts. She didn't just follow whoever was going wherever. She didn't just fall apart. She prayed. She asked God's direction. She did what she was in the habit of doing every day.

God answered her prayer, just like He had every day before. He spoke to her and told her which direction to go in. She ran off in that direction. She didn't analyze it. She didn't call a church board meeting to see if that was the right direction. She listened to Her Lord and she moved. And fast. People saw her determination, and asked her where she was going. She answered them that the Lord had told her to run in that direction and so she was. They got behind her and followed her. She ran out of the building safely in the midst of all the hundreds that perished. Not only was she safe, but 30 people who followed her were safe as well. If we hear and obey the voice of the Lord, we will make a difference to those around us. Especially to those we love. We will lead them in the right directions.

We will make a difference in the lives of those around us. The devil isn't a fool. He knows where to attack and exactly what to use. He splits up whole churches. How? He waits until we stop listening to the voice of the Shepherd. He divides families. The devil hates Christian families. We need to be sure as an entire family that we listen to the voice of the Shepherd, and we refuse to let the flesh rule. Teach your children how to have a relationship with the Lord that is real. Teach them how to hear the voice of the Lord. How? By the example you set before them. I know a lot of kids that won't try to lie to their parents. They go where they say they are going. Why? If you ask them why they would tell you that Mom and Dad know when they lie, so they don't. They don't want to get punished. They will tell you that the reason why Mom and Dad know what is going on is because God tells them, and they listen. What a way to teach your children how to hear the voice of God. Way to go parents who let the Spirit of God lead them. It takes walking in the spirit to do so.

Like the woman in the 9/11 disaster, you can lead those around you to safety when you hear the voice of God.

Think of all the times that listening to God's voice led you away from disaster, kept you from financial ruins, delivered you, guarded you, kept you, led you to tremendous blessings. I could go on and on. How can we do without hearing the Shepherd's voice? Are we really so different from the Israelites in the desert. God led them in the day with a cloud that sheltered them from the fierce desert heat. He led them at night by a column of fire that warmed them from the freezing desert nights. If they strayed too far from either, they died. Are we really different today? We need to follow God and hear His voice. Yes, His Word speaks to us. But we also need to hear His voice as

God speaks to our spirits. Jesus told us about the voice of the Shepherd in John 10:1-5, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth: and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

There are a lot of strangers in our life that we follow. If we aren't careful, we listen to everything and everyone but God. When we are facing critical decisions that we need to make, who do we go to? Often we go to our parents, or our friends, to those people who aren't led by the Lord in their own decisions. We will ask people whose personal lives are a wreck how to fix our own situations. We Google it.

We will ask a doctor who is trying to get the most out of a potential gold mine that he might see in us, over asking the Lord who made us, lives in our heart, and definitely knows all that is going on in our bodies. We need to go to the Shepherd and not to the strangers.

I am amazed at the number of Christians that are getting caught up in false doctrines. They deny the very core of our beliefs. I've heard some churches even deny the virgin birth. Some deny the blood of Christ. Some deny a need for repentance. Some say that everybody goes to heaven whether they accept God or not. Some say that the rapture will not take place. Others say that it already has happened. All kinds of nonsense is going on in the name of the church. When I hear of people getting carried away into things that are not true according to God's Word, I know that they are not hearing the voice of their Shepherd. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice. Another they won't follow".

I know a lady that used to go to church with me. She knocked on my door not long ago visiting with a Jehovah Witness visiting team. I just looked at her and she saw a lot in my look. Then I asked her what she was doing in that. I reminded her that she knew what it was like to shout and rejoice in the power of God in Holy Ghost filled services. She answered me, "We've learned about all that stuff, how it isn't real. It is just a trick." That was her first mistake. She let somebody tell her that something that she possessed wasn't real. If you have something, then no one should be able to tell you that isn't real. Her other mistake was not listening to the voice of the Shepherd. I know God has told her to come way from that false doctrine, but for some reason she has her fingers stuck in her spiritual ears. Another lady got entangled in that doctrine and died denying salvation.

Sure they taught her that there was no hell, but where is she anyway? We all of us need to get our fingers out of our ears so that we can hear the truth. The Bible says that many in the last days would be deceived. We need to hear the voice of the Shepherd.

I knew a lady who decided to move to a new area. She didn't pray through on her decision. She just decided to do it, and did it regardless of any feelings that she had to the contrary. She didn't hear the Shepherd's voice. She decided what to do. Her husband and kids finally agreed. They moved to a new place. This new place had a terrible drug problem. Both her son and her husband wound up addicted to drugs. We need to listen before we move.

I had a friend who was looking for a job. The Lord led them to pray for a list of specific things that they wanted as qualities of this job. They asked for a certain number of hours, working with Christians, when they would work, what they wanted as their specific duties. She listened to the voice of the Shepherd. He told her to go to this certain business and put in an application. There was a job available at that location that had just opened up that very day. The company hadn't even publicly posted the position. She had the perfect qualifications for it. They hired her on the spot. Did the job match her list she had made? Sure did. Listen to God's voice. Sometimes we fuss because God blesses others more than He blesses us. It may be because when God tells us to go, we don't go.

My grandmother had a saying. "There is only one way and that is God's way." She was right. She knew. She had served God for most of her 96 years. That is so true. I don't care what aspect of our life it is. There is only one way that will always work. That is doing it God's way. We think sometimes that being led by God's Spirit is just for times spent at church.

Then the rest of the time we know better than God what we should do. We don't know a thing. The quicker that we can admit this, the quicker we can hear God's voice. We need His direction in everything in our lives, in every decision we make, in our relationships with those we love, in the direction that we choose to take, in when we leave our house to go to town. We need to hear God's voice. Think about it. How many times have you heard God's voice and it protected you? How many times did you refuse to hear and you faced a struggle? God's way works.

I know someone who really hears God's voice. They have refused to listen and obey for so long that they have almost silenced Him. Why? They are very rebellious. They don't want it to be anyway but their way. They are also more than just a little bit spoiled. They only hear God's voice when He is telling them to do something that they want to do. When God is dealing with them to stop something that they want to do, or to repent of some area in their life, they refuse to hear. God is dealing with their heart to get them to repent of some areas. They do what the Bible calls, stiffen their neck. They refuse to hear. What will happen if he never repents? If he dies will he go to heaven while he is rebelling against God? If the Lord comes back today, will he go? If he faces a catastrophe tomorrow, how can God lead him away from disaster? How can God use him to reach out to others? How can God use him to protect the ones that he loves? How can he really give his best to his family? We need to hear the voice of the Shepherd. One day this person came to themselves as the Bible described it. He fell in love with Jesus enough to submit his will to God's will. The change in his whole life was phenomenal. God is using him in a mighty way.

Who loves you like Jesus does? No one can love you more than Him. Run to Him.

Maybe while reading this chapter you have realized that this is a weak area of your life. It is time to fix it. Run to the Shepherd. He loves you so much. He can renew and restore your relationship with Him. You can find a new walk with Him that is closer than it has ever been before. He wants to fellowship with you. He wants to draw you into the circle of His care. Let Him love you and take care of you. Let His voice be as precious and dear to you as your voice is to Him. What a wonderful Shepherd he is. What does hearing the voice of the Shepherd have to do with finding salvation that sticks? God will keep us. He will guard our souls. He will tell us what we need to hear to be safe. If we don't hear His voice, how can He lead us in those green pastures beside those still water?

If you have just recently been saved, and you are just starting out in this journey, learn how to hear the voice of the Shepherd. The devil tries to minimize this and make it a bad thing. People who aren't saved, and have no idea about how this works will often make light of it. They will say things like, "You know how those Christians hear voices". No, we don't hear voices. We aren't crazy. We hear God's voice. We have the Holy Spirit of God inside of us. He gives us impressions in our heart. He guides us often by feelings. We will get an impression to do something, or not to do something. That impression is more than what we had before we were saved, those feelings that we would have. This is different. This is God leading us. Sometimes God speaks and we can hear His voice in our heart. It is more than a voice in our mind which is often our own thoughts. It is a voice that is in our heart. We have to be careful because we will have our own thoughts, we'll have God's voice, and we will have the devil who will sit on our shoulder and whisper stuff into our head.

We have to learn to sort out those, and that will come with time. The Bible promises that we can hear God's voice, and that He will lead us. Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me."

When we hear the voice of the Shepherd, we need to obey. Obedience is the key that unlocks not only God's Word, but also His presence in our lives. We need to practice listening and obeying God.

Chapter 5. Obedience and God's Love

What does obedience have to do with God's love? What does all this have to do with salvation? Remember back just a minute to the last time that you got in trouble with your parents. For me it was during my wild college days I mentioned earlier. I was doing my own little thing, busily destroying my life. At first I thought that I had hidden it pretty well from my Mom. How many know that you don't hide things from mothers? Mothers know. Amen? All this time, my Mom was praying for me. My life style though drove a wedge between us. I was guilty and I knew it. I was not doing what I was supposed to do. I was doing a lot I wasn't supposed to do. I could not feel the love from my parents that I could feel before I got off on this wrong track. There was definitely a divide in our relationship. We didn't talk about it, but it was there all the same. Now there were others in my family that weren't going through the mess that I was going through. They didn't have the problems in their relationship with my parents that I had either. They had their favor. My parents didn't love them more and me less, but it was a whole lot easier to love them. We had a split in our relationship but they didn't. If I would have died before I made things right, I would have been a disobedient child and I would have died outside of that circle of their favor-outside of that circle of their love. Not because they didn't love me, but because I had separated myself from their love.

Do you see where I am going? While I was out of favor with my parents, I was also out of favor with God. I had turned my back on His love and His will and His way for my life. I had wiped my feet on His Word and was walking in disobedience to Him doing my own thing. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Hebrews 10:26 tells us, “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” I was sinning constantly. I had no repentance. There was no forgiveness because I refused to admit my sin, repent, and stop doing it. Why should we ever take it for granted that we can get by with doing whatever that we want to and still get to heaven? Why should we ever take the attitude that we don’t need to repent, because God has already forgiven us? Why do we need to feel bad for our sin? Some people take the attitude that their flesh made them sin, so it is OK to do that. It wasn’t their spirit that sinned. This makes little sense. I’ve heard people even use that excuse to try to get by with their sin. I Peter 2:16 talks about a cloke that we try to use to hide our sins and warns against this. “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” Jesus said about Himself in John 15:22, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin.” Jesus took away the excuses. He took away all the clokes that can hide our sin. He ripped up the rugs that we try to sweep our sin under. There is now no more excuses, clokes, rugs, or whatever we try to hide behind. Isn’t that wonderful. Isn’t it wonderful that we don’t have anything to hide behind?

How could we ever be set free if we were allowed to get by with our sin? If God excused our sin how would we ever be able to get set free from it? God doesn’t wink at our sin because He has made a way for us to be forgiven, delivered, set free, made new, and victorious. Why do we need to hide it? God made a way for us to overcome it. We just have to be willing to be obedient. We have to yield to Him to let Him work. We don’t have to live a life that is hiding from God. We can’t hide from Him anyway.

Just like when you were small and you were hiding something that you were doing from your parents. You really almost wished that it could be over and you could be welcome again in the circle of their love. Run to the Lord like you did to you parents. He will accept you. No, He won't excuse you. He will forgive you though. He will restore you. He will love you. Be real with Him. Repent. Ask forgiveness. He died to forgive you.

Now let's go back to my story. If I had died before I had made things right with my heavenly Father would I have been outside His circle? Outside, not because He didn't love me, but because I had chosen to walk away? Even though I had been saved at an earlier age, would I have gone to heaven if I had died without making things right-without repenting and asking God to forgive me? The forgiven sin is a sin that has been repented of. Would my salvation have stuck while I was standing between the gates of hell and heaven if I had never repented? Whose fault would that have been? I'm not here to argue a point that has often been argued. (Though I could pull up a lot of scripture here.) However, right now I just want to ask you this question? Should we ever take a chance on doing that? Should we ever walk away from our relationship with God on the chance that we might die in our unrepented sin? Why go there? It is important to obey God. It is important to stay in the circle of His love.

It is important here to talk more about what repentance means. I have been a teacher for many years. If two kids in my class were in the habit of fussing and feuding, I would have them to come up front. They would have to apologize and shake hands. They would have to work it out. As you might guess, sometimes this would work, and sometimes it would not. It depended on how sincere their repentance was.

It depended on how sorry they were for what they had done. If they weren't very sorry, they would turn around and do it again. Have you ever had anyone to say I'm sorry, but do it again in the next little while? How sincere was their repentance? Sometimes we do God the same way. When we say, I'm sorry, then turn around and do it again, over and over, how sincere is our repentance? When we love God with all our heart, we won't do that. We will be so sorry when we do wrong that it tears our heart out because we have let God down. It will crush our heart. We certainly won't go out and do that same thing again. Not willingly.

So we have begun to see what part obedience plays in our salvation and in our relationship with God. The motivation behind our obedience is important. I went through a time when I was fervently doing everything that I could do for God. Working in a ministry, you work for God 24/7 which I love. Then I'd go home and make myself read my Bible and pray. Sometimes our workday was until midnight, so when I say make myself, I don't mean that I didn't love to pray and read the Bible. I just meant that some nights I was so tired that I would grab my Bible because I had to. It was what I was supposed to do, even though I was so tired it made little sense. I wasn't doing this out of a pure heart's motivation. God told me one night just to stop doing that. He actually told me that I was becoming bound by the routine and it was doing me no good. He was right. Isn't He always? When we listen, He's right. When we don't listen, He is right. My heart wasn't in doing this routine. When I stopped making myself do it, being bound to it, I enjoyed it. I wanted to do it more than before. That is how it is with anything that we do for the Lord. Our heart's motive is important in obedience. Love needs to be our main motivation.

If you start doing things out of bondage, out of fear, out of doing them because others expect it, or out of any other reason than because you love God, then it will be hard for you to obey.

There is a group of churches in our area that have a long list of do's and don'ts. I'm not sure where they got the most of them. I think more from man's traditions than from the Word of God. They actually say that if you don't keep this list of do's and don'ts, then you can't have salvation. My question to them is, if that is true, then why did Jesus have to die? It is through His blood shed on Calvary that we can be saved. These people follow this list of do's and don'ts because they are doing it for those around them. Or they follow this list out of fear. All this reminds me of the Pharisee in Colossians 3:23, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." Now I know other people who on their own may have made commitments very similar to those that these legalistic people have made. They don't have anyone telling them that if they don't do these things they are going to hell. There is no one else around them that do these things. They aren't doing it to fit into that crowd, or into that doctrine. They are keeping these commitments out of their love for God. Which group has a better relationship with God? Which group has made the right kind of commitment? Which group will find the most victory in their lives? The motive behind our obedience is important. You can't separate love and obedience.

When you talk about obedience, you have to talk about submission. That isn't a topic that we want to talk about much these days. But you can't separate these two. I had some fine teachers in my day. Then I had some that were not so fine. I remember one elderly lady that came in to substitute at our middle school. She would always carry a bunch of switches.

I am not kidding. She would whack us with them too. This was before we got too sophisticated to paddle kids in school. I must say, though, this lady was a little overboard. Do you think that she had more or fewer discipline problems than some of the other teachers? Do you think that the kids in school had a problem submitting to her? I know I did. Love brings about submission. Submission brings about obedience. You can't hide from the fact though that God also has a side that is judgment. You can't separate the two. The God who called the fire down on Sodom and Gomorrah is the same God that sent His Son to die for our sins. That doesn't make Him a schizoid, a split personality. It makes Him a just and a righteous God. God doesn't take any junk. He is upright and righteous. God doesn't wink at our sin. If He did, where would the world be now? A part of His righteousness is His judgment. Psalm 119:137 tells us, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." Jeremiah 23:5 tells us, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

On the opposite end of the spectrum from the teacher I mentioned, think of those teachers who had no backbone. They weren't able to control their class. You never knew where you stood, because they let anything go. Praise God, God isn't like that either. His judgments are true and righteous, settled forever in heaven. We want to obey Him because He loves us, yes. We want to submit to that love. We also know that if we don't obey Him, we have to face His righteous judgment. God is the perfect mixture between those two teachers. He is righteous, but His love and mercy make a way. He loves us, but His righteousness isn't affected by that love. Today we have lost the fear of God. We have lost our respect of God.

We no longer see Him as being the righteous judge. We only want to talk about His love, but not His wrath. God is both. We cannot understand or know God for real until we see that. We'll talk more in a chapter coming up about God's righteousness and how that fits with His love.

Obedience isn't just an occasional random act. It is a way of life. We can't be obedient and once in a while listen to God, doing what He says. It doesn't work that way. Obedience is a total attitude. It shows our submission to God's Spirit. It shows we have chosen to lay down our own self-will and do it God's way. If we want salvation to stick, both of these are important, submission and obedience. What does the Bible say about obedience?

A lot of the promises we find in the Bible are given with the condition of obedience. For example, how do we become prosperous? You obey God. Joshua 1:8. Read it. How can we bring a blessing to our children? You obey God. Deuteronomy 5:29. Read it. How do we abide in God's love? Obey God. John 15:10. How do we build a house on the rock that will stand through the storms? Obey God. Matthew 7:24. Now let's get down to where the rubber meets the road. What exactly does obedience have to do with salvation? Let's read a couple of scriptures. Matthew 7:21 tells us, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Revelations 22:14 tells us, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." So where does that leave the disobedient? Seems like to me it would leave them outside of the city. It is very important to be obedient.

I heard someone preach a sermon about salvation.

They said that salvation is not based on what we do. God's grace is sufficient. They went on to say that what we do doesn't matter. It is all grace. We don't have to work to earn our salvation. Now all that sounds good. Especially if you want a spiritual life that is an easy breeze without any commitment or labor involved. Especially if you want to be able to get by without doing certain things and you want to get to do some things that you aren't supposed to do. But is this the truth? What does the Bible have to say about it?

First let's look closely at what this guy was saying. I have to admit part of it is right. That is what makes it so dangerous. We can fall into a doctrine that the devil has come up with to confuse us. That doctrine can destroy our soul if we aren't careful. How does the devil trap people? In much the same way that someone traps animals. You can't set a trap that stands out brightly. You have to blend it in with the environment. It was to be hidden. Then the unsuspecting animal falls or steps right in. That is the way the enemy operates. He blends in enough of the truth so that we get caught up in the doctrine or idea. What this trap can ensnare is our eternal soul. Let's go back and look again at what that preacher was saying and take it to God's Word. He said that salvation is not based on what we do, but on grace. God's grace is sufficient. Now God's grace is sufficient. That is true. Where would we be without God's grace? The price that Jesus paid at Calvary is enough. When He said, "It is finished", it was done. However, there are two sides to any work. I can build a perfect interstate highway between two cities. I can sacrifice my labor and blood and backbone to build this road. I can make it an easy straight road. I can even make it free to travel. But if someone refuses to follow the signs and keep on the highway, they will get lost.

Then whose problem is that? My work was done, and done right. Through disobedience they chose the wrong road, and chose not to reach home. That is how it is with salvation. If we don't do it God's way following the road He mapped out for us, we will be eternally lost.

We want to do our own thing and then come up with all the scriptures we can find that we can twist around to justify ourselves. We want to live on the edge of our experience with God and in our relationship with Him. We want to do as little as we can to get by. We don't really want to hear His voice because He might be telling us not to do something that we have already made up our mind that we are going to do. We halfway listen so that we can hear what we want to hear. This leads to us walking in a half way truth that is very dangerous. John 7:16-17 tells us, "Jesus answered them and said; My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." If we aren't doing God's will, we aren't going to know the truth. The devil can hand us anything and we'll swallow it. He will do just that. We'll totally justify ourselves as we swallow his lies, knowing all the time deep down in that it isn't the truth. But we are secretly looking for a way out of truth. So we settle for a half-truth. The root of this whole scene is a spirit of rebellion. That spirit will cause us to want to do whatever it is that we shouldn't do, and it will make us hard headed to go and do what it is that we are told not to do. If God doesn't reveal this to us, we may not realize what is going on. We can't live for God until we submit to Him. We have to lay our will down and have it God's Way.

That is how important obedience is to our salvation. Yes, grace is important. It is very important.

Where would we be without grace? It is what started us on this journey. But obedience is what keeps us on the right road. If we don't stay on the right road, we won't reach our destination. Where is grace in all this? Yes, that preacher was right. God's grace is sufficient. It is rough down here on earth. Without God's grace we'd never make it. Yes, we need God's grace to make it. Oh, how we need it every day. It is God's grace that causes Him to reach down when we are so weary that we can't go on. It is God's grace that reaches down and gets us out of the pit we slide into when we disobeyed Him. It is His grace that sets us on that solid rock when it feels like the bottom is sinking out of the place where we're standing. It is His grace that leads us everyday and keeps us in His love. But that doesn't mean that we don't have to follow. Does it mean that it is all up to Him and we do nothing except what we jolly well want to?

I was trying to reach out to someone who had fallen into this "seem right" way of thinking. I call it that because of the scripture in Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." There were some major areas in his life that he needed to get right with God. There were some things that he needed to quit doing. He went along fine for a while and it seemed like it was OK to do these things. For a while, he heard God's voice in his spirit telling him not to do those things, convicting him. He went on by these road signs. I watched God chastise him as He does his sons. Hebrews 12:6, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Rebelliously he rammed on past those road signs. It has been a while since God has dealt with his heart. He is sidetracked on a road going nowhere, refusing to heed the signs that point him toward home. This is a fearful thing to see happening.

I couldn't make it without God's Spirit to bring me back in line when I go to the side of God's will. We can continuously go our own way, and silence the voice of God by refusing to hear it. We can come to the place that we no longer hear him. Romans 1:17-32 talks about the outcome of this. Please read this. This is the outcome of Christian folks, not sinners. This is the outcome of people who have the truth and walk in disobedience, in unrighteousness. These people were Christians who chose to walk in a seem right way. Zephaniah 3:2 talks about some people like this. "She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God." What about this person that I was talking about? Right now the "lord" is talking to him. He hasn't changed in his disobedience. He still refuses to line up to God's will for his life. The things that God has told him not to do he is still doing. But he feels that he can hear the voice of God. My question? Is it really God that he is hearing? If it isn't, then who is it? A combination of flesh and the devil? He is making life-changing decisions based on those voices. He is beginning to be discouraged because things aren't working out right. He has had bouts with depression and has even from time to time become suicidal. He goes to church every Sunday, but he only hears what part of God's Word he wants to hear. If conviction comes, he quickly runs away. Yes, God can help him, but only when he decides to do it God's way instead of his own way. Only if he starts following the signs and gets back on the right road. He ignores both God's Word and His Spirit that tries to direct him, I wonder where it all will end. If the Lord returns while he is this way, will get to go? There is hope. It is my prayer that his eyes be opened and he faces something that is so hard, so rough, that it brings him to his knees begging for God to have his way.

There he can find a relationship with the Lord that is real. When he finally does, he will be so on fire for God that nothing will be able to stop him.

One of the things that hinders a lot of people from obeying is that they are afraid that they can't do what God is telling them to do. God may be leading them to do something for Him. They don't obey because they are afraid that they can't. Many times it is easy to answer God with an "I can't. I'm not big enough, strong enough in God, wise enough, perfect enough, holy enough, righteous enough, smart enough, or educated enough to obey You, God." We forget that when God asks us to do something, no matter how small or great, He does so knowing that we can do it, either because we already have the abilities we need, or because He is getting ready to give them to us. God knows us better than we do ourselves. He knows our innermost weaknesses and strengths. He will not require us to do something we would only fail at. Why would He do that? As a teacher, I would never give one of the Kindergartners Algebra tests and fail them because they couldn't do it. God is wiser than we are. He would never require you to do something you can't do. He will push you to your limits to cause you to grow. He will add talents and gifts so that you can do far more than you would naturally. He will give you the ability to do what He asks. But He would never, never ask you to do something you can't do, just to see you fail. He loves you.

It is wonderful to be able to trust this great love that He has for you. Many times people hurt us, and the devil sees to it that we are hurt. If we allow it to, these hurts cause us to have things inside of us that separate us from trusting God's love. Also many times, because we have failed to obey God, there is a tall barrier that causes us to be separated from Him.

Can you remember many times as a child, we would do something wrong? We would cover it all up carefully hoping no one would find out so that we wouldn't get in trouble. But then that guilt came. It was worse than a punishment. Punishments just lasted for a short time then they were over. This guilt went on until we were found out and forgiven and everything was made right. What a relief it was when we were found out. Sin and disobedience can cause these kinds of barriers to separate us from being able to know God's love. We need to ask Him to tear away anything in our life that stops us from being able to receive His love. When we do receive it, and we understand its depths we will know that nothing can separate us from His love. Only our own sin and desires of our heart can separate us. When we know this for sure, we can then begin to trust Him. That trust allows us to know that whatever He asks us to do, we can do, if we try with all our hearts.

Some of my best spiritual teachers have pushed me to every ounce of my strength. They always had new things for me to try, new heights to climb in God. I would have never been able to reach for those heights if I had never trusted their guidance and their knowledge that I would be able to do what they asked. I knew when they asked me to do something, that it was something that I could do. It may be that it would be a great challenge, but they knew ultimately that I could do it. I could trust them in that. We can trust God in that, also. He doesn't put on us more than we can bear or handle. He is wise. He loves us. We can trust Him with our very soul's salvation. Don't hesitate to do what He asks you to do. Never say God, I can't. Never come up with excuses with why you can't. If He asks you to do it, then you can, and you will, if you try with all your might. He already knew the outcome before He asked you.

He will answer a multitude of excuses with just a few words. He will simply say, "I am with Thee." There are many stories of people in the Bible that had all kinds of excuses. They had all kinds of reasons where seemingly they couldn't do what God asked them to do. God said that they could. They did. These are also the stories of what they accomplished when they stepped out and obeyed.

Jeremiah is one such person. We don't know exactly how old he was when the Word of the Lord came to Him, but Jeremiah 1:4-5 tells us, "Then the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." God told him how well He knew him. God said, "Even before you were formed in your mother's womb I knew all about you." When God asks you to do something, how well does He know you, your weaknesses and abilities? Even before He formed you, He knew you. God isn't looking for perfect people to serve Him. Jeremiah thought of his greatest weakness (at least in his opinion). He answered God in verse 6, "Behold I cannot speak: for I am but a child." God answered Him in verse 7, "Say not I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I send thee and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." It didn't matter about his weaknesses, he was just to go where God sent him and speak what God gave him to speak. Then in verse 9 God added the finishing touch. "Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, behold I have put my Words in thy mouth." What happened to Jeremiah's excuse? What happened to his weakness?

When we listen to God and obey Him, we can do things that are far greater than anything we can even imagine. We can do all things through Christ.

We may not even understand the impact they will have on those around us. We just follow the Leader, the One whose very thoughts are so far above ours that we can't comprehend them. Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." He makes a way where there seemeth none. If we walk in the paths He makes for us, do what He says, speak what He puts in our mouths, it will astonish us what we can accomplish in Him. Where are our excuses? Where are our weaknesses?

How about Jeremiah? What did God use him to accomplish, just by getting him to follow what He said to do? Jeremiah 1:10 tells us, "I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant." God used Jeremiah to change the course of whole nations. Verse 18 and 19 says, "For behold, I have made thee this day a fenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land, and they shall fight against thee; but they shalt not prevail against thee; for I am with thee saith the Lord to deliver thee." In the course of one conversation with a child, God changed the history of nations. He spoke and gave Jeremiah His Word, which had the divine power to make happen what was spoken. Then He touched Jeremiah's lips and gave him the words that he would need. He spoke the victory Jeremiah would have, that his enemies would not prevail against him. Throughout Jeremiah's life he would have many enemies, but not one prevailed against him. This child, because of God's plan and His Word, became a miracle man.

What can you do for God when He asks you? Can you stand before Him and tell Him that you can't do what He has asked?

Don't look at the circumstances and think that you can't. Don't look at your weaknesses and fail to ever try. If God says you can conquer the land, get ready to conquer it. Don't look at the fact that you may be the only one that hears God and wants to obey. Don't think no one will hear what you have to say. If God says do it and you know this beyond any shadow of any doubt, do it, no matter if the entire world around you says you can't. If God gives you a Word, let His Word cause you to win. Get a vision from God. His Word says if we fail to have a vision, something to do, something to keep going for, something to believe in, something to drive us and press us on, then we will perish. What is the difference in Jeremiah and you? Only you can decide whether you will say yes to God, or "No, God, I can't."

We see that it is important to obey God. We can't find victory in our salvation until we learn to obey. Maybe when you read this chapter you begin to feel that there are some areas in your life that need to be fixed. Maybe you have started to feel that you need to come clean. With God's help, we can clean our house. We'll talk more about that coming up. Next, we'll talk about God's righteousness and how it fits with His love. We need to do the things that God commands. We need to obey Him, because we love Him. We also need to obey Him because we know and fear His righteousness with an awesome respect.

Chapter 6. The Righteousness of God

Psalm 48: 10, “According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth: Thy right hand is full of righteousness.” Psalm 97:2, “Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.” Psalm 119:137, “Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.” Psalm 145: 17, “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.” What does it mean when the Bible talks about the righteousness of God? It is hard for our human minds to understand such a thing. We can’t be perfect. We can’t even understand perfection and what brings it about. Because of that, we tend to run away from anything that seems righteous. We think that if it is something righteous, then what would it want to do with us? We talked in earlier chapters about the love the Shepherd has for us. That is what draws us to God. His love. We often fail to see that without God’s righteousness we couldn’t have His love. Let me illustrate by a human example.

I work a lot with kids and their parents. I never will forget the day that I heard two teenagers discussing their parents. The girl was saying how her parents were so strict. She was complaining because she had to let them know where she was going every time that she went out. She had to be where she told them that she was going to be because often they would check on her to be sure she was there. She wasn’t allowed to hang with certain friends who were in a certain crowd. There was a boy that she liked who wasn’t a good influence at all. She knew it, but wouldn’t admit it to her parents. She wasn’t allowed to date him. He was into drugs and the parents knew that. She went on and on talking to this other teen. He took as much as he could take then he jumped up in her face.

He had tears in his eyes. I never will forget what he told her. “My mother put me out of the house when I was only 14 years old. Her boyfriend didn’t want me around. So it turned out my mother didn’t want me either. I have had to live wherever I could. My mom doesn’t care about where I go or when I come in. She doesn’t even know. She found out that I was on drugs and hasn’t even talked to me about it. She doesn’t care who I am hanging around with even though she knows some of my friends have gotten me into trouble. She just doesn’t want me to make any trouble for her. She doesn’t care. Your parents love you enough to care about where you are going, who you are with, and what you are doing. Don’t you complain to me about them again. I would give anything if I could have parents like that.” By the look on his face when he said that, I doubt that she ever did complain to him again. I think that day changed her life as to how she saw her parents.

That is one of the best pictures of God’s righteousness and how it fits with His love that I have ever seen. Sometimes just like teens, we adults can be pretty spoiled to get our way. We want to do what we want to do even if it is the opposite of what is best for us. We want God there in our life, but we want Him to be like a permissive parent, one who lets us get by with sin. We want Him to take care of us when we are in trouble, but we want Him to leave us alone as far as His demanding commitments and priorities. We don’t want to hear about a righteous God that has an upright, a right standard, One who expects us to live by those same standards. We only want to hear about His love. We don’t want to hear about a God who demands obedience because He knows what is best for us. We don’t want to hear about a God who calls sin sin, who says right is right and wrong is wrong. A God Who says there are no gray areas.

We don't want to hear of the absolutes that are there in His Word because He is an absolute righteous God. Human nature wants to slide by on half-truths. Church, there is a lesson to learn from this young man. If God were to be that kind of parent that some of us want him to be, the kind of parent that girl wanted hers to be, would He love us at all? How can you separate God's righteousness from His love?

I don't need a God who is so busy wavering between right and wrong that I don't even know which is which. I don't need a God who changes His rules like the wind to fit His mood. I don't want a God who has a separate set of rules for each set of people. What was right hundreds of years ago when David lived is still right for you now. Right and wrong hasn't changed. It is settled forever. As settled as God is. Malachi 3:6 tells us, "For I am the Lord, I change not..." God has never changed. Neither has His Word or His truth. There is no modern truth that is better suited to us today. There is no modern church that has that modern Word with that modern God. I read a sign on the front of a church that said, "Not your parent's church."

God hasn't changed. His standards are the same as they were for our parents. If a church thinks that it needs to have something more modern to draw the young people, then they are sadly missing out on giving them the truth. The truth will not change. God is older than time. He knows what is best. That has never changed. He will be the same all throughout eternity as He is now. He is perfect. After all, how can you improve on perfection? As a footnote, I have worked with teens for a lot of years. I have found that they don't want permissiveness. They are smart enough to figure out that doesn't work, just like the girl at the first of this story. Most of them want something to hold and keep them through this tough life.

They need something to keep them through the hellish places they have to walk in. Something that will hold them through what they have to face in life. Give them the truth anointed with the Holy Ghost. Lead them to a right and real relationship with God. Let God do the rest. His Spirit will draw in the crowds. Then when they come, they will find something that is a lot better than a cheap imitation.

David went through a lot. Most of the hard times that he went through was because of his sin. He lusted after a married woman. Laid with her. Got her pregnant. Sent her husband to the battlefield so he would be killed to cover up his sin. He married the woman. He lost that child. Things were rough through all that. It got even worse. Later his son rose up against him in his kingdom to take it from him. He tried to connive and take David's throne from him. Through all that, his son was killed. David knew about sin. He knew how easy it was to get caught up in it. He also knew the pain of the price we have to pay when we allow sin to rule our lives. He knew how important it was to serve a righteous God so that when he sinned, he knew he had sinned. There was no doubt in his mind after God sent His prophet Nathan to tell him that he had sinned. Read II Samuel 12. Nathan was a righteous man. There was no hiding from the truth with him. God sent him as a messenger to tell David of his sin. What was the price for David's sin? II Samuel 12:11 tells us, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun." We read in verse 14, "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."

Sin has an awful price. Romans 6:23 tells us, “For the wages of sin is death...” There is no way to white wash that. There is no way to think it away. It is true and it is the Word of God. When we forget that, then is when we wish that God wasn’t a righteous God. What kind of God would be One who knew this fact, and still allowed His people to get by when they sinned? One who allowed them to make up their own rules as they go along? How much would He love them? This verse is true especially with young people today. The wages of sin is death. I see it when the young girls get out of church, get involved with drugs, get pregnant and lose that child because of complications caused by the drugs. When young people get out and get drunk. They drive and kill themselves, or they kill their friends. They get sexually permissive and contract aids and carry it to others. They get depressed because of all the turmoil in their lives and they take a gun and blow their brains out. The wages of sin is death.

Is it any different with us older generation? Let me give you a true story. A pastor sees a beautiful attractive woman in his congregation. They become friends. It is all harmless to start with. He wants to help her with some of her marriage problems. It all starts with a good motive but little by little, step-by-step something more happens. There is something a little wrong in his walk with God and he has a weak place. The devil uses that to get a hook in his jaw. Little by little this woman’s attention gets flattering to him. After all, he is at the age where he doesn’t find himself attractive. They begin to spend more and more time together. It is fine to have friends outside of the home. They begin to feel a little guilty, but shift that off. Those warnings that God sends begin to sound, but they silence them. After all what they are doing is harmless. Doing it isn’t really a big sin.

They ignore God's conviction and make excuses. There were many excuses that could be made. She was unhappy at home. She just wanted someone to make her feel loved and important. What was the harm in that? Then one day there was that one look, that one touch, that one kiss that changed their lives forever. At first they kept their sin a secret. For a while he still preached against sin. But the fire that once fell from heaven to ignite his words is no longer there. He often stumbles in his words in his sermons, something he never did before. There is no longer any conviction in his sermons. Then the nosy neighbor appears in their lives. The one who sees something suspicious and tells the right person, who tells the right person, and so on, which tells someone in that church. His wife hears. Don't they always. A beautiful marriage of many years that had been sanctioned by God is dead. He looks in his wife's eyes. Her love for him is dead. He looks in the eyes of his children. Their respect for him is dead. Their respect for God is slowly dying. He goes to his church that last time. He steps in front of the congregation to apologize and to resign. He watches his work for 10 years crumble to the ground and die. His ministry is dead. His relationship with the Lord is dying. All from one stupid mistake that seemed so harmless at the time. I wish this story were an isolated one. How many times have we heard it though over and over in the lives of people we know? Whether they were pastors or not. The wages of sin is death. The wages of sin is death. Just like David knew, there is a price to be paid for sin. How fair would God be if He winked at sin and let us continue in our disobedience destroying our lives and the lives of those we love.

David knew the wrath of God against sin. He knew that he wasn't going to get by with his sin.

He knew that he would pay the price that God's righteousness demanded. How did he feel about God's righteousness? You might think after he had suffered through all that punishment that he would be angry at God's righteousness. Go back and read the beginning of this chapter. What book of the Bible is all those verses from that refer to God's righteousness? Who wrote that book? David himself. What might have happened in David's life if Nathan would never have carried God's Word to him? How might his story have ended if God had never punished his sin so that he never did it again? As human nature has it, he probably would have returned to that sin, and it would have been easier the next time. Then even easier the time after that. What kind of king would he have been? He had just seen the fall of Saul because of Saul's disobedience. Saul had lost his kingdom. David did not want to do the same. He loved the righteousness of God because that righteousness was his anchor. How much did he honor Nathan who God sent to warn him? He named one of his own sons Nathan.

God called David a man after his own heart. How could that be? Go back and reread the punishment that God gave him. How could he be a man after God's heart? Surely the Lord couldn't do that to someone and love them. Could He? God never did hate David. He punished him because He loved him. My mother used to say this to me when she was ready to spank me for something I had done wrong, (and when she did that I deserved it). She would say these words that most of us have heard from our mothers. "This will hurt me a lot worse than it will hurt you. But I love you and you have to be punished." You know what. After that punishment, most times I didn't do that again. It took me a while to get the part about it hurting her. Now let's look on the adult side.

I have heard some others say that to their children. Now I know what that means. Also, I know that the wages of sin is death, but I also know the rest of that verse in Romans 6:23. "...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." I know about God's love. Yes, there is punishment, but praise God there is also grace. Sin brings about death, but there is still hope. There is a gift. God is love. Eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. David had found that gift. He looked past the punishment into the eyes of His Savior and found there that there was hope. He was forgiven. He could go on in God's love. You might say, "But Jesus hadn't been born yet. How could David know his Savior's love?" I have a little Bible that has marked all the prophecies about Jesus' birth, his death, His resurrection, and His ministry. Have you ever seen one of those? They are a neat study tool. You would be amazed at all the verses in Psalms that are marked. David had certainly been given a revelation of Jesus. Maybe it was because he needed that glimpse of God's mercy. He knew that the wages of sin was death, but he knew there was more. He trusted in God. He loved God's righteousness. If you have a Strong's Concordance, or another comprehensive concordance, read the number of times that the word "righteousness" appears in the Psalms. Read some of these verses. David revered God's righteousness.

Yes we sin. Yes, we have a nature to sin. But there is no excuse for our sin. There is nothing that will make God wink at our sin. We will face judgment and punishment for our sins. Yes, we will be forgiven, but there is a price that we will pay. Jesus did not die to excuse us from our sins, but to forgive us. To reinstate us as sons of God. David knew the blessing of being restored to God's favor after his punishment was over. God's love remained with him.

God's love remained with him until his death. And beyond that. How do we know? Read his final Psalm that he wrote. It is recorded in II Samuel in 22:1-51. Please read it. It closes with these two verses. "He is the tower of salvation for His king: and sheweth mercy to His anointed, unto David, and to his seed for ever more." Praise God. David had found salvation that stuck. It stuck past his sin, past his mistakes, past his failures. It stuck all the way to eternity.

So, what does all this have to do with us? We live in a day where in the average church, you won't find pastors that preach against sin. They don't want to make the congregation uncomfortable because the congregation doesn't want to be made uncomfortable. (I wonder how uncomfortable David was when Nathan visited him that day.) The Word of God in all its power and truth to change lives and transform souls is not preached because it might offend some one. The Spirit of God is not allowed to come because it is uncomfortable when He convicts and pricks our hearts. It is rare to even find an altar in most churches today. If they do have one it is rarely used. The children grow up in the church and do not know right from wrong because they are not taught. Believe me this is true. I see it every day. Our young people are often caught in messes that destroy their lives because they do not have a moral standard to guide and keep them. They really do not know what is wrong and right. They grow up in church and still are like this. Then they pay the maximum penalty for their sin. I can't help but believe that both the church and the pastors are responsible when these teens pay this penalty. God is a permissive God of love to many. Not a righteous God. What hope do we have that this change? We need to get back to the truth, to the righteousness of God. We need to remember, the ultimate price of sin, that the wages of sin is death.

Then after we allow God's Spirit to convict us we need to repent. We need to fall on our faces at the altar and let God clean our hearts out. We need to clean our house. Then we can find His love, like David.

How can we do this house cleaning that is needed so badly. The next chapter talks about Cleaning Our House.

Chapter 7. Cleaning My House

I have seen some of the worst house cleaners in the world. I have been known to pull a few house cleaning tricks myself. I admit that I started out young. My mom would say, “You can’t go until you clean your room.” Well, you can dump things under the bed and in the closet in a whole lot less time than it takes to put them away. Just don’t open the closet door when you clean that way after you put it all in there. This all worked of course until my mom caught on. (Now admit it. How many of you have done this same thing? Remember those days.) Even today I am guilty of being so busy that I don’t have time to clean really good. I admit I am one of those housecleaners who clean the dirt out of the middle of the floor. I clean up the things that you can see and pray that the things that you don’t see, those things that are not right there out in the open in plain sight, don’t overtake you. Like the cobwebs in the closet corners. Now mind you, I don’t live in filth, but I don’t live in total cleanliness either. Just don’t open my closets and for heaven’s sake don’t look under my bed. 😊

Do you remember when you first got saved? I remember a little boy about middle school age that described his salvation like this. He put it about as right as anybody that I have heard describe salvation. He didn’t use big theological words. He put it very plainly and very nicely. He said, “I feel like Jesus took me by the heels and shook me upside down until He shook all the dirt out.” Can you put it any better than that? Then he said, “I feel like Jell-O inside. All light and fluffy”. Remember when Jesus first shook you by the heels until all the dirt fell out. I remember that everything looked different. Everything was so much brighter. My load rolled over onto His shoulders and He carried it so much better than I did.

I was ready to tell the whole world. Praise God, that is not the only time that we can come clean. Every day, I need to come clean. God can shake the dirt out everyday. We have to just let Him.

I had a precious aunt who used to say, “People are chunks. They just chunk in so much stuff that they are walking chunks. You can tell because some people can’t even hug you. They can’t even love you because they are so chunked up inside.” That is so true. It is so easy to stuff things down inside instead of letting Jesus have it? We get hurt. We stuff it inside instead of running to Jesus and giving it to Him. Instead of letting Him heal it, we just chunk it down in and let it fester. We get offended and we let it become a sore that turns into a chip on our shoulders instead of giving it to Jesus and coming free. We mess up and the devil rides our failure like a saddle horse. We don’t run to Jesus and repent, receiving His wonderful forgiveness. We sin. We chunk it down in and run in self-condemnation instead of wrapping our arms around Jesus and receiving His forgiveness. We struggle with our battles until we get defensive with everyone instead of putting it on the shoulders of the one Who’ll carry our every load. We get attitudes and hang on to them if it is the last thing that we do because we are determined to show them. Show them what a big chunk we can be. We sleep in our clothes refusing to take off our dirty garments because we don’t want to take the time to change. (I am talking figuratively here.) Then we wonder why everybody acts like we have something wrong with us. We don’t bother to look in the mirror of God’s Word because we might have to fix up a little. All we can see is everyone else’s problems. How dare they look like that at us, we think. God wants to make us without spot or blemish, but we won’t submit to His Holy Ghost. We just keep chunking it on down in.

We clean up our house by making it look tidy in the middle of the room, but heaven help the poor soul who dares to look in the closet. For one thing, if they do, all that junk will likely dump on their head. For another thing, we might jump all over them, telling them to stay out of there. It isn't any of their business. Then we chew them up for supper. We forget the day when Jesus took us by the heels and shook the dirt out. We become so accustomed to chunking things in that we forget the liberty in the Lord that we once had. God sets us free. We don't have to be entangled in all that bondage. We need to let the Holy Ghost clean our house. He will do it right. There won't be any cobwebs in the closet with creeping things crawling there when the Lord gets through. Just a new life in Him. We can be made new every day.

God promises that we can be cleansed. Psalm 65: 3 tells us, "Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away." Isaiah 1:18 tells us, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Malachi 3:2-3, "But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Hebrews 9:14 tells us, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" We can have our conscience purged from dead works. Isn't that wonderful. All the dead works of the past are gone. When you give them to Jesus they are gone.

Done with. Over. Dead. Buried. Then you are resurrected in a new life in Christ. Galatians 2:20 tells us, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." The old man, the old sins, the old ways are dead, crucified with Christ. You live now, but the way that you live is in faith of the One Who gave Himself for you. That is powerful. You don't have to worry about the old, the dirty places that you let God clean up. You can go on from there in victory because of that One Who shed His precious blood to cover it all so that you could be made new in Him. Each and every day of your life. Praise God, you don't have to be a chunk.

How can you get rid of the things that you have chunked down in? Those things that you have stored in those closet corners. You have to be willing to give them up. You can't hold on to them and get rid of them. It won't work that way. You have to repent. You have to turn away from it all and be willing for the Lord to reveal it all to you. Anything you keep will be like a fish hook in your jaw tied to the devil's fishing pole. Let God purge you. Let God clean you up. Inside and out. I don't just mean when you first get saved. Renew this everyday. If you want victory in your salvation, if you want salvation that sticks, let God cleanse you. Let His Spirit get in to the closet. Let it dissolve the chunks. Let His Word work in your life renewing your mind bringing right thinking. Then you have to accept the work that He has done in you. One sure way to undo the conviction, repentance, forgiving, and cleaning process in your life is to allow condemnation to stop you. Condemnation will creep in and choke the life out of you. It will cause you to think this way, "What is the use. I can't get free from this mess. I don't deserve God's victorious life.

Who do I think that I am to try?" The enemy specializes in condemnation. God's Word says in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Accept God's forgiveness. Don't accept the condemnation of the devil who wants to separate you from God's love.

I am not saying here that we need to get saved everyday. That a one-time salvation experience isn't good enough to last. I am not saying that at all. But for heaven's sake don't get saved, then stop letting God purge you and cleaning you up. Some people do. That is why they never have victory in their relationship with God. Too many things get between them and God. Malachi 3:3 tells us that God will purify us. God will refine us. Not just once, but He will polish us up as much as we'll let Him. As much as we'll yield to Him. We not only can have a clean house, but one that shines with the presence of the Lord. When we are cleaned up and all the dirt is removed, we'll have more room for the Spirit of God. There won't be as many things to interfere with His wonderful work that He will do in our lives. We can then begin to walk in the Spirit.

Chapter 8. **The Holy Ghost**

Today, Jesus Himself, through the power of the Holy Ghost, can come in your heart to live. You see, before Calvary, the anointing of God could only rest on certain people for a time or a season. This was because of sin. Because of the Holy nature of God, the Spirit of God could not dwell in a temple filled with sin. We had to receive forgiveness and cleansing before God could dwell in our hearts. Because Jesus died on Calvary to forgive us of our sins, the Holy Ghost can come in to our hearts. Now I am a firm believer that when we are saved we receive a measure of the Holy Ghost. But there is more to receive. There is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost or the filling of the Spirit. How have I come to that conclusion? One-I have studied out the scriptures. We will go over many of the ones that I have studied in this chapter. Secondly-God Himself revealed to me that it was real and it was for me. When I first heard about it, I went to God and trusted Him to lead me. He led me in understanding about it and led me to receive it. Thirdly-I received it for myself. No one can tell me that it isn't real. When you possess something, you know that it is real. I know what a change it made in my life. I can also say that without the Baptism of the Holy Ghost I would not be here today. It gave me the power that I needed to stand. There is no need for anyone to try to hint that it isn't real. Fourth-I know zillions of other people that possess it. So how can you argue with all of that?

Through the Holy Ghost, an incarnate, eternal, all powerful, all knowing, all encompassing, perfect God can come right into your heart to dwell. You are the temple of the Holy Ghost. You have God Himself within you through salvation and the Holy Ghost.

He is birthed in you through His Word because of His Son who gave His life at Calvary. That is powerful. If we can really get hold of that knowledge, it will deliver us from a lot of bondages that the devil has around us. Think about this for a moment. You have in you God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. You have God's Word for that. Now what about those insecurities that bind you? What about that self-condemnation? What about that fear of failure that prevents you from starting a work for God? What about the fear of the devil and his destruction? What about that fear of sickness? What about those circumstances that you can't rise above? What about those people who try to control and bind you? What about that thing that God has told you to do but you don't because you say you can't? What about that scared little child in you that stays huddled up in the corner instead of jumping right in the middle of all God has for you? What about those days when you feel like a certain failure? What about those situations that you just don't have the wisdom to know how to handle? What about those weaknesses that keep pulling you back? Now before you get all bogged down headed in the wrong direction, let's go back and reread these this idea that we talked about before we started the questions. You have within you God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost. Now go back and read those questions again. At the risk of seeming very foolish, reread those questions. Are you catching a glimpse of what I am saying? You have the Spirit of God within you. You have Jesus Christ in you through the power of the Holy Ghost and God's Word. What have you to fear? What have you to fear? That is one of the things accomplished at Calvary.

I want to take a minute or two here to talk about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost again. Now hold on a minute. You may never have heard of this before.

You may be someone who does not understand what that is all about. You may have even been taught that it isn't real. You may have even been taught that it is a doctrine to fear. It is not something to be scared of. It is just simply God. I understand where you are if these things are true for you. I did not even hear about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost until I was in my 20's. I knew a little about it, but the little I knew was dangerous. If we only know enough about something to cause us to fear it, then the little we know is dangerous. But you see, I was saved when I was a young girl. In my older teenage days, I rebelled against God and got tangled up in drugs and alcohol, and you name it. By the time I was in my early 20's, I had totally destroyed my life. When I rededicated my heart and life to God, He was my only hope. I needed help and fast. I needed power to withstand my past. I needed the power to stand against the enemy who was trying to destroy me. I needed all I could get. Praise God. When I heard about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost I definitely didn't run away from it. I was hungry to receive anything that I could, and I opened up my arms and ran toward it. If you haven't received the power of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, remember that it is for you. I pray that through these pages you run to it just like I did.

I have put here a chapter from my book, ***Walking in the Spirit***. It is titled "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost". By the way, it is a good book if I do say so myself. It is help in learning more about walking in the Spirit. *Trying to walk in the Spirit without having the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is like trying to race a 2006 sports car with a model T engine. You just won't have the power to win the race. I grew up not hearing about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I grew up in an area that had been blinded and bound to think that this gift of the Spirit was not real.*

I was taught that when you were saved, you got all of God's Spirit that there was. I was taught that after salvation, you had it all. I grew up not knowing a thing at all about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Through a miracle, God brought me into contact with a church that believed in the Baptism of the Spirit. After I received it for myself, no one could tell me that it wasn't real. It was the key that brought me victory over a life that had been bound by sin, drugs, and alcohol.

The devil had worked overtime in much of my life to destroy me because he knew that I would one day serve God. Maybe you are going through the same thing. Maybe it seems like every time you try to get up, you get knocked back down. You know in your heart that you should walk up-right before God, but every time you take one step forward it seems you get knocked three back. You may be about to give up in defeat, which is exactly what the devil wants you to do. It may be that he sees that up ahead, you will bust his little kingdom wide open in some area. You may be sitting there thinking that it is hopeless. That there is no use to keep trying. You won't make it. The devil has you where he wants you. You think it is because you are worthless. It may be because you are getting ready to rise up and be what God has chosen for you to be. It is your choice. If you give up now, you will never know. Maybe the key for you to overcome is the same as it was for me-the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

When I first learned about it, I got it. I grabbed hold and didn't let go. There was none of that intellectual twisting around that a lot of people do. I knew that this was the key for a victorious life and I turned it. Even though I had grown up hearing that it was not right, when it came time for me to accept it, I knew I needed it. That settled that. Don't read about this and talk yourself out of believing it.

Don't talk yourself out of knowing that it is real, and that it is for you. God said it is, so let that be the end of that.

Now over 25 years later, I can say that no wonder the devil tried to keep me blinded. I have been working full time for God for over 25 years, and will continue to do so. Not in my own power, but in the power of God's Spirit. I had to be hungry enough to submit myself to allow God to do things His way. I had to take Him and His Word at face value. I had to receive the gift that He had for me. I have never regretted it. God will allow His Spirit to control only the things that we allow Him to control. When we say, God, I have decided to do it your way. Come and fill me up to the brim. Then we are ready for the Baptism of God's Spirit. He fills us up all the way with His Spirit. That is what the Baptism of God's Spirit is all about. Here is what God has to say about it in His Word. We first read about it in Acts Chapter 2. Here we read that the disciples were all gathered in one mind and accord. In verse 4 it tells us, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." What was the outcome of this? Those few who were hiding in fear after the crucifixion, became bold enough and so full of God's Spirit that they turned the world upside down. Without the Baptism, they would not have endured to start the church, and keep the Gospel that was committed to us today. Verse 41 tells of the outcome of that day, "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." This didn't stop here. We read about this throughout Acts. In Chapter 8, verses 14-17, these men received the gifts of the Holy Ghost. In Chapter 10, verses 44-48, the Holy Ghost is again on the scene filling the Gentiles.

In Acts 19: 1-6, these men also received the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they had believed. These men were already saved, but they had something in addition to salvation that they were about to receive. They answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." In verse 6 the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied. I think of myself when I read their answer to Paul, "We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost." I hadn't heard, but God found me anyway. How do you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost? I was blessed to find a church that believed this way. The congregation laid hands on me and prayed for me in the same way that Paul laid hands on the men in Acts 19:6. But I still didn't receive it that night that they prayed. Several nights later, when I was by myself, the Holy Ghost fell on me and I was filled. I prayed in tongues for the first time that night. You can receive it through the prayers of others, or you can receive it through your own prayers. It is a gift of God that He has given us to empower us against the battle of satan. It is a gift that gives us boldness in our witness, like it did those on that first day. It is for you. I have heard many people argue against the Baptism of the Holy Ghost being real. They argue that it is not for us today. When I hear this, I know several things about those people. I know that they are ignorant of God's Word. In Acts 2:38-39 we read, "Then Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." I would say that means us too. I also know when I hear people argue that the Baptism is not for us today, that

these people do not know God. I know that He wants the best for His children. He wants us to overcome and be victorious. I also know that we live in the last days, which has to be one of the hardest times to live on the earth. Why would God give a gift to help the early disciples, tell us about it, and then deny us the right to have it or make it so that it is not available to us who need it the most? That is not the God I know.

I think that one of the things that hinders people in receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is that it comes along with the gift of speaking in tongues. For many, that is a stumbling block. This is because the devil wants to scare people away from our being able to pray in the Spirit, or pray in tongues. What it means when we pray in tongues is that the Spirit of God prays through us in His own language. He is praying directly through us using our vocal chords. We may not understand what He is saying, though sometimes He will allow us or others to interpret. Whether or not we understand, the devil knows when we start praying that something is being done to bind him and to loose the power of God on the scene. No wonder he works overtime to confuse people about this powerful gift. Have you ever wanted so badly to pray for someone but didn't know how to pray? All you could do was to say a general half way prayer, when you know you needed to do more. The Holy Ghost knows exactly how to pray in God's perfect will. When He prays through you that is a powerful prayer that will get the job done. Also, when we pray in the Holy Ghost it strengthens our inner man, Who is the Spirit of God in us. (Jude 20, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." When we are filled and consumed with the Spirit of God, and we allow Him to pray in us, we are submitted to His Spirit in a way that nothing else can do.

We strengthen His Spirit in us. We submit our flesh and our flesh man takes second place in our life. With all that going on our flesh doesn't stand a chance. God's Spirit rises strong in us and we take on His likeness.

Now you may interrupt me here to say, what about the people who receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and wind up turning their back on God, or they sin in a big way and take on a life of sin instead of a life with God? Just because you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost it doesn't make you perfect. You still have your flesh man. If you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost is still not allowed to control your life, then flesh will. That is why it is important to allow the Holy Ghost to move in you. Pray in the Holy Ghost daily. Don't hinder the Spirit of God when He starts to move in or through you, whether it be in church or at home. Allow God's Spirit to control. Then He will be there when you need Him. One of the greatest stories I have ever heard about the power in the prayer of the Holy Ghost is this. The Holy Ghost moved on a man and began interceding through him. The man had no idea why, but he obeyed and yielded. God spoke to him to take note at what time this had happened. The next day he heard about a close friend who had been stabbed. That had happened at exactly the time that the man had prayed. The other man's life had been miraculously spared. Another time I heard about a man on a plane who had interceded through the Holy Ghost. After they landed, they were told of a mechanical failure that had nearly caused them to crash, but miraculously the failure had corrected itself. The man who had prayed had no idea, but God knew. Thousands of times I have heard stories how the Holy Ghost had interceded by speaking in tongues through those who had the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The situation was corrected, the life was saved, the soul was saved, the person was delivered, or whatever need there was, it was met. There is no prayer that is more powerful than the prayer of the Holy Ghost Himself. If you do not have the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, ask God for this. Seek it. The Bible says that when we seek God, or His gifts, we will find them. Who says so? Jesus. Luke 11:9, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Read this section of scripture through verse 13. In verse 13 we read, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

If you haven't received the Baptism, ask for it. It is a gift, and God would love for you to have it. If you have received it, realize that just receiving the Holy Ghost doesn't mean that you have arrived. We still have to day-to-day walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. We have to let the Holy Ghost rule and reign in our life daily. We have to walk in the Spirit to find the victory that God has promised us. It will give us power to find a salvation that sticks. You can read more about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost in the book titled *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*.

Chapter 9. The Dog You Feed The Most

A man had two little pups. Someone asked him, "How can you tell which one will grow up to be the biggest?" The man answered, "The one that I feed the most." Makes sense. We have two natures in us. We have the flesh that is born to be trouble. Romans 8:5-10 and verse 14 talks about this. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, He is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The flesh is definitely bad. When we yield to the flesh, we even become an enemy with God. We may not mean to be. No matter. We still are. Our flesh at its best is not enough. That is why it is so important to be filled with the Holy Ghost and walk in the Spirit. We then let Jesus rise up to be Lord inside of us, and in our lives.

When we are saved, we have a New Man in us, Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost. Then if we receive the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, we strengthen the Spirit Man inside of us in a phenomenal way. Which one will rule in our lives determines whether or not our salvation will stick.

Which one will rule? Which one will be the biggest? The one that we feed the most. Let me give you some examples.

I know someone who is a Christian. This is his daily diet. He seldom reads His Bible. He seldom prays. He is seldom in the fellowship of Christian people. He works constantly with non-Christians. He never listens to gospel music. Instead he has a steady diet of country music. He listens to it to the place that those words of those songs stick in his mind instead of words of Gospel songs. He constantly plays video games that have a lot of bad language in them. He doesn't mind watching movies or TV shows with off-colored language or whatever else. He has become calloused to all these things. He no longer feels God's conviction. He did at one time but he was so determined to do these things anyway that he ignored it. Now he doesn't feel it. It doesn't bother him to be this way because it is his routine. It is the rut that he is in. He is bound to these things and doesn't realize that the enemy has gotten him in this rut. This is his Spiritual diet. Can you guess what kind of victory that he has in his life? Is he being submissive to God's will? Is he yielded to God's Spirit? There is still a part of him that wants to be, but he is unwilling to change his diet. The pup you feed the most will grow the most. So how do we make sure that the Spirit pup gets fed the most in our lives?

One of the keys to a good spiritual diet is prayer. Prayer is so important. It is more than just asking God for things. It is our relationship with God. What is the evidence of your relationship with someone? How is a relationship carried out? By communicating. How do you reach out to those you love? By talking to them. How do you reach out to God? By talking to Him. By prayer. But just like in any relationship you have, listening is important too.

Too often our prayers are filled with "give-me's" and no thank yous. With wants and not praises. What kind of a relationship is that? Do you know that you can minister to the Lord? If you have a Strong's Concordance look up the word minister. Most of those references that are given refer to people who ministered to the Lord. Now true the references are referring to the priests who were to minister to the Lord. With that in mind lets read I Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." We are so busy wanting the Lord to minister to us that we never realize that the Lord wants us to minister to Him as well.

He delights in your praise. Hebrews 13:15 tells us, "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." The Lord delights in the love and fellowship of His people. He delights in fellowshiping with you as much as He did with Adam and Eve when He walked in the garden with them in Genesis 3:8. Nothing gets God's attention quicker than our love and our praise. Sometimes though, like spoiled children, all we give Him are our wants. Praise Him for Who He is. Praise Him for His wonderful grace. Praise Him for His power and His righteousness. Praise Him for being your heavenly Father. Praise Him for caring for you. God doesn't have to pay attention to us. He doesn't even have to be mindful of us. He doesn't even have to notice that we are down here on this puny little planet. Yet He not only notices us, He notices you specifically. He notices you to the point that every hair on your head is numbered. He knows where you are in life and what you need even before you ask. He loves you.

Respect and honor Him. Love Him for that precious love He has for you.

There is an old song that says “He didn’t have to do it but He did”. He didn’t have to send His son to die for us, but He did. He didn’t have to love us but He did. He didn’t have to bless us, but He did. Jesus didn’t have to die on Calvary, but He chose to. Why? To show us His love and the love of the Father. So that we could walk with them in that same love that they have for us and for one another. We humanly can’t even understand God’s love. Our love is so selfish and self-centered. It is not self-sacrificing. Our flesh binds it. We can’t understand God’s perfect love. God is love. Our love compared to His is like a man with a glass of water standing in front of the ocean. We only have a little, but we still need to give Him all we have. Why? Because He deserves it. He has earned it. He has given and now it is our turn. God wants your fellowship. Nothing feeds the Spirit side of us more than prayer and praise. We’ll talk more about the importance of prayer in a chapter coming up. It deserves a whole chapter to itself.

The Word of God also strengthens our Spirit Man. Deuteronomy 8:3 tells us, (I am quoting the second half of the verse) “That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.” Sound familiar. Most of us know that scripture as being Jesus’ reply to the devil when he was being tempted in the desert. In Job 23:12, Job talks about one of the ways that he overcame the temptation of the devil in his life, “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips: I have esteemed the Words of His mouth more than my necessary food.” Job held onto God’s promises and eventually saw God’s blessings. The Word of God will strengthen our Spirit Man.

Not some watered down version where our doctrine has caused us to ignore whole sections of scriptures or misinterpret them. But the whole truth of the Word of God as revealed by the Holy Ghost to our Spirit. That is what feeds that inner man. The Word of God will feed our faith. It will guide our steps. It will strengthen us. It will be our sword in battle. Where is your Bible? When is the last time that you buried yourself in its pages letting God's Spirit reveal it to your heart? Are you hungry for God's Word? Or are you too busy packing into your spirit all the world's junk food to have time to feast on the wholesome goodness of His Word? We need to make it a priority to read God's Word. Being filled with the Holy Ghost, daily walking in the Spirit as we've discussed in chapters before this, definitely feeds the right pup. It gives us power to overcome. We will talk more in a chapter coming up about the power of God's Word. It too deserves a whole chapter.

Another way to feed the Spirit Inner Man is fellowship with God's people. There is a reason why God established the church and commands us in the Word to attend. Hebrews 10:25 tells us, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." Now if our church is so full of this world that the Spirit of God is not there, then it won't strengthen your Spirit man. If flesh rules in the hearts of the people, then flesh will be strengthened in you. That is why it is so important to go to a church where the truth is preached, the Spirit anoints, and the people walk in the Spirit. Most of you work in sinner environments. A few of us are blessed to work around all Christians, but that is a rare thing. Most of you spend 5 days a week, or more, subjected to all kinds of filth that comes out of their mouths. Their talk is carnal.

Their advice to you is flesh. Their way of thinking is warped when compared to the Word of God. Isn't it like a breath of fresh air when you are able to change that environment for that crowd at the church? Don't be the last one in the door at the church and first one out. Good Christian fellowship feeds the right pup. One of the devil's tactics is to cause us to miss out on this. He'll create circumstances to make it look like someone at the church is offending us. Or someone is talking or thinking bad about us. By doing that, he can isolate us from our family of God. You need them. They need you. Don't get separated. Fellowship with God's people will strengthen you in the Spirit.

So does good old Gospel music. Brother Goad, our ministry director has preached this message several times. He makes this statement. We need to have a radio check. We need to go out in the parking lot this morning and check and see how many cars have their radio dials tuned into Gospel stations." Then he says, You show me a Christian that has country or rock playing on their car radio and I'll show you a person who lacks the victory in their lives. You can't fill your mind with all the world's garbage and have victory with God. You don't feed the flesh that junk and be strong in the Spirit of God. If you are listening to that stuff and the Lord isn't convicting you then something is also wrong with your salvation experience. You are silencing the voice of God. If you are listening to anything other than Gospel, then you aren't listening to the voice of God. He will then make the statement, "If we did a radio check in the vehicles of most of the cars sitting in most church parking lots you'd find them tuned into something besides Gospel music." Some people tell us, "But I can't get a good gospel station on my car radio". Do you have a CD player or tape player in your vehicle?

Make it a priority to use it. If not, silence and spending that time praying, or praising the Lord is better than silencing the voice of God.

Well, lets go back to the beginning of this chapter where I mentioned my friend and his diet. He recently went through a terrible battle. Everything went wrong. He just about gave up on God entirely. He became depressed and couldn't find hope. One day he was driving down the road and got behind someone with *God Is Love John 3:16* on their bumper sticker. Thank the Lord for Christian bumper stickers. You never know what they do. He went home and picked up his wife's Bible for the first time in many, many months. It fell open to the page with John 3:16. He knew that the Lord was trying to get his attention. This time he listened. He later told me that he had lost hope because he had forgotten God's love. He had grown up in church but his worldly diet had choked out his knowledge of God's love and the things of God out of his spirit. He is starting to look up now. He is on his way back home. The first step he'll have to make is to change his spiritual diet. He will have to decide that he doesn't want all those things in his life any longer. He will have to set his priorities. Now, though, he realizes that those things that he thought were so important at one time aren't as important as his eternal soul. The pup that you feed the most will grow the most. Which pup are you feeding?

One important way to be sure that we feed the right pup will be when we decide that we need to let ourselves go. If old number one is determined to be the center in our life, then God and His Spirit in us will not be in control. Self has to go. Flesh wants to rule and have its way. How can we come to the place where we allow Jesus to be Lord? Read on.

Chapter 10. Let Your Self Go

A key to finding victory in your life is being able to let your self go. I don't mean that you get rid of all your inhibitions, and let your self go. I don't mean that you let yourself go wild, letting your hair down so to speak. I mean that you let go of old "Mr. Flesh", old "Mr. Self-will". Self has to die. If you want to be victorious in Jesus, then Jesus has to be Lord of your life. If you are a spoiled person in a way, someone who has to have it his way, it is a given fact that you aren't obeying God completely and totally. It is a given fact that you aren't walking in the Spirit. It is a given fact that you aren't letting God clean your house. That you are feeding your flesh more than your spirit. Admit it. It is human nature to want to do your own things. We have a streak of that. Some more than others. If all these things are true though in our lives, and we haven't allowed God to change this, then we will lack victory in our salvation.

We may think that we know what is best for our life. We may think that certainly our own will is important. After all, if we don't control our life, someone else will, right? You are right. That One Who will control our life is the One Who paid a dear price for you on Calvary. He paid the price to be able to control your will. He doesn't want to take it away from you. He wants you to yield it to Him. He wants to lead you into all the promises in His Word. He wants to change you, shape you, and mold you into someone who can make a difference in your world. He wants to bring you to the place where you have peace and joy in Him. You will never find real victory in Jesus, until you let Him have your will. It isn't human nature to want to yield. Flesh wants to be in control of every situation you are in. That is the battle. We have to yield our way, our will to God.

Only when we yield our self-will do we let the will of God work in our lives. Being in control only hinders God from being able to work in us, through us, and for us. Until we let go of a failure, God can't work to change it to a victory. Until we let go of a problem, God can't move in the solution. Until we let go of a bad situation, God can't work that miracle. Until we let go of flesh, God can't move by His Spirit. The key to letting God move in your life in a supernatural way is letting go. Give it up and give it all to God.

God doesn't move when we can, He moves when we can't and we get out of the way so that He can. There is a victory in this that will change your life if you can just get hold of this. Yield. Yield. Let God have His way in our life. You can't obey God until you do. People who aren't yielded always come up with some reason why they have to go over this way or that way instead of where the Spirit is going. They can't do what everyone else is doing, those that are going with the flow. They have to be over here to the side doing their own thing. If what they are doing doesn't get as much attention as something else, they either stop that and move on to where they can get in the limelight, or they cause a situation where they can get noticed. Even though they don't mean to, they often become more of a hindrance than help. Picture the will of God like it is a river. The current is swiftly pulling you along in God's direction, leading you to a victorious life. Everyone else is flowing in the same current, working together for the Lord. Picture someone flowing gently in that stream, God's will carrying them. Now picture someone who is determined not to yield to God's will. They are continually swimming against the current. Or they are busy swimming across the current. There is no peace for them, only a struggle. No rest for them. If something doesn't change, they will eventually give up the fight.

Or they will drown. What is their only hope? To give up their struggle and turn and flow with the current. To stay in God's will for their life. To yield their way to God's way. Do you know anyone who has been a Christian for many years who suddenly turned their back on God and went back to the world and to sin? Why? They got too tired of fighting the current? They wanted their way and God's way too. They struggled upstream in their Christian walk until they just couldn't struggle any more. I am here to tell you that you don't have to struggle any more. God will be your strength if you will just let go of your own strength. God will be your love if you will just let Him. God will help you to overcome those things that you are struggling through if you will just let Him. Most of the time when we go through a hard time, people say, "Don't give up. Stand your ground." This time though we have to say instead "Give it up. Give it to Jesus. " When you do, you'll find a victory greater than you could even imagined. Your struggle will be over.

How do we know that we are truly the Sons of God? This comes when we are doing His will instead of our own. You can know that you are hidden in God's love and in His care. You can know that you are His child and that He will bless you and keep you. You can know that your struggle can end there in His love. You just have to let go and let God be in control. This should be our prayer found in Psalm 143:10, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God; thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness." God can lead you into that land of uprightness if you will just follow Him.

John 7:17 tells us, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Why are there so many weird doctrines and beliefs, so many different ideas?

Because so many people don't give up their will to do it God's way. They start a little doctrine that allows them to do it their way. Instead of flowing downstream, they paddle to the side and build a little dam to sit on. Problem with this is when the waves and storm come, it washes them away. Anytime we do that we will always be in the wrong place at the wrong time because flesh instead of God is leading us. Make sure that your doctrine is the whole truth and nothing but the truth. In John 8:31-32 Jesus told them, "...If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." If you obey the Lord and continue in His Word, then you will be free. If you have to constantly make excuses to God's people or be on the defensive for how you believe, you may not be walking in the truth. Now notice I said God's People. Other Spirit led obedient folks. How do we know if we are in the truth? Get out God's Word. Get on your knees. I mean to get on your knees in your heart. Give up self will. Get sin out of the way. Pray through, repent and get forgiveness. Yield to God. Ask Him to reveal His Word to you through the power of His Holy Spirit. You will find His truth. Psalm 40:8 tells us, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

Preachers, here is an added footnote to you in verse 9, "I have preached righteousness, in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowedst." If you want to lead a congregation, be sure that you lead them in the truth. What an awesome responsibility. Pastors, if you have trouble submitting to the will of God in your life, then don't be surprised if a rebellious spirit takes over your congregation. You can't lead people to submit and to flow with God's Spirit if you aren't doing so yourself. How can you teach, if you don't do what you teach?

If your congregation isn't walking in the Spirit how will you know? Here is a test. Is there often strife and contention popping up among them? Do you have several that are not in the current as we were talking about, but they are over to the side busily doing their own thing? Do you have some that are puffed up because they aren't the center of attention? Is flesh with all the petty little differences that it brings ruling instead of the Spirit of God and the love that it brings? How can you bring about a change? You have to first identify that there is a need. Then you need to make sure that you are walking in the Spirit yourself, so that you are leading those in your congregation to do so. If you aren't, you need to repent and be real with yourself and with God. Ask the Spirit of God to move in your midst, and make Him welcome. Let God do a work in you and in your congregation. Call your church to their knees. After all, letting His Spirit have His way is what church is all about to start with.

OK. Here we are with self-evaluation time. Here are a few questions for you to ask yourself. Am I submissive to God? Do I yield to Him? Do I let Him have His way in my life? Could it be that you are struggling upstream instead of flowing in the current of God's will and His Spirit? Are you happy and at peace in your relationship with the Lord? Here is another test to see if you are submitting to the Lord. How do you react when people tell you what to do? Do you get on the defensive and tell them to mind their own business? Do you refuse to accept help because you have to prove to yourself that you can do it on your own? Do you take people's advice, or do you have to prove what you can do and what you know? Can you submit to others? If you can't, then it is a guess that you are not submissive to God either. Yielding to others comes when you yield to God.

If you get your back up with the people around you, then more than likely you have your back up with God as well. When we accept God's will, it is a lot easier to accept the wills of others around us. I am not meaning hear the will of those who are trying to get us to go against God's will. I mean the guidance and help of those that we love. We can't always have it our way. To find victory, have it God's way. Let Him be number One.

We can truly begin to Lean on Jesus when we let Him be in control of our lives. Then we can find His peace. We'll talk more about that coming up. When we yield to the Lord, we can take off the yokes and bondages that we have. Coming up next, how to take off the yokes.

Chapter 11. Taking the Yokes Off

We live in a world where fear is literally controlling people. The fear of failure, the fear of the unknown, the fear of what is going on in the world even though it has nothing directly to do with you, all are very real fears. Stress and fear cause not only those who don't know God to lose their victory, but it also binds a lot of God's people. God doesn't want us to live in bondage. He doesn't want us to have yokes. Isaiah 58:6 says, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

What is a yoke? This was a wooden harness strapped around beasts of burdens so that they could pull their load, their cart, or whatever things they had to do. The donkey, or ox would have to pull these wagons, or whatever load they had fastened to them by these yokes. The loads of some masters were cruel. They had to drag around unmerciful burdens, sometimes even carrying them to the grave. That yoke made them subject to their masters. As long as they had that yoke on, they couldn't be free. They were bound.

Picture this for a minute. Picture a huge ox. He has on a yoke. He is pulling a load much too heavy for him. His master works him literally until he is ready to drop dead. He can't be set free from the load or the master because of that yoke. Then the day's work is over. The yoke is taken off. Can you imagine how that old ox rolls around in the dirt and shakes himself? He is free. Free from the burden he carried. When his master comes back, he might not catch that old ox this time as easily as he did that day before. He'll catch him only if that big old ox submits to him enough to allow him to put that yoke on him.

Only if it allows him to fasten another load to it.

We are a lot like that old ox. The devil convinces us that it is OK to have to wear many of the yokes that we wear. He sneaks in and puts it on us when we aren't looking. Then he tricks us into accepting the yoke and the load it is attached to. He knows that if we ever see them and decide to take them off, we will take them off. He puts on us yokes of fear, worry, anger, and bitterness. Then he attaches another load to that yoke. Loads like condemnation, separation from God's love, doubt. We pull that heavy thing around until it wears down our spiritual energy and victory. We pull that old load around until we drop in our tracks. Every step we take the enemy puts another brick in our wagon. Our faith starts to waver as we wonder, "God, why aren't you helping me? Why have you put this load on me?" We look at the load until we can't see around it and lose hope because it is way too big to carry. Then we just quit trying. We say to ourselves, "I knew there was nothing to that religious stuff anyway." A lot of Christians start out wanting to serve God in victory but wind up quitting because of the yokes of the enemy. So what is the answer?

Jesus said, "Take my yoke on you." Let's read Matthew 11:28-30. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." When we learn of Jesus and we cast our load on Him, our burden is light. When we have His yoke, then there is no room for the one the devil has for us. When we have His yoke, He is there to help us to carry the load. His load is light. When we learn of Him, we know that we no longer have to carry the yokes of the enemy. What happens next time the enemy comes?

If he comes against us with fear, we repeat a scripture. Like II Timothy 1:7, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." When he tries to put on us the yoke of depression, we remind him, and ourselves, of the scripture in Nehemiah 8:10, "...for the joy of the Lord is your strength." When the world around us seems like it is falling apart and the devil tries to put on us the yoke of stress, we can say, My confidence is in the Lord. I will not be moved. Jeremiah 17:7-8, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

We don't have to accept the yokes of the enemy. We don't have to be bound. Our part is to make up our mind that we are tired of certain yokes. Sometimes we have bondages in our life because we are convinced that there is nothing we can do but accept them. That is part of the devil's job to do that. Sometimes we have bondages because we settle for something. At least until it gets so bad we have to do something about it. Why settle for it at all? We have to stop allowing the enemy to put yokes on us. You will be bound until you decide that you have had enough and you go to God and do something about it. Just like that old ox, if you don't stoop your head over to accept that yoke then the enemy can't put it on you. Refuse it. Shake yourself. Roll over and get out of there. You have authority over the enemy. God has placed the devil under your heel, not around your neck. The Word of God doesn't give the devil victory. It gives the victory to the church. The promises of the Word of God give you victory. You are a winner. You have a God-given right to be victorious.

The devil has a God-given right to be a loser. When he tries to bind you down, slip that old yoke onto his shoulders for a change. That is where it is supposed to be. You have God's Word for that. Matthew 16:19 tells us, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." You have the right and authority given to you by Christ Himself not only to take that yoke off, but also to put it on satan's shoulders and bind him. We have this all backwards sometimes.

Sometimes fear becomes bondage because we don't realize it is there. So does stress. I am so bad myself to load up on things. I will start having physical problems. I will think to myself where is that coming from. I go to the Lord. He will show me all those little stressful things that I have rolled up like a ball. One by one, I cut them loose and give them to the Lord. My tension eases. There is one requirement to this that is needed to make it all work. You have to take time to stop, listen, and obey. God can nudge you and let you know something is piling up on us. But if you don't take time enough to decide that you aren't carrying that around with you anymore, you'll be stuck with it from now on. A lot of times we wear a yoke because we have never taken the time to deal with it and get it off. The devil is an expert at getting our eyes off the problem so that we won't fix it. He loads us up so that we can't see what is going on. Especially if our priorities are out of line, and our life is filled with all kinds of junk. He will have us on a treadmill running nowhere at break neck speed. That in itself is a yoke that will destroy our spiritual life. When we do that we aren't praying, or reading our Bible. Jesus stops being number one in our lives. He gets pushed out. The devil fills our wagon up.

He fills it up with useless rocks that are just dead weight. The rocks are disguised. They are really small looking. But put a zillion little small things in and you get one big problem. Then he gets us too busy to see what is going on. Then he slips in another yoke or another rock or two. We start to drag spiritually and wonder why. We need to get back to the place where Jesus is number one and we obey Him. Jesus will lead us beside those still, calm, peaceful waters, in those green fields. The devil will have his yoke on us driving us through the desert until our tongues hang out and we perish.

So what do we do when the Lord shows us there are yokes in our lives? There are two choices. Keep it on or get it off. God will reveal the things that are getting us down. He will send us His Spirit to deliver us. He will move the mountains and make crooked places straight. He gives us strength to stand against the enemy and say no to that yoke. He will give you strength just like that old ox to be able to shake that thing off. It starts with recognizing the need. Then we have to realize it is not ours and we don't want it. We have to obey God. Sometimes He will show us what to do to get out of bondage. We have to fill up with His Word. We have to praise Him. We have to let His Holy Spirit intercede through us to knock that yoke away.

We sing a song at our church, *Shake Them Off Children*. It goes like this:

Shake Them Off Children

Chorus

You've got to shake them off children, shake off the bondages you've got all around you.

Got to shake them off children, rise and claim the promises of His Word.

Stand up be a child of God.

Verse 1

*Aren't you tired of that battle in your heart and mind.
Give it all to Jesus, soon you will find,
If you will not waver like a house upon the sand
A solid rock foundation is in your building plan.*

There is a sound principle illustrated in that little song. Praise the Lord. Look to him. Lift Him up in your life. Then shake off those heavy bands. That yoke isn't yours. It wasn't made for you. That is not a load you have to carry. Give it to the Lord. He will replace it with joy, life, light, and victory in the Holy Ghost.

What happens though when you have a yoke and a load with you that is tied to it and you can't shake it loose? Seems like no matter how hard you try to get out from under that load, it always comes back. Maybe it is because you have some weeds that need pulling. Maybe those hinder you. May sound silly, but it is true all the same. Keep on reading.

Chapter 12. Weeds You Need to Pull

We had a garden once that was at a low place in our yard. There was a steep bank that stopped at the corner of the garden. It was not a very good place for a garden. Water would run along the road, and off that bank. It would settle in our garden. It was often just a huge mud pie. Then the water would dry up in the summer sun, and the dirt would harden as hard as a rock. It would bake in the sun. It was really hard to weed that garden. I would pull up the weeds and it seemed like right after that in the next day or two those same weeds were back. Why? When I pulled up the weeds, I wasn't pulling them up by their roots. The stem would break off, but the ground was so hard that the weed broke before I could pull up the root. It did no good at all for me to pull them up. I just made it worse. What does that have to do with our spiritual life?

Sometimes we can have a problem, or a battle, or a struggle with something. Or we can have a yoke that we just can't get off. We can't find victory over it. We think that we have it licked and it crops up again. If we aren't careful the whole situation makes us doubt God and give up. Or we think we are a failure and we don't deserve God's love because we can't get the victory over this area in our lives. It may be that thing has a deep root in our heart, mind, or life that we aren't pulling up. It may be that we are grubbing up the part that we can see, and leaving the part just under the surface that we can't see. To totally get the victory over this area in our lives, we have to dig down and get the root out.

I knew someone who had a problem with bitterness. It had such a stronghold in their life that not only was it impossible to forgive that one who had caused them this hurt, it was impossible for them to

forgive anyone. Sometimes when we refuse to forgive one person, it can open up a door for the devil to bring a spirit of bitterness against us. The enemy sees a weak place and uses it to his advantage. He sees a place where he can get a hook in our jaw that he can use to reel us in. Then he'll send other things to happen to us, to make us even more unforgiving. My friend even became bitter against God because of all the problems that he was having. He had no idea what was going on. Often when we face something like this, we can't see all that is going on. We just know that we are going through a battle that is spiritually killing us. We may not even realize what that battle is from. Why is bitterness such a bad problem? Not only can a root of bitterness mess up your life, but it can also mess up the lives of everyone around you. Hebrews 12:15 tells us, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God: lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Modern doctors have even linked bitterness to many physical conditions including hardening of the arteries, and cancer.

The person that I mentioned in the last paragraph tried to deal with fixing the problems he was having on the surface. But there was a root that had to be gotten out. The problems would leave for a while, but come back. They are still going through the same battle today. Why? Because they refuse to forgive. What is their hope? They need to get real with God and see the damage this is causing. They need to ask God what the problem is. They need to come to the place that they are willing to do anything to get this area of their life fixed. Have you ever been there? If you have been in that place, then you know that is a place where God can deal with your heart. Desperation is a good fertile ground for God to sow in. Rebellion can often go hand in hand with bitterness.

I know that somewhere along the line God has dealt with this person about their bitterness. But they have hardened their face, and said no way, I won't. That is rebellion. So now rebellion is added to the list, another weed springing up from that one little root. Through God's love we can forgive. We just have to come to the place that we are willing to. God will make a way for us to if we will come to that place. God's love is sufficient. We have in us the Spirit of the One Who cried from the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." When we forgive, we can receive God's forgiveness and be restored to His love for us.

There are other roots that can cause problems. The root may be a little sin that can't harm anyone, or so we think. A little closet that we refuse to clean out. The devil spots that area of our life and zooms in to make it worse. I am reminded of Saul in the books of Samuel. What was the difference between Saul in I Samuel 9:2 and Saul in I Samuel 31:4? What happened between these two sections of scripture? I Samuel 9:2 says, "And he (Kish) had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." I Samuel 31:4 tells us, "Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through and abuse me. But his armour bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it." What happened to him? His story started with such promise and such victory? What went on between those two accounts? Saul had some roots in his life that he refused to get rid of. One was his bitterness against David. We read about this root in I Samuel 18:29, "And Saul was yet

the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually." His whole life became obsessed with trying to destroy David. Another root was his refusal to submit to God and do it His way. I Samuel 15:23 tells us, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." Saul didn't all of the sudden just one day happen to disobey the Lord and the Lord jerked him out from being king because of it. How many times did God deal with Saul before that day? How many times did He send others to talk to Saul's heart? We will never know. When you study his life between these two verses, you can catch glimpses of these roots.

We may have yokes that are drug addiction and alcoholism, or sexual sins, or having sex outside of marriage. No matter how we turn those things, they are wrong according to God's Word and they damage our hearts, minds, and souls and the lives of those we love if we continue in them. We have gotten saved, but we have problems giving these things up. We know they are wrong. We can go so far in giving these things up, but it doesn't last for long. How do we get free? First you have to admit they are wrong to yourself. You have to see the damage that they are doing to your life. If you don't, you won't really have the desire to get free. Then you have to decide that you want these things out of your life. The Bible says that a double minded man is unstable in all his ways, let not that man think that he can get anything from God. Until you make up your mind, God won't help you. If one day you want out of that trap that you are in, and the next day you excuse yourself for your behavior, you won't get out. You will only eventually dig yourself deeper in your trap. But when you decide that it is time, that you are tired and you want

deliverance. God can deliver you.

One of the hindrances with getting delivered from something is the old crowd that you do it with. It may be a smoking crowd, or a drinking crowd, whatever the sin, there is usually a crowd that you do that sin with. To get out of that sin, you have to change crowds. Sure one day you might go back and help them, but get real, until you get out of the problem yourself you won't be able to help them. They will only see you as a hypocrite, and face it, you will be one to them. Get out of the crowd, get out of the sin, and let that be a testimony to them. Then get the roots out. Let God deliver you. God's Spirit can set you free from what is binding you.

How do we get those roots out? We let God convict us. We listen and obey. We repent. Today repentance comes too easy. There have been times when conviction would come on me so heavy that I would nearly die. It was so hard you could hardly breath. That is true conviction. That will bring about true repentance. That will cause us to come to the place where we want to get real with God and get all those roots out. Jesus is coming for a church without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. Ephesians 5:27 tells us, "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Let go of those roots. Let God clean up your closets. Then you can finally be free. When you do, that battle that you thought you could never get out of will be over. You will be free. Free indeed. Free at last.

Chapter 13. Prayer

Prayer is important. We all know that. Let's talk a little about what exactly prayer is and why it is so important. We touched on that in an earlier chapter but want to spend more time than that. I heard a preacher the other day talk about prayer as being a burst of positive energy that we focus on a problem, a person, or a circumstance. I think that there is something definitely missing in that definition. Matter of fact, I'm a little suspicious of the roots of that definition. I think it probably has its roots in the New Age Movement that has crept into so many of the churches today. We hear these things, pick them up, repeat them, and live by them if we aren't careful. We have no idea where a lot of things that we have adopted as statutes for our lives come from, but they still become a part of how we think. Then if we aren't careful they become a part of our relationship with God, and how we act and react. That is why it is so important to focus on the Word of God, letting the Spirit of God open it to you. Not everything coming from the pulpit is the Word of God. I am not saying this to scare you and make you doubt everyone running away from them in fear. I am just saying this so that you take that Bible off the shelf, dust it off, and get on your face before God asking Him to reveal it to you. His Spirit can write its pages in your heart and change your life. It can give you a discernment to be able to tell when someone is not speaking the truth. I want to change your focus so that you are working out your salvation, not letting everyone else do it. In the last days, and we are in the last days, there will be more and more false doctrine.

We have to learn to be aware. Revelations 22:18-19 warns us not to change God's Word. This scripture is written out in the book of Revelations.

We can assume that the Lord is speaking about this book of Revelations. On the other hand, why would this particular book of the scriptures be more holy than the scripture as a whole? I think this applies to all God's Word. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." That is pretty serious. When people change the Word of God to make it to be what they are saying, they are on serious grounds. Just a note to preachers here. If we preach only the part of the Word that makes our congregation feel good and appreciate us, aren't we in danger of leaving out part. Don't worry. We'll get back to our discussion on prayer.

This preacher defined prayer as a burst of positive energy. Is that what prayer is? If it isn't, what makes it work? When we study out the prayers of people in the scripture, we see one common ingredient that helps us to define prayer. Let's look at some prayers. Please read these sections of scripture, as I didn't write them out here. Here are just a few prayers that are recorded in the scriptures. I have given the first verse of the prayer in the reference but read on from there. In Genesis 18:23 we see Abraham's prayer for Sodom. Elijah prayed on Mt. Carmel in I Kings 18:36. In I Kings 8:22 we read Solomon's prayer as he dedicated the temple. Ezra's prayer for the sins of Israel is found in Ezra 9:6. The Lord's Prayer taught by Jesus is prayed in Luke 11:1. Some of them knelt when they prayed. Some had eyes open, some had eyes closed. Some were flat on their face before God. Some were bold. However, some were not so bold.

Some were prayers that changed the course of their whole nation. What then is the common ingredient? Each one was talking to a God that they knew. It wasn't a rare thing for them to pray. They had prayed many times that day probably in their mind as they faced this situation. They were speaking with their Father. They knew that He heard them because they often spoke to Him. When Elijah prayed fire down from heaven it wasn't the first time he had prayed. He knew God. He knew God was there with him. He knew he wasn't on that mountain alone. It was not a surprise to him that fire came. He knew it would, or he would never have dared to stand there in the first place. He often poured his heart out to God. Study his story. Read the times when he went boo-hooing before God. Sometimes it was because he was filled with fear. He wasn't perfect. But even in his imperfection, he still sought God. Prayer was just a continuation of his relationship with God. He knew God was there to hear Him, because just earlier that day he had talked to Him and He was there. He knew that God wouldn't let Him down. The other day, look what He had done for him. He trusted in the One that he had dedicated his life to serve. He was more than confident that day. That is faith. He mocked the priests at Mount Carmel. Read the story in I Kings 18. Read how he mocked them in verse 27. How could he be so bold in his prayer? He knew that their gods couldn't hear their prayers. They weren't real. He knew his God was real. He knew because he walked with Him. He already knew God would send the fire.

Prayer starts with a relationship. Faith is trusting in that relationship with God. Faith is trusting in God and His Word. Faith is found as we grow in that relationship with God. Faith grows as we grow in the Word. Faith grows as we put it to the test. When we pray and we receive an answer, our faith grows.

The next time, it is easier to believe. What can weaken our faith and cause our prayers to be ineffective? Not knowing God personally. Not walking with Him everyday. Not putting our faith to the test. Not praying. Trusting only in the prayers of others.

How do you communicate with God in your relationship? Sometimes I have been guilty of just whining. Have you ever been there? As a teacher, I have had some whiny children. They grumble and complain about everything, demanding better, even when what they have is fine. I wasn't really in a hurry to hear those voices. Wonder if God is eager to hear us when we whine. Or complain. Remember the children of Israel in the desert. They were constantly grumbling. If I'm not careful I will catch myself grumbling about this or that to God. Sometimes, too, if we aren't careful we'll see God as being a big loving Santa Claus like person, and all we do is present our huge list, calling it off demanding like. We want to sit on his lap and call off our list, then that is all we say to Him until the next time we have a list. Sometimes we need to grow up in our relationship with the Lord and learn to carry on a decent conversation.

When do we need to pray? Often prayer is something that we do at the end of the day before we go to sleep because that is what we are taught to do. Problem is, we often fall asleep right in the middle of our conversation. What if that was the only way that we talked to our husband or wife? What kind of a relationship would we have? You might be thinking, but God knows I know He is there. I don't have to talk to Him all the time. If that is our philosophy in how we do those we love, what kind of a relationship will we have with them? Some of you may be thinking, "Oh, I know the best time to pray, it's in the morning. The Bible does say that we need to seek.

We need to seek Him early. I think though that there is another side to prayer that we are missing. We catch a glimpse of this side in I Chronicles 16:11, "Seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face continually." And in I Thessalonians 5:17, "Pray without ceasing". I used to think, how in the world could anyone pray without ceasing. I have to go to work. I have to do other things. I just can't be on my knees 24/7. What can these verses mean? Then I grew in my relationship with God. It became a joy to spend time with Him. I hungered and thirsted to be with Him. Psalm 42:1-2, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" I long to be with the Lord. He is so wonderful. When I talk to Him, He can strengthen me. His guidance is the best. His advice is what I long to hear. He can get me straightened out with just a word when I am getting attitudes. He is my brother, friend, Father, mother, all rolled into one. I need Him. I need His companionship. I need His mercy. When should we seek the Lord? Why would you not want to seek Him continuously? If Elijah hadn't been continual in his relationship with the Lord and in his conversation with Him, would he have had the strength to stand at Mt. Carmel? Why was he bold? He knew God. That is the key to powerful prayer. That is faith. That is trust.

We need to be mindful of our relationship with God continually. He is real. We need to be real with Him. He is there as we wake up, watching over us through the day. He is there as you drive to work through that rush hour traffic. He is there as you face those blue Mondays, and not so great Tuesdays. He was there when you faced that crisis. When you faced that battle, it was then that He strengthened you.

He kept you through the night. He was there when you cried on His shoulder. He has never left you. Talk to Him. Pray continuously. Make your relationship with Him a focus in your life. He is focused on you.

If you conversed with your husband or wife the way you talk with God, how long would your marriage last? You are married to God. You are part of the bride of Christ. Fall in love with Him. When you do it will be a joy to talk to Him without ceasing. Try it. Try going to Him in your thoughts. Make it a way that you think. Don't just spend time talking though. Just like in a marriage, that doesn't work. Spend time listening. He has a lot to say to you. It won't be just telling you how bad you are. It won't be that He will just convict you. He will give you that word that you need. He will be the rejoicing of your heart. When you have that kind of relationship with God, you know that when the battles come, He will be there. When you need Him, He will hear you. When you stand on Mt. Carmel, you can do so without fear. Pray. Pray. Pray. Pray without ceasing. When you get this kind of prayer life, you will watch mountains move. You'll watch your loved ones turn to God. Even the ones that you doubted would ever change. You will watch the mess that your children have made out of their lives untangle. You will watch crooked places straighten and mountains move. You will watch gifts begin to operate in your life, like the gift of faith. Your faith will grow as you watch your prayers answered.

Now you can't find that prayer life if you are afraid to pray. I watch people a lot. I see many that every time that they need God to move in their lives, they run to get somebody to pray for them. If they get sick, they run to the pastor.

They face a financial problem. Or a problem;

They run to a parent to pray. Their loved ones face a battle, they run to their brother or sister in the Lord to pray. I was guilty of this at one time. Then I lost the people that I had run to all the time. That was the best thing that ever happened to my prayer life. I learned that I could have prayed all the time. I learned that my faith could be just as strong as the faith of those who had been praying for me. I learned that the reason their faith was strong because they had prayed so much for me. Those people who you rely on to pray cannot get you to heaven. When you let them pray and fail to do so yourself, you are letting them have your relationship with God. Your house is built on the sand, not on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. When the storms of your life come, and they will, your house will not stand. God longs to have a walking talking relationship with you. You can be the one with the powerful prayer, if you'll just run to your Savior instead of to everyone else.

You might come to me and say, "But I did pray. I really believed once and it didn't happen. I don't trust in my prayers any more. Something was wrong with me. I didn't have enough faith." When we don't have a prayer to be answered, that opens the door for the devil to slip in with condemnation. He can stop us from praying that way. The best thing to do when a prayer isn't answered is to get back up and keep on praying. Don't let a rift come in your relationship with God. Go to Him and find out why it wasn't answered. We'll talk about in a few minutes how every prayer that we pray is answered. Read on. What about Elijah? Did he always get a positive answer to his prayers? Did he ever have any doubts? Read his whole story again. I Kings 17 through II Kings 2. One of the things that you will notice that he actually went through times of total despair. God used him in spite of all of it. He wasn't so very perfect.

The same Elijah that had called down fire from heaven was hiding in a cave in the next chapter afraid for his life. He could have sat there and said. "This is not working. God certainly didn't answer that prayer like I thought He would. I am not sure if God hears me at all. Something must be wrong with my faith and me. I don't have a right to talk to God." But he didn't. His story didn't stop there. Yours doesn't have to either. Your faith doesn't have to stop because you think that a prayer wasn't answered.

All my prayers that I have ever prayed have been answered. Wow, that is a bold statement. Am I saying that because I am a perfect, oh most holy person. After all I must be, I write books. (Just a little side note here. Don't even think that I am something that you can't be, or aren't. I am what the Lord has made me. I am also what I have made me. That part is not perfect. But God is my righteousness. I just trust more in His righteousness in me than I do in my flesh. You can do the same. That is one key for having faith in your prayer life. Concentrate on God, not on yourself.) No I am not perfect, but still every prayer that I have ever prayed has been answered. I'll go a step further. Every prayer that you have ever prayed has been answered. There are three ways that God answers prayer. Sometimes He just answers it by doing what we've asked and we are expecting Him to do. How many times has He done a miracle for you? Those answers that came and you knew nobody but God could have worked that out. Those times when a sick one rose up from a deathbed. Those times when that financial miracle came just in time. That time when the battle with the devil that threatened literally to choke your spiritual life out of you just stopped and you stood in victory wondering how you got there. That time when the crooked place straightened, and you knew you hadn't been the one to straighten it.

These are all examples of answered prayer. But what about those other times? Those times when God was silent and you had to struggle on. Until that perfect time when the answer came.

Ask Mary and Martha. Was Jesus late that day when He came to Lazarus? The answer may not come when you think it should. Does that mean that God hasn't answered your prayer? When that sick one didn't rise up from their sick bed, does that mean that God failed to hear your prayer? Maybe the answer He had was a far better answer than the one you wanted to see. God did hear. What about those times when you had that financial struggle daily praying for enough money to pay those bills. Any minute you were afraid that you would lose it all. You didn't get a big financial miracle. But did you lose it all? Aren't you still hanging in there? Isn't that an answer to your prayer? Just not the answer you thought you'd have. What about that battle that didn't go away, but just kept getting worse the more you prayed. Through it all, your faith grew. Your relationship with the Lord grew. You were quicker to obey because you knew that was the only way that you could make it. You grew to be more obedient because you knew if you weren't you wouldn't make it out of that valley. Your trust in the Lord grew because next time you faced something you knew that He had seen you through the last time. You knew He would see you through this as well. What about those times when the mountain just got steeper the harder that you prayed. But you wound up bouncing off the cliffs with hind's feet because you learned how to climb in the rough places. Did God refuse to answer your prayer? Did He fail you? Or did He answer them in a greater way?

Then there is another answer. It is simply "NO". That is one answer that I know we don't like to hear.

But praise the Lord, God isn't afraid to give it to us anyway. He definitely isn't like a spoiling parent who gives His kids anything they want just because they want it. There have been many, many times in my life when I was totally confident that this thing that I was asking for was exactly what I needed. Or I was convinced that this was the direction that I needed to go in. I was devastated when God didn't answer my prayer. Then on down the road, I'd see it work out so much better another way. Or I'd see the problems that I would have had if I had gone in that direction. My prayer had been answered, and it was the right answer. If we aren't careful we can get like spoiled children. We want it the way we want it when we want it. If God doesn't do it that way we doubt Him. It may be that our miracle is that God loves us enough to say no.

Then there is the story of the importune woman in Luke 11:5-13. What is importunity? That means she wouldn't shut up or give up or go away until she got that bread that she was asking her neighbor for. Sometimes we just have to keep on asking, keep on believing until that prayer is heard. Don't shut up, or give up, or go away until it is answered. That is faith. That is how God wants us to be when we pray. He wants us to come boldly before Him in faith. He wants us to hold onto that prayer until it is heard. I have had some prayers that I wouldn't give up on for years until God heard them. When He did, He moved mountains.

So let's review. What is prayer? It is conversation in an obedient, expectant relationship with God. It is constant conversation. It has to operate with love and with faith. Because you love God and because you know He loves you, you pray. Answers to prayer may come in three different ways. But answers always come. Those ways are: 1. Yes. 2. No. 3. Wait.

When it seems God hasn't heard your prayer, keep on praying. How do you know the things that you can pray for? God has given you a book of promises. We'll talk about that coming up.

Chapter 14. God's Word

God's Word is the most powerful force in the world. Much more powerful than any thing that man has. It comes with a guarantee that it will work perfectly. How long has that guarantee lasted and how long will it last in the future? Throughout all time, for eternity. Matthew 5:18 tells us, "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Every little tiny part of it will come to pass guaranteed. We have talked a lot through this book about the Word of God. Can't close this book without giving it a whole chapter though. If it had not been for the Word of God, we would never have heard about salvation. The promises of God are found there. The map for how we are to live is there. Hope for eternity is found in its pages. No wonder I fuss so much about you getting it out and reading it. It is like a door that we go through to find out about all the things of God. Even the door we have to go through to get to know God Himself, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost.

We have talked about how important it is that we know the Word of God, not the traditions of men and doctrine. The Word of God is the truth. It is the truth that will set us free. The truth isn't someone's opinion. John 8:32 tells us, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." We need to know the Bible, not just what our preacher preaches and our Sunday school teacher teaches. It is good to read books about the Bible, but if we spend all our time reading them and never reading the Bible how will we know if what the author is saying is true? We have talked about how the Word of God is the foundation of our faith. Romans 10:17 tells us, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

If you were going to build a building, wouldn't the foundation be the most important part. Would you want to build a foundation blindly? Would you want to build it with no knowledge of the ground that you were building on except for what someone told you it was like? Would you let someone you didn't even know choose your materials without even looking at them for yourself? Would you choose the place to lay your foundation without walking through the area yourself just because someone told you it was a good place to build? We wouldn't do these things with a natural building, but often we do these same things with the foundation that holds up our eternal soul.

Let's talk about how we know that God's Word is true. The number one place to go to prove the validity of God's Word is God's Word. There are historic proofs as well. There are many proofs, historical and Biblical, that illustrate that God Himself gave the prophecies in the Bible. How else could these have come to pass just as they were spoken if they weren't given by inspiration of the Spirit of God? There are historical proofs that demonstrate that the prophecies in the Bible were written before the prophecies were fulfilled. There is no other book that has prophecies that are proven countless times over like the Bible. There are many prophecies, but the most remarkable are the prophecies about Jesus. There are historical proofs from sources outside the Bible to prove Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled these prophecies. There is also historical proof from Jewish writings, the Jewish Talmud, that Jesus lived and fulfilled the prophecies regarding Him. Here are only a few of the prophecies found in the Bible. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 talks about several of the prophecies. This was written by the prophet Isaiah around 700 BC. Please read this section of scripture. In these verses, we read that Jesus would be beaten so bad, beyond recognition.

We read that He would be beaten with stripes. In Psalm 22:14-19 David wrote around 1000 B.C. that they would pierce Jesus' hands and His feet. That they would divide His garments among them, and cast lots for them. I am sure that the Roman soldiers who cast lots for Jesus' robe that day had not read the scriptures. They weren't doing this to obey the scriptures. In Zechariah 9:9 Zechariah at around 520 B.C. wrote that Jesus would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey colt.

Here are some more prophecies. I have written them beside of their fulfillment. Please read each of them for a blessing. Prophecy found in Genesis 3:15 was fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-23. Isaiah 7:14 was fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-23. Micah 5:2-3 was fulfilled in Luke 2:4-7. Isaiah 42:6-7 was fulfilled in Luke 4:17-21. Isaiah 49:6-7 was fulfilled in Acts 13:47, 15:6-18. Isaiah 61:1 was fulfilled in Luke 4:17-21. Zechariah 9:9 was fulfilled in Matthew 21:5-6. Isaiah 50:6-7 was fulfilled in Mark 14:65. Psalm 16:8-11 was fulfilled in John 20:14-30. Psalms 49:15 was fulfilled in I Corinthians 15:1-8. Isaiah 53:10-12 was fulfilled in Matthew 28:1-10. There are countless other prophecies that are recorded in the scriptures. Some of them prophesied the rise and fall of whole civilizations and countries. Always they happened to the detail of what God's prophets had written in the scriptures.

Jesus death and resurrection is the greatest proof of the Bible as being God's inspired Word. What other religion claims to have a risen Savior? If the Buddhists could get by with claiming that Buddha raised from the dead, they would. Why haven't they? Because he didn't. It was irrefutably established in history by many, many eyewitness accounts that Jesus rose from the dead. If that wouldn't have been so, then we couldn't claim it today.

What are some other facts that prove the Bible is the Word of God. Consider these things for a moment. The Bible was written for over a 1,500 year span for over 40 generations by over 40 authors from every walk of life. It was written in many different places, and at many different times. It was written on three continents, Asia, Africa, and Europe. It was written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects. Subjects that now can't be agreed on when mentioned or discussed. Yet there is an agreement between the writers that could only exist because God's Spirit inspired them. They agree as if one author had written what they wrote. There is a continuity that runs throughout the book. Another fact, it was written on material that perishes, especially the Dead Sea Scrolls written on papyrus, yet they were preserved miraculously for thousands of years. Also, the scrolls had to be preserved by being written by hand for thousands of years, but every copy agreed. Those who copied it were especially chosen for that task. They kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word, and paragraph. These men even counted the syllables to make sure that it was copied correctly. Another fact that proves the Bible is the Word of God is this. No other book has been attacked like the Bible, yet through time it has stood every test and still stands as the Word of God today. These are only a few of the reasons why we know that the Bible is God's Word.

Now that we have established that we know God's Word is true, let's read what God's Word has to say about itself. Here are some scriptures about the Word of God. I am not writing these scriptures down here quoting them directly. I am doing this for a purpose. Please get out your Bible before you even start reading this section of scriptures. Read them for yourself.

Psalm 119:89 and Isaiah 40:8 tells us that Gods Word is settled forever.

Matthew 5:18 tells us that every little part of it will come to pass.

I Peter 1:25 tells us that it is how we hear the Gospel.

Deuteronomy 8:3 tell us that it is food for our soul.

Jeremiah 15:16 tells us that it is our rejoicing of our heart.

II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21 tell us that it wasn't just written by man.

Psalm 119:11 tells us that it will keep us from sin.

Romans 10:8 tells us that it is faith.

Psalm 119:105 tells us that it shows us the way to go.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us that it is our sword

Psalm 119:9 and John 15:3 tells us it cleanses us.

I John 5:13 tells us that in its pages we find eternal life.

Revelations 22:19 tells us to leave it like it is.

We could go on and on.

How important is it that you daily read God's Word? I am not one of the slimmest people in the world. I struggle with my weight. I daily struggle with trying to come home and walk on the treadmill. I try to get into a routine of eating right too.

I spend a lot of time and energy working on these two areas in my life. Even if it is just energy spent on worrying that I haven't done it today. How much more important is it to make sure our spirit man is in good condition? Has He been fed today? Good healthy food, or junk food? Have you exercised your prayer life? Exercised your faith? If you neglect reading the scripture, the Spirit man (Jesus in you through the power of the Holy Ghost) will be weaker than your flesh. You won't have victory in your life. Neither will your family, your husband or wife, or children. Neither will your friends. Neither will your church. When you are filled up with the Word of God it will pour out on others around you making a difference to everyone around you. I am not saying that you have to constantly preach the Word of God to them, hammering away at them. I have learned the hard way that never works. It means that you love them with God's love and you live His Word before them. It means that you carry God's Spirit and His Word to them. It will make a difference to them. They will see from the victory in your life that God's Word works. If you constantly preach God's Word to them, but they don't see victory in you, then it will only prove to them that God's Word won't work for them. After all it must not be working for you.

When you go through a battle, do those around you see God's Word at work in your life? When you have to walk by faith do they see victory in how you walk and talk? When the devil is trying to destroy you, do your loved ones see how to overcome by how you overcome? Is God's Word reflected from you? How are you teaching God's Word to those around you? If God's Word is the foundation for your life, they will see how strong that foundation is by how straight the building is standing. I am not saying here that you have to be perfect-you won't be able to.

Just show them the perfection of God who is at work in you.

We have to be careful that we aren't like the guy who looked in the mirror and went away looking as bad as he was before he looked in the mirror. What good would that do us? We have to read God's Word and do it. We have to obey. We can read it all day, even memorize huge sections, but if we don't put it to practice in our lives, it will do us no good. When we look into the mirror, we need to at least get out the washcloth and the comb and fix a few things. Don't just read the book and talk the talk. Stand up and walk the walk. After all, someone is watching you.

How strong is your foundation? How straight are your walls of your building? Are you the same at church as you are at home? Does your family see a different version of you than your pastor? Do you have to change how you dress, act, and talk when you see your pastor and your church friends? Do you have habits that you have to hide? Do the people at your work place see a different you than your church friends? Do they see a different you when they come up to you with their latest dirty joke? Are you a light to them reflecting God's Word? Are you a light to your family? What kind of a foundation are you helping your children to build? Can they see God's Word in your life? A lot of parents fall back on the old excuse, do as I say, not as I do. What kind of foundation is that helping them to build? They will walk in your footsteps further than they will walk in your words.

Are you carrying the light of God's Word to a lost and dying world? You can speak it but if you aren't living it, they won't believe it. They will see it through the life you live. I'm not saying that you have to be Mrs. Holy Righteous Perfect Person. That won't lead them to Jesus, but run them away from Him.

I am not saying that you are to go around like that little children's rhyme, "Little Bunny Fooh Fooh" and go around picking up the field mice and everybody else and bopping them on the head with God's Word. God's Word is not something to bop people over the head with. It isn't a yardstick to measure how holy you are compared to how everyone else measures short. You ain't perfect. God's word is a light to a lost world. You can't fill yourself with God's Word without filling yourself with the love of God. You can't fill yourself with God's Word without filling yourself with God's Spirit. You can't fill yourself up with God's Spirit without filling yourself up with God's love. Lift up those around you in God's Word, His Spirit, and His love.

It is important though while you are loving and lifting up that you do not compromise. Too many people are trying to lead those around them to the Lord by just being one of the boys so to speak. If you compromise on God's Word and the standards there, then you are just a joke, not a light. If you don't stand for something then you will fall for anything and those people who you are trying to help will fall under you. When I was first saved, I had the idea that I could still hang with my old friends, and be a light to them. I could just do a little bit of what they were doing, and still be a light. I could walk with them and walk with God too. I was a dingy light, not at all very bright. The Lord gave me a dream one night. In my dream I was hanging out in a bar with my friends. I wasn't drinking, but I was compromising in a lot of ways. Just by being there I was compromising on what I knew was right. While I was there, the rapture took place. Because I was compromising, I was left behind. My friends knew that the rapture had taken place when it did. They all had heard it would come, but like me they weren't living up to what they knew.

They looked at me and all I could see was the hate they had for me. They knew that I had not stood up for what I had believed in, for the Word of God and its truth. If I had been a light, they might not have been left behind. My dream ended with them chasing me to kill me because they hated me. Think of that next time when you are tempted to compromise and just be one of the crowd.

God's Word is straight. His path is plain. It may not be a broad road, but it is well marked. If you get in His Word, read it, and live it, you won't get lost. You will know right from wrong if you read it. The world's church is filled with the doctrine, "What is right for me might not be right for you. What is wrong for me might not be wrong for you." Stack that one up beside God's Word. We have so twisted God's Word to excuse our sin that we no longer can see the truth. We have perverted it until it is a laughing stock to the world. Dare to be a lighthouse instead of a stumbling stone. Forget tradition. Forget doctrine. Forget theology. Get on your knees. Ask God to reveal His Word to your heart. Dare to live by it. Your world will never be the same.

The Word of God and faith go together. One builds the other. In the next chapter we will talk more about faith.

15. Faith

What is faith? The best definition that we can find is given in Hebrews 11:1, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” In that chapter we read of the heroes of faith found in throughout the Bible. Their faith moved mountains, and changed their whole world. What made that faith possible? We read many names in this chapter. Some we recognize easily, but some we may not recognize. Please read the rest of that chapter. These were people who it says in verses 33 and 34, “Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” That is pretty victorious. But right in the midst of all that victory we read about some that seemingly didn’t have it so good. We read about them in verses 37-39. “They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

How could being sawn asunder be walking in faith? How could all the things that these people went through be considered faith? When we read the last verse of the chapter, we get the idea that we might not have what we have today had it not been for these people who were willing to face what they did. Why were they willing to go through all this? Because they knew that on the other side of it all there was something far better. They had somewhere caught a glimpse of a Savior that loved them. They held onto that love trusting in that love to see them through.

They had caught a glimpse of a love so wonderful that they were willing to go through whatever they had to go through for Him. That is faith. They had caught a glimpse of that place that He had prepared for them. They knew that they didn't have to be troubled. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3. They looked beyond what they saw and endured. They put their hand in their Master's hands and trusted until they saw their promise. That is faith. We think that because we don't have everything perfect that we don't have faith. We think that if we are going through a battle we don't have faith. We need to stop doing that. That isn't really faith. Faith is when we go through what we have to go through, enduring it all, trusting in the Lord. Stephen in Acts chapter 7 looked past the faces filled with hatred into the eyes of Jesus. That was faith. Faith knows that God will see you through.

I was blessed to be able to spend several months in Russia and Romania. Many of the people that I had met there had been beaten and persecuted for their faith severely. I remember one man that had been arrested while smuggling Bibles. He only had one regret, one thing that had been condemning him. He told me that he had regretted being afraid. He felt that had failed God. He had been beaten for several days. Then he was set free. He said that he had been afraid for a few days and hadn't smuggled during that time. He had gone on to continue it and had done it for years afterwards. I think that the enemy had used that brief time of fear to condemn him for years. His faith may have wavered, but he didn't turn and run.

His faith had wavered, but it grew to the place where he was able to go back in. The devil had caused him to concentrate on that brief time of failure, instead of that time of victory that came after the failure. The devil is a master at trying to make us think that we don't have faith. Everything in God is obtainable if we have faith. That is why he tries to destroy our faith. If he can't, then like this man, he will condemn us to the place that we listen to him and think that we have no faith. Some of us don't know what kind of faith we have because we don't dare to put it to the test. If we were to, we might find that we would have the faith to get the job done. God can give us the faith we need.

It takes faith to know that God's Word is real when we first hear it. It takes faith to respond to it. We feel God's love and His Spirit drawing us. It takes faith to respond to that. We see that we can have a personal relationship with God. It takes faith to be able to do that. As we grow in our love for Him, we know that we need to obey Him. It takes faith to step out and obey God. As we go through battles and circumstances that try to destroy us, it takes faith to overcome these. The devil comes with his lies and tricks. It takes faith to overcome him. Then the enemy comes and says to us, "You can't do that. You don't have the faith to do that." And we listen. What is the trouble with that? How can we not have faith? We just let him talk us out of our faith. We read the scriptures about God giving to everyone a measure of faith, and we excuse our doubt by saying, God must have just given me a little bit of a measure. We have the faith to move mountains, if we will only try. A stronger faith comes when we focus on God and not on ourselves. A weak faith comes because we concentrate on our flesh and its weakness. Forget yourself. Trust in God. Trust Him and believe Him.

Then do what He tells you to do.

What is the key to having a strong faith? We know that the Word of God builds our faith. We've talked about that scripture. We know that praying in the Holy Ghost builds our faith. Jude 20 tells us, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." What else strengthens your faith? We have talked about how time in a relationship with the Lord builds your faith. You know that He can do because you have seen Him do. You know that He will keep you tomorrow because you watched what He did for you yesterday. Trust comes into a relationship when the storms cause it to grow. Also, your faith grows from the testimonies of others. Always surround yourself with faith talking people, not negative people who destroy your faith. However, you need to remember that you can't build your own faith by totally relying on the faith of others. There is also another way that you can strengthen your faith.

I knew someone who had a powerful ministry praying for cancer victims to be healed. Matter of fact, my own mother had lymph cancer. This lady prayed for her and she was healed. Has been healed for over 10 years. Why did this person have such a gift and a faith to pray for cancer victims? Because one day she dared to step out on faith and pray. Her prayer was answered. Then there were those times when she prayed in faith and it seemed like God didn't hear her prayer. She didn't stop praying. She accepted God's answer, and kept on praying. She did this for many years. Her faith grew in this area as more and more prayers were answered. Through exercising her faith in this area her faith grew. That is one example of how we can grow our faith. If we never step out and dare to pray, our faith will never grow.

Faith has to be personal. To stand and walk in faith we have to have a relationship with God that will stand through the storms. When we know His love and we walk in that love, we know that we're precious in His sight. We know that He won't fail us. We know our trust is not in vain when we trust in Him. Psalm 37:3, "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Psalm 37:5, "Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." It is important that we not trust in man more than we trust in the Lord. Psalm 118:8, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man". It is also important that we not trust in the arm of flesh. That we don't put more confidence in our own natural abilities than we do in God. That will just set us up to fail more often than not. Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." We also have to beware that fear doesn't creep in to destroy our faith. Proverbs 29:25, "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe." How can we guard against fear? By falling in love with Jesus, and trusting in His love. II Timothy 1:7 tells us, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Put your trust in the Lord. Faith will come with that. Bury your doubt in God's Word. When you do have doubt, admit it. Go to God. Repent. Ask Him to help you with your doubt and strengthen your faith.

Know what the Lord is like, and then it is easier to trust Him and put faith in Him. It is hard to trust something blindly in the dark. In an old barn there may be a lot of ropes that are hanging down. Some may be more than a little rotten after hanging there for years. You don't want to trust one that you can't see. You don't depend on something you don't know.

If you are going to swing out of the loft on one of them, you definitely want to turn the light on and take a good look at it before you swing. Check it out. Check out God's credentials in his Word. Get to know Jesus. It will get easier and easier to trust and to have faith as you grow in your relationship with Him. Take time to read God's Word. It will turn the light on as well.

If reading this makes you want to have a greater faith, that isn't a bad thing. That is a really good thing. In Luke 17:5 the disciples had that same desire. Jesus told them in verse 6, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you." A mustard seed just does what it is supposed to do. There is something inside of it that causes it to grow. It spreads all over the place without even thinking about it. If it grows enough around a tree it will literally uproot it and throw it into the sea. In verse 7-10 we see how to be servants. "But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him; I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say; we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." When I first read that I thought, how mean. They wouldn't even let the poor servant eat until last. That is because I am not accustomed to having a servant. The servant's job is to serve. That servant is not to concentrate on his own needs, but on the master, on serving the needs of his master.

The master is not to expect any less than that of his servant. So what is the servant's job? To do all the things that the master commands and leave the rest up to the master. That is faith. Use what you have in you to do what the Lord tells you to do, and then leave the rest up to Him. That is faith.

You can't have a chapter about faith without covering doubt. How many know that there will be times when you will doubt? We all know that doubters will be thrown into the lake of fire, so when we doubt we get afraid. We know fear is wrong so we get condemned for being afraid. The devil has us just where he wants us, and moves in to mess with us making it all worse. What should you do when doubt comes, and it will? Number one, don't get condemned. Run to God with your doubt, not away from Him. Don't hide from your doubt, or try to hide it from God. He knows it anyway. Go to Him and talk to Him about it. I remember one time in particular that I was going through a rough battle with my faith. We had gone through a terrible time in the ministry, and it had really shaken my faith. The battle had gotten hot. We were coming out with the victory, but it had been a rough season. I just couldn't seem to get it together after that. I asked God what was wrong with me. He showed me my shield. It was all beaten and banged up by the battle. It was holding, but it was weak. My faith was weak because of the stress of the battle. I spent time with the Lord and time in His Word. I prayed, especially praying in the Holy Ghost. I spent time around God's faith filled people. I spent time praising the Lord. My faith began to strengthen. What if instead of going to God with my doubt, I had run from Him? I might not have overcome that battle. Face what you are going through. Face your doubts. Don't push them down in and refuse to deal with them. That will cause problems.

That will cause problems to come up later. Don't hide the questions, find the answers. This thing has stood the test of time and still continues to. I certainly won't crumble on you because you have questions. Just be sure that you go to the right source to find the answer. Start with God, His Spirit and His Word. He can certainly help you with the answer.

As our faith grows we learn to lean more and more on Jesus, and less on ourselves, and on others. We learn that we can expect the best and not settle for less. And we learn that we can have victory in our battles. These chapters are coming up.

Chapter 16. Learning to Lean

There is an old song “Learning to Lean”. “Finding more power than I’ve ever dreamed. I’m Learning to Lean on Jesus”. There is a lot of truth in that little song. Let’s talk about what that means, learning to lean. To do that we have to define what it means to lean. If you are standing there leaning against something, then your whole weight is against that thing. If somebody comes along and knocks that prop out from under you, you are in trouble. You will fall. You are totally dependant on that thing to hold you up. If we aren’t careful we find props in our life that can easily be knocked out from under us. What kinds of props can we have? One prop, or leaning post, that we can have is the people around us. It may be Mom or Dad. Their experience can’t get you into heaven. You have to find a salvation experience and relationship with the Lord all your own. Preacher’s kids are some of the hardest kids to find true salvation. They grow up in their Mom or Dad’s experience. Then reality hits them like the waves of a storm and they find their house had been built on sand. Why? Because their life and their makeshift relationship with God collapses when put to the test.

I was much the same way. I got saved when I was in the fifth grade. I went to the altar because I was expected to. I remember when I told my aunt I had been saved. She was so happy. It was like my going to the altar was the most exciting thing that had ever happened to her. I didn’t get it. It was OK. Not really that exciting. Why? Because my salvation there that day was a salvation leaning on other people’s expectations. Nothing really happened between God and me. Much later on in my life when storms came, my house fell quick. Then I got back up, or rather God picked me up. I had fallen flat.

This time flat on my back looking up, knowing no one could help me but God, I found salvation for real. I found a relationship with God. One of the first people that I ran to tell was my precious aunt. This time I was more excited than she was and she was pretty excited. Something had happened. I had learned to lean on Jesus.

One leaning post that we might have might be family, or it might be other people in our church, or our pastor. We have talked about earlier in this book the dangers of letting our pastor or the others in our church be our leaning post. One of the dangers in this is that so often people will lean totally on others. Then the people that they have put such confidence in fall short. They lose their relationship with God because of the imperfection of the person that they were leaning on in place of the Lord. We need to be sure that the Spirit leads the people who we listen to. Let's get off the subject a little bit here. Do you think the Spirit leads most doctors? Highly unlikely. Yet we go by their advice and put our lives in their hands. I've known people to go by their doctor's advice and ignore Holy Ghost filled advice and the voice of God. They died. Let us learn to lean on Jesus. If you need direction, go to the One who knows your future as well as He knows your past. If you need strength, lean on the One who can supply you with supernatural strength. If you need salvation, go to the One who died to give it to you. If you need hope, go to the One who can hold you. If you need truth to sustain you go to God's Word. Don't build your house on the sinking sand of other people. I have put here the words to a song that tells about that lesson so well. Until we look to the Lord, past everything else, we won't ever see Him.

Lord I Look To You

Verse 1

*I looked for You Lord in the strength of a man.
I looked for You from a loved ones hand.
I looked for You through who I am.
I could not find You Lord, till I looked to You.*

Chorus

*When I looked to You Lord
Left all the rest behind.
You filled my heart with Your joy,
Your peace filled my mind.
There's no other place, no other one,
Lord can I find.
Nothing else will do.
Lord I look to You.*

Verse 2

*I looked for You in the high mountain.
I looked for You in the peace of the sea.
I looked for You in a child's laughter
I looked for You in this world's dreams.
I'd look for You on the path that I'd choose.
I looked for You where life led me to.
I looked for You but I could not find You.
Savior I found You, Jesus I found You, when I looked
to You.*

Another prop or leaning post that we can have is the world and everything it stands for, its ideas, thoughts, its ways. We can concentrate on keeping up with what everyone else is doing. Thinking what everyone else is thinking whether they are God's people or not. Or running to do what everyone else is doing. Then we find ourselves in trouble and our life in a wreck, priorities all out of line, and we wonder how we got in the terrible shape that we are in.

You can't hold onto the world and do it God's way at the same time. How do most of us that have financial problems get that way? By trying to buy what we think we ought to have to fit in with what everyone else has. By doing and being what we think we should be so that everyone notices how we fit in with everyone else in our financial bracket. If we would forget the world, and spend what the Lord says spend on what He leads us to spend it on, we would not only be financially successful, but at peace with ourselves as well.

Another prop or leaning post we can have is the arm of flesh. II Corinthians 1:9 tells us, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." We can't trust ourselves. We are flesh. If we think we are smart enough to make all the decisions that we need to make, then we are fools. We don't know what is best. Only God can see us through. We need God. How many times have you had those "I can take care of it myself" attitudes, and it turned out to be a disaster. We need God. If we depend on ourselves to get through, we may never even see first base of the ball game. You can't do it without God. You are walking in the flesh. We have already talked about how that turns out. Most of us have experienced enough of this type of situation so that we are ready to run to Jesus like His children should. Don't play God. If you aren't letting Jesus be Lord of your life, submitting to Him, following Him, then your house is on the sand. We can't live a Christian life by ourselves. We can't even be good by ourselves. We have to rely on the Spirit of God inside of us to carry us through and keep us. That is why God made a way for us to have Jesus in our hearts through the power of the Holy Ghost. He knew we couldn't do it on our own. Give it up and give it to God. He can do it.

He can do it all so much better than we can do it on our own.

We have to get ourselves out of the way. We have to die to accept salvation. We have to let go of our will to be obedient. We have to die to self to let the Spirit of God control our life. If we don't let ourselves go, we'll never know what it means to trust in Jesus. Until you have nothing left but God you will never know what God can do. Until all the props and leaning posts are gone, you won't really know what God can do in your life. When you are flat on your back and all you can do is look up, then you are in a position for God to take control.

It is sad, but most of us never yield to God until we are in that kind of situation. We need to learn to give it up and yield to God 24 hours a day. Do you know who it is that hinders God the most from being able to answer our prayers? We ourselves. We ask God to work in a situation. Instead of waiting for his answer we butt in and start fixing it up, which just messes it up beyond repair. God is trying to work in the life of a loved one. We can't keep our mouth shut enough so that they can hear God's voice. We are praying for a miracle of healing in our body. Right before that miracle comes we run to the doctor who does irreparable damage. We are asking God for a direction in our life. He works to put circumstances together and is ready to lead us on the path He has constructed especially for us. Our neighbor tells us we should go in another direction and off we go. We take the carnal advise over God's Word in our hearts. We ask him to use us. We never yield enough to obey Him. Does any of this sound familiar? We need to learn to lean on Jesus.

We have got to give it up to Jesus. You can find victory when you give up the battle to the Lord. You can find the answer, just give Him the question.

You can find that release and that sweet peace that comes from God's throne if you give it up to the Lord. Lean on Jesus. Lean on Jesus. It is hard to lean on Jesus until you come to that place where you trust Him. When we trust Him we find out that we have a right to expect only the best. That chapter is coming up.

Chapter 17. Expecting the Best

Faith comes from hearing God's Word. Faith comes from all those times that we have leaned on the Lord, and He came through just in time. All of these things take place in our lives when we learn what to expect. We have to learn to expect the best. Sometimes we have to refuse to expect, or accept, anything else. Let me illustrate what I am talking about here. My husband and I went to Virginia Beach a while back. We hadn't been there before and we didn't know anything about which motels cost what, and where they were. It was off-season. We rode around searching for the cheapest motels. We didn't stop at any high rises. We were just looking at all the economy packages. You know how it goes. You look for the ones that you will hope will stand in high winds. The ones that you hope cockroaches won't carry off the luggage. You hope security won't either. We stopped at all the economy looking motels and there were no vacancies, or they weren't open for the off-season. The rest of the time we spent riding around totally lost. God started dealing with my heart. He told me that we are His children, and that we deserved the best. He chastised me for only looking for the cheap. When I made up my mind that I was going to expect the best, we turned the corner and there was this wonderful motel. God said to go in. After all that prior talking to, I didn't dare say or think, but God we can't afford this. We stayed at that motel for less than a fourth of what it normally cost. When did their reduced rates start? That very night just an hour before we walked through the door. That brought home to me the lesson that as God's children we should expect the best. This was a lesson that changed my life. I started living, not looking for the cheap, but expecting God's best that He has for me.

What happened the next year I went to the beach? This is true. I stayed at one of the nicest motels there for a week. I ate at the best restaurants in town. I had the best time. My cost for the entire trip was only \$15.00 (thank God and thanks to a dear friend of mine who let God use her). How much did it cost her? Even less. I had learned my lesson of expecting the best. Oh, and something else. When I was there, I won a week's free vacation for me and my husband at one of the nicest motels there for the next year. God is good. Expect the best.

We are King's Kids. Let me rephrase that. We are THE KING'S Kids. We need to expect His best. Now I am not taking up for the name it and claim it churches (as we have nicknamed them, the grab and blab it churches). You are Beloved and longed for. The Lord loves His children. We have talked about this over and over through this book. He wants to pour out His blessings on you. But a lot of God's promises are conditional to obedience. There are times when what we say we get is true, in the positive and in the negative sense. What we confess with our mouth is important. But that is not all there is to claiming a promise of God. You have to, number one, read and know God's Word to know what promises He makes. We have already discussed that. I cannot find anywhere in God's Word that we can have a Cadillac. No Strong's concordance references can be found for Cadillac. There are a lot of prosperity teachers that are teaching that you can walk in prosperity. There are a lot of miserable followers of those teachers, along with the teachers themselves, because they have no idea what prosperity really is. How many times do these teachers concentrate on prosperity in your finances? One of the richest people with the most material things was one of the most miserable. Elvis Presley died of an overdose.

He died while sitting on a commode. How prosperous was he. Can you put a price on health, well-being, peace of mind, joy, and a well and happy family? Blessings of the heart, those spiritual blessings, are what make us prosper. These prosperity teachers are concentrating on material things. Most of these teachers teach that if you give, you can be prosperous. Especially if you give to them. They are the only ones who prosper in that kind of situation. They look prosperous so people look at them and say, hey that must work. So they give. The ones that give get poorer while the pockets of those teachers grow fat. Who is getting rich and who is getting poor? Does it really have anything to do with principles in God's Word? I am not saying that if you give to God and His work you won't prosper. I have learned that you can't out give God. That part of what they are saying is true. But this is the problem. When you give to wolves in sheep's clothing that go about deceiving God's people to line their own pockets are you giving to God's Word? Are you? Give. I am not saying that you shouldn't give. Give and give and give some more. Just be careful what you give to. Give to the pastors around you that you watch feed the hungry. Give to the preacher that is sacrificing to get the Word of God out. Give to the laborer in the vineyard who just spent his last dollar reaching out to someone who was lost. Give to the evangelist who is determined to travel even though he has no finances to pay the fuel bills. But He is trusting that God will make a way so he goes anyways. Give to the ministry that has the faith to stand and say I will work for God and do what He tells me to do even if I don't have the finances to do it. Give to those that speak the truth of the Word of God with the power of His anointing without using gimmicks to trick the people into giving. Give to those who you see evidence of the fruit of the Spirit.

Those wolves in sheep's clothing not only steal from the sheep, they also steal from God's true workers. Every time something comes out in the news about a preacher who worked a scam, giving stops for a season. People become afraid to give and they just don't do it. That hurts the genuine workers. Don't stop giving because some are wrong. Become more determined to give to the Lord's work. It goes on.

Part of what is wrong with these prosperity teachers is that they only concentrate on giving. They teach that all of you can prosper if you give. And that is the only thing that they concentrate on. Giving. But we have talked a lot in this book about so much more that needs to be done. When do you hear them preach about commitment? When do you hear them teach about getting priorities in line? When do you feel conviction in their Words? When do you feel the anointing of God anointing their Words? How much of the Word of God do they teach or preach? Do they only concentrate on this one message? What are they teaching about the power of God to save, heal, and deliver? Isn't there a lot missing from their message. If you want God to prosper you Psalms 37:4 tells us how. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart." That is the key. Yes, it is important to give, and the Lord promises a blessing on those who give. But how do we get God to give us the desires of our heart? Read on.

You may be asking how did all this get in a chapter entitled "Expect the Best". We need to expect the blessings of God. But, I am saying this. Things of God don't come cheap. You don't have to earn them, but you do have to respect them. When you give your best up to the Lord, you have a right to expect the best from Him. When you delight yourself in Him, He will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He

shall give thee the desires of thine heart”.

What should be the focus of your life? Sometimes we don't try to make serving God a focus because we are so afraid to fail that we don't even try. We are afraid to start so we never do. If we would just go ahead and do and expect His best, He would use us to do miraculous things. Not because the focus is on us, but because the focus is on Him. Dare to cry out. Dare to try to make a difference in this world. Think of the people around you who need to see God in you. Think of your family that doesn't know God. Picture them in hell. Think of your neighbors and friends who don't know God. Picture them in hell. Picture the people you are acquainted with who don't know God. Picture them in hell. We say that we know the Lord is coming soon. But what are we doing about it. Are we real with that thought? Let's act like we know it is true. Dare to do it. Dare to expect the best. Dare to speak out and obey the Lord. If you do and they are saved, you will be blessed. If you do and they don't hear you, you have obeyed God, and you still will be blessed for your obedience. How can you lose?

When you obey God and love Him you can expect the best. Give Him your best. Can He expect the best from you or do you just give Him the leftovers of your life, what time is left after everything else. Do you leave the Lord out of your work and family? At work, do you pray while you do your job? Do you dwell on His Word or on whatever you plan to do after work? Is your conversation about the Lord? Does your family know where you stand with Jesus? Do your children hear God's Word from you in your house? Do your children see the Lord in you and in your life? No, I am not saying you have to be perfect. That is an excuse sometimes that people use. They say I can't be perfect, and then they don't try. Fall in love with Jesus. Give Him your best. Then expect His best.

Chapter 18. Winning the Battle

I guess by now you have figured out that being a Christian doesn't mean that things will always be perfect. That you'll not ever have a battle or go through a hard time. Matter of fact, when you get on God's side, you get an enemy. The devil is out to destroy all God's children. He hates you because he wants to stop God's Word so he tries to stop you. You gain an enemy, but you also gain a co-warrior. God is on your side. Because of this, you can expect the best in your battles. As you learn more of God's Word, you find the power to overcome in its pages. We have talked about that. You also gain the power of the Holy Ghost inside of you. How can you lose? Then why do we see people that lose? Why do people turn their back on God and go back to the weak and beggarly elements that they came from. With all that going for them, why do you hear about the Gospel singers gone gay? The preachers who get caught up in affairs. The people that throw in the towel on God and leave church and God. Why do we hear about more and more of this as time goes on? Earlier in this book we talked about how if we don't let go of sin, it can be like a hook in our jaw. We've talked about how we have to line our lives up to God's Word. We talked about how we have a flesh and a Spirit man and who we feed the most will be the strongest. We talked about how the Baptism of the Holy Ghost will fill us up and give us power for victory. If we refuse to accept it we are weaker and more vulnerable. We talked about how we have to get priorities in line and commitments settled if we want to have victory in God. We've talked about how we need to be careful not to take our salvation for granted because the enemy is there to steal our very soul. That is why people lose what they have found in God.

What we have obtained we need be careful to maintain. Yes we have a battle but oh how sweet is the victory.

Does having the victory mean that you never have a battle. A friend of mine said that she thought something was wrong with her relationship with God because she was going through a battle. Sometimes we think that if we aren't careful. Then we hear all the prosperity teachers telling us that if we don't have a Cadillac something is wrong with our faith. Can you still have victory and go through a battle? Because you have a need, does that mean that you aren't victorious in your faith? How can you have victory without going through a battle? You can't even do that. You can't win if you haven't fought. Think just a minute of the people who have the strongest faith. Think of those who have a deeper walk with God. Is it because they have never been through a battle? Or is it because they have faced things that without the Lord they surely would have been destroyed? Where do we grow? In those mountaintops where everything is perfect? Or do we grow most in those places where it seems like there is no way but for the grace of God that we can overcome, but we do, and we do it again, and again and again. Where does our faith and trust grow the most? In those places where you have to blindly trust God because you can see no other hope. What if we never faced a battle, how shallow would our faith be? Do you want to make the devil really mad? Thank him the next time that he throws you into a battle. Thank Him for how God is going to use this to work a miracle in your life, your faith, and in helping you grow to have a deeper walk with God. When you have that kind of an attitude how can you lose. Thank God for the battle. Praise Him for how He is trying you in the fire. Throughout the scripture how does God purify?

God purifies us by using fire. Zechariah 13:9 tells us, "And I (God) will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, it is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Malachi 3:2-3 tells us, "But who may abide the day of His coming and Who shall stand when He appeared? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." I Corinthians 3:13 says, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." I Peter 1:7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

In Jeremiah's potters house (Jeremiah 18) the potter had the clay on the wheel. The vessel that the potter originally made was marred. So he beat it out until it became soft and malleable, to the place where he could mold it right. In the potter's hands it not only became useful, but a thing of beauty. Hard times can beat us to the place where we will yield to the master potter. Sad to say, human nature is stiff and unyielding. We need to get beaten into shape often. When we do, God can use us. How do we learn to yield and obey? What changes our nature from unyielding to yielding? Those times when we failed to yield and because of our disobedience we paid the price, and it literally tore the hide off. Those times when we did our own thing and then paid the price for it. Those times when we went through those battles when we could do nothing on our own but trust God.

Those times we stumbled in the dark until we finally learned to do it His way. Even the worst struggle can turn into a blessing if we will give it to God. Struggles and battles are really disguised blessings. They are potter wheels where we are shaped and molded and then put through the fire to come out purified and fit for the Master's use.

How can we lose? By getting a loser's attitude. What does that mean? If we get the gravel rash. A poor me chin hanging in the gravels as we scoot along attitude. An attitude that always looks for the bad instead of looking for victory. A pity me attitude which always looks more for sympathy than for victory. By having a life that is filled with fear instead of faith. A life where we go to a pill bottle because of our anxiety and worry instead of trusting in God. These things can all cause us to lose.

We don't have to fear the enemy or the battle. I used to be so afraid of the devil that I spent most of my time rebuking this or that spirit. Have you ever known people like that? They go around looking everywhere for devils. They spend more time looking for devils than they do looking for the Spirit of God. Believe me, they find them. Don't look for them. Just tread on them. You don't have to fear spirits. You don't have to fear the devil. Just put him under your feet. He specializes in making you think that he is a lot bigger than he is. God's a lot bigger. He made the devil. He can certainly stop him. Not only does He have authority over the devil but He has given the church the keys as well. You have authority over the enemy. Matthew 16:19 tells us, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." I have enclosed part of a chapter from a book titled *Your Authority As a Child of God*.

This first chapter explains our authority as given by God in an easy to understand way.

One of the best illustrations that I can give to explain what it means to take authority comes from my years of being a teacher/principal in both the public and private schools. One of the lessons that I had to learn early in my teaching years was how to take authority. I learned it in a small public school that actually had grades K-12 in one building. All teachers were required to take turns doing hall duty after school, monitoring the halls while the buses were loading. I was new at teaching, and I was totally new at having to deal with teenagers. I was new to them, and I was an elementary school teacher, which made things harder. It was beneath them to listen to me. I was nervous at having to tell them what to do, and I was a soft-spoken, mild mannered person. Often that doesn't mix with teaching older students. I had not learned to take authority. I barely had learned how to take authority in my classroom, but my hall duty time was a nightmare. Nobody listened. I was too unsure to take the authority that was mine as a teacher. Some of the teachers who had been there for years had no problem with their authority. They knew their place. They knew their rank and they knew how to pull it. Most importantly the kids knew, too. When they walked into the hall, the place would grow quiet. If there was something going on that wasn't supposed to, it stopped when they showed up. These older teachers walked in their authority. They were sure in that authority. Later on as I grew in understanding my place and how to take the authority that was mine, when I walked in I had the same affect. It took some time. It also took a little help from God. One day I noticed a remarkable change in the respect that the older students had for me. I had no idea what happened to make the change.

I started asking around to find out what was going on. Now this was back in the days before teachers got too educated to use corporal punishment. We were allowed to paddle. I had to paddle several of my second grade students. I had to spank about 12 of them. They were an unusual class. It was a class that had been handpicked from those with the most discipline problems. Not even the superintendent of schools at the time could handle that class. After that things changed. Not only did the atmosphere in my class change tremendously, then is when I noticed the change in the high schoolers as well. When I asked about the change in attitude of the older students, one of the students told me that it was because they had heard about how I had taken authority over my own class and it had made an impression. (Before you get off on corporal punishment, bear me out and hear about my message in taking authority.) This was the jump in authority that I needed. When I saw that I could take authority, it became easier. When the teenagers saw that I had started taking authority, they listened when I told them what to do. It wasn't long before my presence had the same affect on these kids that the older teachers had.

Now you may ask what does this have to do with taking authority over the devil. The devil is just like an unruly teenager. You can talk to him all you want to, you can even quote scripture all you want to, it will have little affect until you take authority over him. This comes from knowing your place as a child of God and walking in it. As you grow in your relationship with God, and you grow in understanding of who you are according to God's Word, you will grow in the authority that you have over satan. Just as I grew in my authority with the teenagers on hall duty, you have to grow in your authority over the devil. You might say that you are on permanent hall duty.

It is your job to monitor the devil's behavior and see to it that he does not get into things that he isn't supposed to.

Now when I started teaching one of the main problems that I had as a newcomer to the school was that I didn't actually know what all the kids were supposed to be doing, and what they were not allowed to do. I didn't know their restrictions. It didn't help that they knew their restrictions, and they knew that I didn't know them. They were some of the best little con artists. They could talk me right into giving them permission to do what they knew they weren't supposed to do. They could get by with doing things in front of me to break the rules, because they knew I didn't know the rules. As children of God, we face this same thing with the devil. We often don't know his limits. God has put strict limits on what he can and cannot get by with. For example, if you read the story of Job, you will find out in chapter 1 that for the devil to try Job, he had to get permission from God. Read the whole first chapter. Then reread Job 1:10-12. In this section of scripture the devil tells God that because of His protection, he can't touch Job. The devil knows the limitations that God has put on his work. The problem is that often we do not. The Bible is filled with teaching about our position as children of God and our spiritual authority in that position. That is why it is so important to know the Word of God. We run everywhere to find all the answers, but never to the one true source. We spend time doing everything else, but never have time to read the scriptures like we know we should. (By the way, watching TV will not insure our soul's salvation, rather it steals from our spiritual strength. If you think you don't have time, start recording how much time you spend in front of the TV.) Through God's Word we will find out the rules and just what the devil can do.

Besides knowing what the rules are, to be able to take authority, you have to learn who you are and what rights and privileges you have as a child of God. This doesn't mean that these rights and privileges are based on who you are in the flesh. Many times we get this confused. We think that because we aren't perfect, or super-spiritual, or giant Christians, we don't have any rights as children of God. Now if we are not committed and submitted to God we lose many of our rights. For example, the Bible tells us that if we are double-minded, we won't receive anything from God (James 1:8). It tells us that if we are not obedient to God then we lose our authority over the devil. It tells us that if we submit to God, then we can resist the devil and he has to flee (James 4:7). Therefore we know that if we are not submitted then we cannot resist him and have him flee. There are certain conditions of heart and life that we have to have to be able to take the authority that God has given us, and to take our position as children of God. But many people are walking so far in condemnation of the flesh, that they can't see that their rights as children of God are not dependant in their strengths or weaknesses. As a teacher on hall duty, I was a lousy teacher, because I had not learned to take authority. However, my rights and the position I held as a teacher with all the authority that came along with it did not change just because I was a lousy teacher. I was still a teacher, and I had authority, even though I had not learned how to take it. That is the same way with you as a child of God. You just have to learn your position and walk in it. Then when you square your shoulders back and tell the devil to get off your premises, he has to listen.

Now the true test of this came one day when one of the teenagers had gotten hold of some bad drugs. He meant to do harm to teachers and students.

Along with other teachers, I was able to take authority over him. He left the premises. That is how it is with the devil. He will come with the soul purpose of doing harm to you and those you love, and those you serve God with. When you know the rules and you know who you are, you can take authority, and the devil has to leave the premises. It is my prayer that through these pages, you learn that you can put him to flight.

Now before I go on in this book further, I want to take time to talk about casting out devils. This is our right as children of God to cast out devils. When people hear this they think of only one thing. They think of casting demons out of demon filled people. This is a genuine and very real ministry. I have seen this in our own ministry. There are people who come to the Lord as new Christians after a life filled with the occult and drugs, and they are possessed. I have seen these people delivered through the power of God. I want to say carefully though that this is not all there is to taking spiritual authority. Every day I have to take authority over the powers of hell who are trying to gain control of my life or the ministry that God has given me, especially in the ministry of working with young people. Especially if you are in some sort of ministry, you should know what I am talking about. We are in a spiritual battle and we had better learn how to take spiritual authority to be able to win this battle. The weapons that we have are not carnal, and we had better learn what they are and how to use them. If we never learn these things it will be easier for the devil to steal our day-to-day victory, and if we never learn them, he can eventually steal our soul. If we are in a ministry, that battle is compounded by the fact that not only will the devil come against us personally, but he will also come against the ministry that the Lord has given us. He means to keep us from doing that which God intends for us to do.

If you think that you are not in a spiritual warfare and you think that you don't really need all this, then you really need to beware. There is an old saying, "If the devil isn't fighting you, then he may already have you." The devil won't fight you if you are living a compromised life. He will blind you into thinking that there really is no warfare in your life. Look out. All of us are in this spiritual warfare, if we are children of God. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." I pray that through these chapters you learn to identify the battle, and you learn how victorious you are. Ephesians 1:18-23, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Amen Amen Amen Amen.

You have authority that doesn't come from who you are. It comes because you know Who you know. It comes because you know what you know. It comes because of Who is inside of you, Jesus through the power of the Holy Ghost. It comes because of God's Word and the blood of Jesus. How do you win? How can you avoid a lot of battles that the enemy may send? Walk in that authority that God says is yours.

When we apply the principles in this chapter, how can we lose? When we know that every battle only works for our good. Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." When we know that with God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26 "...with God all things are possible." When we know we serve a God Who is over all. Psalm 50:1, "The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken..." When we know where we stand as children of God. How can we lose? Sure we will face battles. They will only cause us to grow and be stronger in Him. If we let them. I want to close this chapter with this scripture. I know we have had this verse before, but some things are important enough to repeat. We need to get them in our spirit. Ephesians 1:17-23, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, But also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." AMEN AMEN. If we could only see these things that are spoken about in this section of scripture as being a part of our right as a child of God, it will change our lives and our walk with God. It will change what we do for the Lord.

It will change our victory.

One way to overcome is to look ahead. The Bible says that when people lack a vision they perish. That is so true. If we never see beyond today with its battles, it is a lot harder to overcome. When we put our eyes on a vision for tomorrow, we can find the strength to press on.

Chapter 19. Looking Ahead

I was blessed to be able to stay with my aunt who died with cancer. I was blessed not long ago to spend a month taking care of someone I loved very much who was dying with cancer. I can without a doubt say that was one of the worst times of my life. I can also say that during that time I received more from God, and grew more than at any time I have ever been through. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything in my life, even the best of times when everything was great. Now you may be thinking that this was one of the best times in my life because God won the victory over cancer and she was healed. No, this may sound strange but hear me out, I really don't think that would have changed my life as much as what happened. We serve a mighty powerful God who has promised us that even our worst times can turn into miracles. (Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.") One of the blessings that came out of the fire with me was this. When my aunt lay dying, for days all she could do was swallow water dripped out of the end of straw. She had no strength left. She praised the Lord for each sip of water that she took. When all she had was strength to move her hand that was just skin and bones up and wave it in praise, that was what she did. She did it until she went into the sleep when she died. I learned something that changed my life forever. We serve a mighty big and wonderful God. We don't have to be afraid of anything the devil or this world has. When we as children of God can lay in the chains of cancer, dying, and still find the victory in God to praise Him, what in this world do we have to fear. I also learned that death is a precious thing. That sounds strange.

Hear me out though. It is hard to watch someone grow helpless inch by inch and have their life slowly taken away. But through this I gained a life-changing glimpse, an understanding of what it means to surrender to God, and its importance. My aunt fought death in a tremendous battle that went on for weeks. Then I watched God deal with her to surrender. He was her strength to be able to help her with this last and greatest surrender that she would have to make. First she had to surrender the issues of her life that had to be resolved. I watched her go through a time when she had to let God's Spirit do its final conviction, when He groomed and made ready His bride. Then she went through a time when I knew she was interceding in her spirit for people that she had had burdens for in her life. How did I know that this was so? Because one by one, as she surrendered them to God, He worked miracles. Then I watched her surrender herself totally to the hands of God. One night she passed away. I was asleep myself when she died. The quickening power of the Holy Ghost woke me up from a sound sleep. The Holy Ghost was so strong in the room. I knew before anyone told me that her last surrender was done. I caught a glimpse that night of God's glory that waited for her on the other side. Life is a succession of surrenders, and the last and greatest surrender leads to our last and greatest reward.

How could this last section have anything to do with the power of resurrection? In a chapter like this you probably expected me to put in that the Lord had come and raised her up from the dead. You know. He did just that. Because of the power of resurrection, death lost its hold. Death lost its sting. Sure she went through physical pain. But the sting of death was gone. She lay in its hold praising God for the victory that was hers. That is part of the resurrection power of Calvary. She knew she faced a new day.

She faced a new day with a new hope and a new body. She knew that just on the other side of this pain was an eternal victory. How did she know? Because like Lazarus and his family, like Mary and the disciples, she walked with the One Who had declared, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Death where is your sting? Not even death could withstand the power of Calvary. Through Calvary, we are given life everlasting. Life in a perfect world without sin or a devil to cause us all those problems. The Bible doesn't tell us much about heaven and what life after death holds. I think that it is because heaven is the best that a perfect God has to give His dearly beloved children. God is so far above what we are that we can't even comprehend Him. I really believe that heaven, the best that He has for us, is so far beyond what we can comprehend that human words can't even describe it. That is why heaven is only glimpsed through the scriptures in a few verses. The few glimpses that we have though have been enough to keep zillions of saints of God on track and going through whatever they had to go through to serve God. Whatever Stephen glimpsed that day in Acts 7:55-56 was enough to make him glow like a heavenly torch in the face of one of the most cruellest deaths you could ever imagine. It has been enough to hold me on course. It has been enough to hold you. How do I know? Here you are reading this book about Calvary. No matter what the devil has thrown at you, here you are. Raise up your hands and praise the Lord. That same God and that same power of Calvary that has kept you so far will see you on through. Lay aside all weights. We have a race to win. Oh, what a glorious prize.

Death is not final. Death is not losing. Death is not defeat. Not the death of a child of God. We have things to look for that we can't even imagine.

How long will that goodness last? Forever. Forever we'll walk with God in that perfect place like the one he first created for us. The Bible doesn't say much about heaven. What it does say is fine enough. We know that Jesus prepared a place for us. The sum total of all the scriptures about heaven, though, is not very much. I think that it is because heaven will be so perfect that our human words can't talk about it. Our puny little human minds can't comprehend it. We couldn't see it if God told us everything. We probably couldn't even stand it, it is so wonderful. We wouldn't bother to stay here. We'd just want to move on.

I heard about a mother who nearly died in childbirth. During that near death experience she saw a glimpse of heaven and Jesus. It was so real and so wonderful that she longed for it. When she came back to this earth she had little desire for this world. Even when they showed her that new little one. What she had seen of heaven made her long to go. You can see it in the faces of those children of God who have gone on. Peace and satisfaction. How can you find that in death? Find peace with God. Fall in love with Jesus. Know where you stand in your relationship with Him. Then when He comes for you, you will be satisfied.

We have a promise of eternity with God in that special place He has made for us. But we also have promises that will get us through each day until that day. How can we overcome the battle? By keeping our eyes on the promises that are ahead. By keeping your eyes on those promises of victory that are surely coming just around the corner. There were many times I might have given up if I hadn't kept thinking, what if I give up now and victory is just ahead. I would go on no matter how long the battle lasted because I knew that one day I would win. I had hope.

How many times have you tied the knot on the end of the rope and hung on? How many times have you kept on keeping on because you knew the promise that God wouldn't put on you more than you could stand? Don't give up. When the battle threatens to choke that life out of you, keep on. The end of it all is still ahead. We always have something to look forward to, whether the end of this battle or a glimpse of heaven to keep us until we stand at the gate. Hold on child of God. Victory is just in site.

Chapter 20. Procrastination and Justification And THE END

I am writing this chapter after watching the movie *Left Behind*. In the movie, there were many people who knew where their loved ones had gone when they disappeared. They knew the truth. They knew that they had been left behind. Can you imagine the fear and horror that you would have if you realized one day that the Lord had come back, the church was raptured, and you were left behind. There will be people from all walks of life who will be in that position. Some may even be pastors, Sunday School teachers, people who grew up in the church. How could that be so? They possessed this thing in their heads, but not in their hearts.

They did all the outward motions, but lacked a relationship with God. Matthew 7:21-23 talks about a group of people who were busy working for the Lord, but they didn't know Him. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Wow. That section of scripture used to really bother me. To be frank, it used to scare the daylights out of me. I thought if those people who had enough going for them that they could prophesy and cast out devils, and they couldn't make it. Where would that leave me? I would wonder too how prophesying and casting out devils could make you to be a worker of iniquity like the scripture says. Then the Lord showed me this one little part of the scripture. The part that says, "I never knew you."

What is the most important thing to do to get ready for heaven so that you won't be cast out as a worker of iniquity? What is the most important thing that you can do to get ready to be in the rapture? We know that it is by grace that either one of these things can take place. We know that there is no way that we could be good enough, or do anything to deserve this. So if we have never prophesied or cast out devils, we can still do this one thing that we have to do to make it. We have to know Jesus. We have to establish a relationship with Him. We have to get to know His love. We have to walk everyday with Him. We can't really get to know Him and His love and have a relationship with Him and not spend every day with Him. It is hard when we are sitting at His feet to ignore Him. When we really know Him, like the hart pants after the brook, our heart longs for Him. Nothing else will do. Nobody else can take His place. We won't wait until the end of the day to seek Him. When we walk with Him, then He can keep us. He can make us ready for that day when He comes, or that day when we go to meet Him by way of death. He can get us ready. He hides us in the palm of His hand. His love is faithful. We can trust in His love. He will present us wrinkle free and without blemish before His Father if we allow His Spirit to work in us, and we keep His Word.

We don't have to be afraid that we won't go to heaven when we walk with the Lord. We don't have to be afraid that we will miss the rapture when we walk with the Lord. When we get to know the Savior, He knows us. He will stand before His Father and declare that we are His. John 17:24 and 26, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. And I have declared unto

them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” How can we escape such a hand? How can we escape such a love? When we know the Lord, He will keep us.

So what about all those people who will miss out? Those who will get left behind even though they know the truth? If God has such a great love for us, then how will that happen? They didn’t know Jesus. They didn’t know His love. They had unrepented sin in their lives that they didn’t fix. They didn’t get their priorities in line to take care of their soul’s business. They knew, but they did nothing with what they knew. Jesus will return for those who walk in an obedient relationship with Him. For those who have let the Spirit get out their wrinkles. Who have let Him clean up their spots. Those who have been cleansed by His blood. Those who have not swept their sin under the rug. Those who have let His precious blood wash away their sin. There will be a lot of people who know the truth but who did nothing with it. Those are the ones who will have to face whatever will come here after God’s children are gone.

Is there a timelier message today than the coming again of Jesus? I can remember when I was younger every once in a while something would happen that would make me think that the Lord was coming soon. I would just ever so often see a sign of the times, as people would put it. Now, today, it seems that every day I see a sign of His coming. We turn on the news and hear things that point to His coming soon. The technology advances that are being made let us know that He is coming soon. The earthquakes, Tsunamis, and other fierce disasters point to His coming. The state of affairs in the world, and in people’s hearts let us know that He is coming soon. We expect any day to see the clouds open, and see Jesus step out.

We expect any day to hear that trumpet that declares His coming. Jesus is coming soon. Sure there are churches who have started teaching that Jesus is not coming in that manner. Little do they know that in itself is just another proof that He is coming. How can we be sure that we don't get left behind? We can avoid these two tools that the devil uses to trap us. Self-justification and procrastination.

Two of the greatest tools that the devil uses to make sure that we will be left behind are those two tools. Let's talk a little first about self-justification. I don't mean from this justification as being defined as just as if I had never sinned. I am not talking about the justification that we receive from the Lord when we have repented and received His forgiveness. I am talking here about self-justification. What we do ourselves. Here are some illustrations of what I'm talking about. In the Bible we first see self-justification showing up in the book of Genesis. Right in the beginning. In Genesis 3 we read the story of the fall of man. God came walking in the garden as He had always done. There was a problem. He knew what Adam and Eve had done even before He set foot in the garden. How many knows that God knows? How many times have you thought that you had hidden that little thing from Him, but He convicted you of it? How many times has He convicted you of things that you even had hidden from yourself? He knows. He knew that day. But He asked a question, "Hast thou eaten of the tree..." Adam said, the woman did it. Eve said that the serpent did it. Poor serpent didn't have anybody left to blame it on. That is self-justification. Blaming on others, making excuses, anything to keep from facing the fact that something is wrong and we need to make it right. That is what self-justification does.

We have already talked about the story of Saul.

How he failed to obey the Lord and what it cost him. We read this story in I Samuel chapter 15. What happened when Saul kept the cattle and sheep even though God had told him to kill them all? Didn't he blame it on others? It was the fault of the people who took the spoil. Never mind the fact that he was king and could command that they be killed along with the flocks. Then he self-justified himself. He actually used God to do that. He said that they had taken it to offer sacrifices to the Lord. How could that be pleasing to God for people to disobey Him to offer a sacrifice? Saul had excuses and self-justification. Saul asked Samuel to let him once more worship the Lord. I wonder though what his motive was in that. In verse 30 it seems like the thing that bothered him most was what the people thought. I don't know. I can't judge. But God did. And God knew His heart. When we make excuses, God can't convict us. When we make excuses, we won't repent. When we don't repent, God can't forgive us. We have to repent actively. We can't just say at the end of the day, "Well God, anything that I have done forgive me". Then go on our way to do the same the next day. That isn't true repentance. Repentance comes when the Lord convicts us of that particular sin. When we repent and we are heart broken before God. When we come out of that sin and do it no more. When we fail to let God deal with us, then we will get left behind.

Why do we justify ourselves? Why do we make excuses? Because really in our hearts we want to hear what we want to hear. We want to do what we want to do. We want to go where we want to go. And we do just that. God convicts us. We ignore Him by making excuses or justifying what we do. Excuses like these. Here are some that we often use. I can't help myself. My flesh is weak. I grew up in a rough way. Everybody and everything is against me. I just can't.

I need to do right but I can't make up my mind because it is too hard. I can't find the right direction to go in because everything is so confusing. I'm not sure I want to make that kind of commitment. That is too fanatical for me. I am not sure I want to stop these certain things. That is so confining to live with all those rules. I am sure God doesn't mind the way I am. God loves me just like I am. He doesn't care what I do. He will forgive me. Jesus died so I could get by with doing what I want to. God loves us and He won't send anyone to hell. He loves us unconditionally and I am OK no matter what I do. These are all examples of self-justification. Throughout this book we have talked about how all these things are so wrong. We've seen in the Word of God how all these are wrong. The truth cuts all our excuses up into pieces. The Word of God annuls all our excuses. The blood of Jesus is shed for those who repent, not for those who justify their sins and make excuses. The Holy Spirit reveals our sin. There is no cover up when He sweeps through the house. The Word of God reveals our hearts cutting down like a sword through the very marrow of our being. When we allow all these to work in our lives, where does self-justification go? It has to leave. There are no more excuses. When we stand before God at judgment He will be blameless. He will know that He did all He could. If we fail to make it to heaven, or we fail to go in the rapture, it will be because we rejected Him, His Spirit, and His Word. Don't let this tool of the enemy cause you to be left behind.

Another tool that the devil uses is the tool of procrastination. we can get by with putting off some things, not others. When the Lord comes back to rapture His bride, how many people will be left behind who just the day before said to themselves that they know they need to get their priorities in line?

How many will tell themselves just the day before that they knew they need to give their heart to the Lord? How many will be convicted of a sin that they need to repent of, but they put off that repentance just one more day? How many will the Lord be dealing with to get real in their relationship with Him, but they put it off one more day. How many will God deal with their hearts about submitting to Him and obeying Him, but they put it off just one more day. Procrastination causes us to put it off. To put it off until we have no more time. How many people in hell knew better, but just put it all off one more day. Just one more day.

How many times has the devil used this tool to mess up your life? Isn't it a smart one. It can cause you to miss out on obeying God. It can cause you to miss out on a blessing God had for you because you delayed obeying Him. Throughout this book and throughout the Bible we have read of people who obeyed God and He kept them and blessed them. We've also read about people who didn't obey, and they went through heartaches. Remember the old saying, "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today, because tomorrow may never come". That is surely true. Why put off things. Especially those things that have to do with your eternal soul.

Some of the greatest preachers may never preach a sermon. Why? Because they have said for years, "One day I need to start that". Some of the greatest singers have never stepped up on the platform and took a microphone. Why? Because they say, "One day I will. Just not today." Some of the greatest teachers will never teach. The greatest evangelists will never step out to carry the Word. Greatest visiting teams will never go out to the people. Why? Procrastination. On the other side of all this, what about those lost who may never find the light God gives.

They never find it because those who were to carry it to them never got around to it. How sad will it be the day after the Lord comes back. One day we will have to stand before the Lord and give an account for what we have done, and for what we procrastinated in. Those who put off ever making an obedient commitment to the Lord will be sitting there beside those they might have reached out to. Procrastination. What a smart tool for the devil to use. Don't be fooled.

Let's be obedient. Keep your priorities in line. Love Jesus. Let Him love you. Hear the voice of your Shepherd. Nothing is as important as Jesus. He can't come second or third in your life and still be the Lord of your life. When priorities are out of line that is when the devil can use procrastination. When nothing is more important than Jesus, we won't want to put Him off until tomorrow. Remember, we are never guaranteed tomorrow. Don't let your tomorrow fill your eternity with regrets.

I wanted to close this book with this chapter because if we aren't careful all we've read will vanish into thin air if we don't guard against these two culprits. I hope that this book helps many people. It has enough of God's Word in it by itself to change lives. I hope that it will make a difference in your life. Take it to heart. Take God's Word to heart. Don't make excuses. Don't justify your failures. Don't excuse your sin. Don't put off doing the things that you need to do. Don't put off fixing the areas in your life that the Lord is dealing with you to fix. Don't silence God's voice. Don't shove away His conviction by saying, I'll do that another day. We are soon coming to a time when tomorrow will definitely be too late.

Closing

When the Lord started leading me to write this book, some people who were close to my heart were losing out on their relationship with God. They no longer made it a priority to live for Him. They were going backwards steadfastly instead of forward. I could see the devil creeping into their lives with all kinds of things to destroy them while they were weak. He kept their lives so full of things that they didn't have time to spend with God. One made a comment to me that he had forgotten God's love. It was scary to me to watch this happen. I started praying about why people lose their salvation. I know there is a doctrine that says you can't lose your salvation. But we all know that there are people who do. This isn't because salvation fails, or God fails. It is because people choose to turn away from God. At a meeting our pastor was talking about this. He was talking about how some teach that we can't backslide. He asked the people to raise their hand who had backslid at some point in their lives. Nearly all of us raised their hands. So we know that you can turn your back on God.

In my 20+ years of serving God I have watched many who turned their backs on God. People who were dedicated at one time. You have seen it yourself. What happens? I've tried to deal with that in these chapters. We have discussed what can go wrong and what can go right. We have talked about how to stand and what to stand on. We have talked about how to hear and obey God's voice so He can help us to stand. We have talked about how to feed the Spirit man inside of us and how to let Him keep the victory over flesh. We have talked about how we have to grub those things up by the roots that could grow up and choke the spiritual life out of us. We have talked about the power of God's Word.

We've talked about how to overcome and how to win the battle. We have talked about how we need to keep our eyes ahead for the victories that will come. As surely as that final victory that we'll face. There is just one more thing to cover. That is this one question. What will you do now? Will you be like the man looking in the mirror changing nothing? Will you let the victory from God's Word that you've read fire you up and put a "go ye" and a determination that your salvation will stick? Sure, many have fallen, and more will fall. But you don't have to. When you have salvation that sticks, you know your destination. I may never get to meet you here on earth to talk to you to find out if this book helped you. But one day, look me up in heaven. We'll both be there celebrating the One Who saved us and kept us in the palm of His hand. Praise the Lord.

Book Two

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

© 2010
Sandy Haga

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
<i>Introduction</i>	179
<i>Why Do We Need The Baptism Of The Holy Ghost</i>	189
<i>Who Can Have It</i>	194
<i>How Do We Receive It</i>	200
<i>The Benefits of the Baptism</i>	206
<i>What Is Speaking in Tongues</i>	213
<i>Walking in the Spirit</i>	220
<i>Obeying God and Finding the Power To Do So</i>	230
<i>Overcoming Satan</i>	236
<i>For Those Who Have The Baptism</i>	243
<i>God's Washing Machine</i>	247
<i>Closing</i>	255

Introduction

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is an experience that is a key experience to enable and empower the church today. If there has ever been a time when the church, the bride of Christ, needs to have power, victory, boldness, faith, and the quickening power of the Spirit, that time is now. All these things are brought about by the Baptism of the Spirit. Sad to say, a lot of churches teach that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was an experience that only the Christians in the beginning days of the church could have. My question to those who believe that way is this. Why would God give early Christians an experience to empower them, and take it away from us today? We could be called the last day church. Do we need that power today? Why would God deprive us of something that we need?

If you don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, you might be saying to yourself, "But I thought that we got the Holy Ghost when we got saved." That is true. When you get saved, you get a portion of God's Spirit. Jesus comes into your heart through the power of the Holy Ghost. God's Spirit enters into your heart. That is the beginning. Let's start by explaining just what the Baptism of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is all about. I call Him the Holy Ghost because that is what the Bible mostly calls Him. The Holy Ghost is a person. He is a part of the trinity of God. God is made up of three persons, three parts, much like an egg. An egg has a shell, the white, and the yolk. If you separate one egg, you have three parts, but there is still only one egg there. God the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all three parts of God. You are a person. You have a spirit that will one day go back to God, and you have your flesh part.

It is the part that people see. You may have a son. That son is a part of you, a part of your flesh. Your DNA, your blood, your genetics, and all the things that parents pass into their children is in your son. He is a part of you. This is much the same way as God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost are connected together. That connection between them is so strong that they are one. They operate as one. One will never step out on His own, but they are all in total and complete agreement. That is something that we humans can't understand on our own. There is an old song that goes like this, "He's God in the Father, He's God in the Son, He's God in the Holy Ghost, He's God all three in one. I know God is God, and He won't ever change." Here is one example of part of the trinity and how they fit together. John 17:21 says, "That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Jesus is saying here that He and His Father were one. He was also saying that He was dying on the cross so that we could be one with both of them. That is a lot of love in that passage. I guess you could say that the stuff that holds God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost together is love. That is the same stuff that holds us together to make us one with God.

When you get saved, you are born of the Spirit of God. God's Spirit comes into your heart. Jesus comes into your heart through God's Spirit. So you are right if you say that God's Spirit comes into your heart when you are saved. But there is more. If you have been baptized or filled with the Spirit of God, then you know what I am saying. Baptized with the Spirit and filled with the Spirit are both terms that refer to the same experience. There are three reasons why we can know that being baptized or filled with the Holy Ghost means more than just having salvation.

I know because I have read the full counsel of God's Word and it is all through the scriptures. Also, I know because it has happened to me. The third reason I know that it is so is because millions of people down through time have experienced the same thing that I have experienced.

When you get saved, you get a portion of God's Spirit. When you receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, you get baptized, filled, empowered, filled up to the brim. Here is a little bit of what the Bible says about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. We will be studying scriptures throughout this book. This isn't something that I've made up to entertain you. It is found throughout the Word of God. It is valuable truth that may make a difference in your life between victory and defeat as a Christian. If you already have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, then this book will still be a blessing and a strength to you as you are reminded about what power, strength, comfort, and all that you can find because of it. Keep reading.

Here are some scriptures. There are more to come throughout the book. Luke 3:16 tells about the incidence where the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is first mentioned. John the Baptist is speaking here. "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." At Pentecost the Holy Ghost filled them, baptized them. This is found in Acts 2:4, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 8:15 talks about a group of people who had been saved, they had received the Word of God, and they had been baptized in water already. Then something else happened.

They received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. “Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost.” Verse 17 says, “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” (If this were talking about salvation, and receiving the Holy Ghost because they were saved, then why hadn’t they gotten it when they were saved? Why did they have to go and lay hands on them so that they could receive it? We’ll talk more about this later.) Acts 19:6, “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” This is talking about more than salvation.

If the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is such an empowering experience, why are there so many Christians who don’t know about it, and why haven’t we all received it? All too often people grow up being taught a certain thing. They don’t study the Bible out for themselves. Or if they do, they use what they have been taught as a strainer, straining out the unfamiliar. They take what they have and rejoice in that, and refuse to see that they could have more. Traditions of the church sometimes can be shackles to bind people. They can become blinders that keep people from seeing the very things that can bring them victory. God often shows me things in pictures. Not only because a picture is worth a thousand words, but also because I am so simple. Sometimes it takes a picture to explain things to me. (☺) He once showed me a picture of people crawling around on a floor. They were picking up crumbs. They were so excited about the crumbs that they found. They were comparing their crumbs, bragging to each other over what a big one they had found. They were rejoicing in those crumbs. They were even fighting over them, grabbing them up. Then the picture shifted up above their head.

God showed me that just over their heads, out of their reach, was a banquet table spread for a king. All they had to do was to stand up and sit at the table and feast. But they wouldn't. They were too busy crawling around on the floor eating the crumbs. They didn't believe that there was anything better than those crumbs. So they wouldn't stand up and see the table. That was really sad to see that. Since that time though I have realized how many people do this every day. God spreads out a spiritual feast for us, and we settle for the crumbs. That is why there are so many people who are falling away. They are weak. They are not strong enough to make it through these trying times that we are in. Their faith is based in their traditions, more than in the full counsel of the Word of God. They are eating crumbs and those aren't enough to strengthen them. They have strained out the good stuff and they are settling for baby food that keeps them weak. They refuse to stand up and get the food that they need for their strength. Satan convinces them that by holding to their traditions and the beliefs that they have, they are actually being loyal to God. However, those traditions and beliefs are stripping them of the victory they need to overcome.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost may not be familiar to you. I can understand. I was once the same way. I was in my 20's before I heard about it. I can say that when I heard about it, I was so hungry that I got it. You see, it was the experience that saved my life, and kept my soul from going to hell. I had been saved when I was a kid. I had gone to church all my life. When I was in my late teens and early 20's, I set out to see what all the world had to offer. Boy, did I find out. It didn't take long for me to totally wreck my life. I destroyed my heart, my mind, my life so bad that soon there was no return, no way to fix any of it.

I had no hope, or so I thought. I found my way back to God. It was still hard to turn my life around. I was bound by addiction, by the scars of my sin, and by the life style that I had become caught in. The devil had me so bound that I couldn't change anything on my own. There were no Pentecostal churches around my home back in those days. Through what I would call a miracle, one opened up. I believe that little church opened up for me. Why do I think that? Not long after I went, learned about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and received it indirectly through a church service, that little church moved miles away. God sent that for me. It was the key that I needed to unlock me. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost knocked the devil off my porch and gave me the strength I needed to keep him off. If I wouldn't have received that when I did, I would have given up on serving God and I would probably be dead today. That is a bold statement to make, but it is very true.

That is why I am writing this book. I see people who are hungry for something more. They know that there is something more. They are dying because they can't find it. They are too bound in their traditions to pull up to the table. I hope that I can describe that feast that is up there on that table and make you so hungry that you pull yourself up, grab hold of God's hand to get the strength to do so, and pull up the chair that God has set for you there.

My Grandmother was what I call a saint. She was a prayer warrior. I remember when she was in her 80's, my aunt and her started what I call a ministry, reaching out to shut-ins. They had several hundred people that they mailed a little Bible study to, and many of these, they hand delivered to people who were shut in. They visited these people, they would pray with them.

They would encourage them. Not only did they visit with these people, they visited their children and grandchildren when they were asked to. That was only a little of what they did. Everyday they prayed for hundreds of people on their prayer list. Many of those people were preachers and workers for the Lord. When my grandmother got to the place where she could no longer get out, she still prayed. When I got the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, I didn't talk much about it to my grandmother. As time went on, I didn't share about it with her because I knew that she was such a wonderful Christian, I thought that she didn't need it. God kept dealing with my heart to share with her what God had done for me. I finally did. When I did, she started crying. She told me that she had searched for this all her life. She had known that there was more. She had read it in the scriptures. She had asked preachers for years and years to explain to her what it all meant. She was so thirsty for it. None of them told her the truth. Sad to say, some of the preachers that she had prayed for every day were Pentecostal preachers. When they held revivals in the Baptist churches that my Grandmother attended, and visited, they preached Baptist doctrine. They didn't preach about the Baptism when they were in those churches. When she prayed to receive the Holy Ghost, I can remember the joy on her face. It lit up. I thank God that I shared with her. That is one of the reasons why I am writing this book.

You may be like my grandmother. You may be a fireball Christian. You may still have a feeling that there is something more that you hunger for. You may have read scriptures that showed you that there is something more than what you have, and you feel that in your heart. But you have had no one to show you the truth.

You may have tied a knot in the end and you may be hanging on to the knot ready to slip. Like I was, you need the power to overcome things that you sowed in sin. You want to live the way that God says to, but you don't have the strength to do so. Every time you take a few steps forward, you slide as many back. You are about to give up on serving God. Hold on. Reach out. Pull yourself up to God's table. He has a feast that will give you the strength that you need.

You may be new Christian who is just learning about this thing called Christianity. You want to become a bold Christian, but you just can't get out of the wimpy stage. Let God fill you with His Spirit. You will be bold enough to turn your world upside down.

You may be someone who is bound with worry and fear. Both of these are spirits that bind so many today. You may be holding on to hope, but the worry and fear of this world and this life is pushing you over the edge. You are bound with fear and so many other things that your life is a wreck and your whole family is suffering. You can be delivered. Let God's Spirit knock the devil off you, like it did me.

Whoever you are and whatever your needs are, don't be like those who were crawling under the table. God has a gift for you. God has a life-giving feast for you. Don't be too afraid to find out about this. Don't discredit it because it isn't the way you were taught. Ask Him about it. All you have to do to find out the truth is to seek for it and be open to hear Him tell you about it. He wants to lead you into all truth. The whole thing. Every bit of it. Luke 11:9-13 says, "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto

you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone: or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Talk to your Heavenly Father. He will lead you to the truth. You can trust Him. Read the Word of God. Be open to it.

Even though I had never heard of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, when I heard of it, I didn't reject it. I was hungry for it. I knew in my heart that it was the truth. I didn't reject it. I was in love with God, and wanted to serve Him with my whole heart. I needed all the help that I could get. I was like a little bird, holding open my mouth for anything that God had for me. Anything that God had, I wanted. That is how we need to be. We don't need to have strained food. We don't have to be satisfied with crumbs, just because that is what we've always eaten and what could be so bad with that. Time is running out. We need to be powerhouses for God. We need to be boldly declaring to our family, our friends and neighbors, and to those we love who do not know God that soon they will be facing terrible times such as they have never seen, if they don't accept Jesus and get ready for His coming again. We need to have enough victory in our lives that they can see something that can hold them through these troubled times that we are facing. They need to see in you something that they want. If ever we needed to stand in the full counsel of the truth it is now. When you only stand in part of the truth, then you aren't standing firm.

It is easy to get swept away by all the lies and untruths that the devil is spreading. We need to be walking in the full counsel of the Word of God in all the strength that brings.

If you don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, then you need to read this book. If you do have it, you need to read it to remind you of the power that you possess. It is time.

Chapter 1.

Why Do We Need the Baptism of the Holy Ghost?

The church is sick. Everywhere I talk to people, I hear how sick the church is. I'm talking about the bride of Christ as a whole. Most Christians have settled into a compromise state. They are either asleep on the pew, or they are so busy with the things of the world that they have no time for God. They have long ago stopped making a priority of serving God. Somewhere along the way they have forgotten what it means to have a burden for the lost and a desire for them to be saved. The conviction of the Holy Ghost no longer falls in most churches. The name of the Holy Ghost explains why. God's Spirit is holy. God is a holy God. He isn't the God of compromise that most churches have settled for. God is a just and a righteous God. When sin is allowed to rule in the church, and most sermons preached are preached to justify sin, and pat the sinners on the back, then there is no righteousness in the house of God. God won't be a part of that, and neither will His Spirit. If we had to paint a picture of the church today, it would be a sick crippled person, leaning on every crutch but God, carrying weights that so bind her that she can't even walk, so bound to the world that she follows after every whim the world dictates, and has long ago left following God. It certainly isn't the victorious bride of Christ that the Bible talks about, full of God's love, obeying His calling.

Here is a picture of what the church should be according to God's Word and His plan. Colossians 1:10-13, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto

all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear son.” That is powerful. That is God’s plan. We are to be a light to the world. Not some kind of weird reflection. We are supposed to be salt. When you throw salt into a wound, it burns. The burning cleanses the wounds, purifies it. Luke 14:34 says, “Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill: but men cast it out...” Salt that has gone bad isn’t fit for anything but to be thrown out.

We know that the hour is late. Every day we see signs of the coming again of the Lord. Soon He will split the eastern sky and those without spot, wrinkle, or blemish will be caught away. Now is not the time to be defeated. Now isn’t the time to lose our savor. We must be ready for His coming, or we will get left behind. We must be yielded to the Spirit of God more than ever before, ready to obey Him so that we can lead those we love to Him. How can we change the picture of today’s church to be the one that Colossians talked about? The key to unlocking the church is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. What difference can that make? Read on to see.

I have put together a little chart that illustrates how the Baptism of the Holy Ghost makes a difference.

1. With the Baptism—Power to Overcome
Without the Baptism—Settling into compromise and defeat
2. With the Baptism—Boldness to obey God

- Without the Baptism—Excuses for why you can't and justification of sin and disobedience
3. With the Baptism—Comfort, overcoming fear and other bad fleshly emotions
Without the Baptism—Bound by fear, anxiety and panic attacks
 4. With the Baptism—Ability to show the fruits of the Spirit
Without the Baptism—Fruits of the flesh being more prevalent than the fruits of the Spirit.
 5. With the Baptism—Understanding and walking in the full counsel of God in the fullness of His Word
Without the Baptism—Not being rooted and grounded in the full counsel of the Word of God, easily side-tracked or swayed from the truth.
 6. With the Baptism—Peace with God
Without the Baptism—Rebellion that comes when you try really hard to do what you feel you need to do but you only fail because you are doing it on your own in the flesh
 7. Without the Baptism—Struggle
With the Baptism—Release that comes when you let the Spirit of God control your life
 8. Without the Baptism—Feeling empty.
With the Baptism—Feeling satisfied.

Finally and most important:
Without the Baptism—defeat
With the Baptism—VICTORY
We'll talk more in a chapter coming up about how all these things work. I'll give scriptures to show you.

To sum this all up, here is a parable that Jesus told. It is found in Matthew 1:1-13. It is the parable of the 10 virgins. They were waiting on the bridegroom to come to the marriage feast and let them in. Five were wise and five were foolish. The foolish ones ran out of oil in their lamps. Their lamps went out. They went off to buy oil, but it was too late. When they were gone the bridegroom came. When they got back the door was already shut. "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." We need oil in our lamps to be able to stand in these last days. Throughout God's Word the Spirit of God, the anointing of God, is referred to as being oil. Having our vessels be full of God's Spirit is more important now than ever before. It will be the difference between having victory or defeat. We can't get our oil at the last minute. It won't work that way. Either we will be ready when the Lord comes, full of oil, full of His Spirit and the victory that brings, or we won't be.

It is harder not to believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost than it is to believe in it. It is harder not to be filled with the Spirit of God than it is to be filled. It is much harder to live a Christian life without the fullness of God's Spirit than it is not to have it. It is nearly impossible to do so without it. Do you long for more victory in your life? Do you want to overcome?

Do you want to overcome your flesh and your weaknesses? Do you want to become a powerhouse for the Lord? Are you tired of your Christian walk being one step forward and two steps back? Are you longing for something more, more power, more victory? Keep reading.

Chapter 2. Who Can Have It

There are three requirements to being able to receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. They are simple. One, you have to be saved. Number two is that you can't deny the Spirit of God. The third is that you have to be obedient. Coming up in this chapter we'll talk about what all that means. The first one is that you have to be saved. You have to possess salvation. Lots of people profess salvation, but don't really possess it. They have what is described in II Timothy 3:5 as being, "...a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..." My way of describing that is by saying that they profess salvation, but they don't possess it. We have to be real with God. If we say that we are saved, but there is no change in our actions or attitudes, then we don't possess salvation, we are just saying that we do. There are so many people that have cheapened the salvation experience. They take the attitude that it doesn't matter whether or not they obey God's Word they are still saved. This thing takes commitment. It takes Holy living.

What does it mean to be saved? I have included here part of a book, *Know What You Believe*. *When you get saved, you ask Jesus into your heart. He really comes in. He makes a change when He comes in. You know that He is real because He is in your heart. What other religion can say that their main figure came back from the dead, still lives, and can come into your heart today? Isn't that kind of far out for someone to say? If you have asked Jesus to come into your heart, if you have been saved, then you know that this is true. It really does happen. I know Jesus is alive because He is inside of me. I know him. I am not worshipping a memory of some dead guy.*

I am serving a living, loving Savior who died because He loves me, who came back from the dead, and now lives inside of me. He helps me to do what I am supposed to do because He is in my heart. That is certainly proof enough for me. I know that Jesus rose from the dead. He is my best friend today. I know Him. He is not just a figment of my imagination. I have seen evidence of His presence in my life for over 30 years.

Getting saved, asking Jesus to forgive you and asking Him to come into your heart is the first step to take in getting to know God. When we ask Jesus to come into our heart, He does through His Spirit. He comes into your heart and takes up residence there. How can He do that? Our hearts are made like a container to hold the Spirit of God. That is why we feel so empty if we don't have Him in our hearts. Jesus explained to someone who asked Him what it meant to be saved, and He explained it this way. The wind blows everywhere. If you open your window, and I open my window all the way across town, the wind can blow into both windows at the same time. God's Spirit is like the wind. If we open our hearts, He can move into our hearts and live, all of us at the same time. God will come into your heart if you ask Him to. When that happens, you will know that He has come in, because there will be a change in how you feel and how you think. He will help you to change how you live. There will definitely be a difference in you. Getting saved means that you repent of your sin, and you ask Jesus to come into your heart and He does. Well, if it is that easy, how come there are people who say that they have been saved, but they are not living like they have been? If it is that easy, how come you know people who at one time were in church serving God, but now they aren't? Salvation is a gift.

What we do with that gift once we receive it is up to us.

Some people say that they have been saved because they have been baptized. You can't be saved just by getting baptized. These are two totally different things. If you could be saved just by getting baptized then you wouldn't need to ask Jesus into your heart, and He wouldn't have had to die on the cross for your sins. Salvation is more than being baptized. You get baptized to show that you have been saved, not because baptism saves you. There is an old saying, if a sinner goes down into the water and doesn't get saved first, he will come up a wet sinner. Water doesn't wash away your sins. The blood of Jesus washes away your sins. When Jesus shed His blood on Calvary, He did that so that He could cover your sins, so that you could be forgiven. He did that for everyone, but not everyone accepts the gift that He gave. If you don't accept that, and ask Jesus to come into your heart, then water won't make a bit of difference. Water can't wash away your sins. What can wash away your sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Some people say I'm saved because I don't drink or party. I'm a good person. The Bible tells us that accepting Jesus is the only way to be saved. We can't earn our way to heaven. No matter how hard we try, we can't be good enough. The Bible tells us that our best is just filthy rags in the sight of a holy and perfect God. We can't be perfect and holy. We are saved when we repent and ask His forgiveness. When we ask Him in our heart, then we start to take on His holy nature. That is the only way that we can ever be good enough to get to go to heaven.

You can be saved. You can know that you are saved.

Some people tell me that they don't know if they are saved or not. Make up your mind. Commit your heart to the Lord. God will meet you more than halfway. If when you read this chapter you feel Him dealing with your heart, don't turn Him away. If you feel Him talking to you, if you feel His conviction, don't shove it away or ignore it. It is precious. If you haven't been saved, don't ignore that feeling that He is knocking on your heart's door. Open wide your heart. Let Him in. If you have been saved, and you feel His conviction, that feeling that lets you know that you are not where you should be in your relationship with Him, that you are doing things or having attitudes that aren't according to the best that you can be in Him, don't run from Him. Repent. Ask for His forgiveness. Ask Him to help you change through the power of His Spirit that is in your heart. He loves you so much and you need that love more than you'll ever know. Run to Him. I know that He will be there. When you do that, then you will know that you have been saved. When you do that though, the devil will be there to try to talk you out of your salvation. He will lie to you to try to make you think that you really didn't change, nothing really happened. Well, according to God's Word you did what was required, if what you did was heart felt. Then according to the book, you are saved. You then accept God's Word in faith. You then know that you were saved. Yes, you will feel different. But it is based on more than a feeling. It is based on the truth of God's Word.

Before we got into this long quote from my last book, we were talking about the three things that are required to receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Of course, the first one is salvation. The second one is that you can't denounce the Spirit of God. That is called blaspheming the Spirit. What do I mean?

The Bible warns against this as being the sin that you can't ever be forgiven of. How do we do that? We can do that when we refuse to let God's Spirit deal with our hearts. We do that when we refuse to let His Spirit convict us of our sin, when we refuse to let His Spirit lead us to Him. We can also do that when we shut out the knowledge of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Let me explain.

There is a preacher in our town. He knows about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. He knows that it can give him the power that he needs to overcome. He has some major battles with things in his life that used to bind him before he got saved. It is evident that he is losing the battle with these things. Instead of receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, he talks against it. Why he won't receive what he knows, and be delivered from these things, we aren't sure. He would rather have this battle with his sin than he would to accept deliverance. He is refusing to let the Spirit of God work in His life. That can only lead to a disaster. Sad to say, if he would receive the Baptism, and let the Spirit of God fill him up with the power that goes with that, he could overcome all this and be a dynamic preacher. Instead, he is falling headlong into becoming something that will cause a lot of grief in the family of God. We can't shut ourselves away from the knowledge of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and receive it. Nor can we hear about it, refuse to accept it, and be able to receive it. The Bible warns against shutting away the Spirit of God from our lives. It is the Spirit of God who draws us to God. It is the Spirit of God who convicts us of our sin. It is the Spirit of God who quickens us and gives us the power to overcome. He will catch us away to be with Him in the rapture, and the it is the Spirit of God who will catch us away to be with Him when we die.

Why in the world would we want to stop Him from working in our lives? Isn't that dangerous?

The third requirement is that we be obedient. We read in Acts 5:32, "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him." To be able to have the Holy Ghost we must obey God. God's Spirit will not come into our life if we are not obedient. (As a little side note here, what does that do to the belief that it doesn't matter what we do, we can still be saved?) We know from this that if there is no real commitment in our life, if we are still playing church-acting saved on Sunday but living like the devil on Monday, then we cannot expect to receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Now if we have come to the place where we are really, really, really tired of our sin, and willing to do whatever we can do to overcome it, then we can receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. If we have repented of our sin, and we want the power to overcome it, then the Baptism is the key to help us overcome. We can surely receive it.

So now we know how much we need the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, what is required for us to receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. How do we receive it?

Chapter 3.

How Do We Receive It?

The best way that I can begin a chapter about how we can get the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is by telling you about what happened to me. I talked a little about this in an earlier chapter. Remember, I told about that little church that opened up in the little country place I grew up in. God led me to go to that church. I obeyed Him. I went to church there and I heard about the Baptism. I received that teaching. I didn't discard it. I didn't file it in my file 13. I didn't trash it. I received that teaching. I hungered for what I was taught. And then I accepted it. God did the rest. You can see how my receiving the Baptism was based on my obeying God, and on my accepting this. I was hungry, and God filled me. I sought this. The Bible says seek and ye shall find. It happened just that way.

At one of the church services, God led me to go up front and ask them to pray for me to receive the Baptism. I did. That is scriptural. We read in Acts 8:15 and 17, "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." I didn't receive it right then. I am not sure why I didn't. It may be because there were some more things that I needed to understand. Or it may have been that I was a shy person. When everyone gathered around and started praying for me, that was more attention than I was used to. For whatever reason, I didn't get it right then. Lot's of people do. That was the beginning of my receiving it. I guess you could say that my experience came in two parts. Later on that same week I was riding around praying for someone that I had a real burden for. I was grieved in my spirit for him, I had a burden.

I was praying with all my heart. All of the sudden I started speaking in tongues. That is when I knew that I had received the Baptism. Acts 2:4 says, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” The two go together. The Bible says that an evidence of receiving the Baptism is speaking in tongues. Some people have trouble understanding about this, but does that mean that it isn’t real? In I Corinthians chapters 12, 13, and 14, we read about whole chapters that talk about speaking in tongues. We’ll talk more in a later chapter what speaking in tongues is all about. When I started speaking in tongues, I knew that I had received the Baptism.

Now I grew up in a home that didn’t believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. It wasn’t that we talked against it. It was just that we had never heard of it. This thing was all new to me, except for what little bit I had learned at the church I told you about. I didn’t realize that speaking in tongues was subject to the person who was speaking. It is the Holy Ghost speaking through you in His language, but still you will be the one who will stop and start it. The Holy Ghost doesn’t speak through you until you open that channel. I thought that I had to do this the whole time. The Holy Ghost poured through me. For a whole day I spoke in tongues. I guess I needed that extra power in a bad way. My life was changed on that day. As the old saying goes, I knocked the devil off my front porch and he landed way out in the yard. On the humorous side, I was afraid that if my family heard me they would think I was crazy so I stayed outside all day working with the horses. I was afraid that I couldn’t make it stop. At least I had enough sense to not want it to. Speaking in tongues is an evidence that you have received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

How can you receive the Baptism? The same way I did. Believe in it. Get hungry for it. Open up your heart to receive it. Make sure that you are obedient. Go to a church that believes this way. (As a note: If you go to a church that doesn't believe in the Baptism, then don't expect them to be able to pray for you to receive it.) Ask the Lord to fill you. Let them pray for you. Believe that you will receive. And accept it. It is a gift. The Bible refers to the things of the Spirit as the gifts of the Spirit. We don't have to be perfect or super spiritual to receive it. I think that one of the things that often hinders people from receiving the Baptism and the gift of speaking in tongues is that people get afraid that they can't get it. That isn't faith. All the things of God are given to those that believe. I have talked to people who have prayed and prayed and nothing happened. The minute that they go up for prayer, they become afraid that nothing is going to happen. The more they try, the more this fear grows. That fear is what is hindering them. The devil is pulling a trick on them by using fear. He'll also use condemnation to stop you. Every time you pray for the Baptism, your thoughts may fill up with remembering all that you have done, all your sin, and all your past. Those things are behind you. They are under the blood. It is your enemy, the devil, who is reminding you of all this, who is condemning you. The Bible says that when we have repented, the blood covers our sin, and we don't have to be condemned any longer. Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If you are walking in Christ, not giving into the things your flesh wants you to do that is sin, but if you are giving into the Spirit then there is no more condemnation. You can tell the devil to go away and leave you alone. If all that is happening to you, the best thing to

do is to say, “I accept this gift that God has given me. I am meeting the requirements. I accept this thing by faith. I believe that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

I believe that one way to overcome all this fear is by reading over and over this section of scripture that we talked about earlier until you get it in your heart and mind. Luke 11:9-13 says, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone: or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” God knows how to get through all this bondage and give you the Spirit. You are seeking Him. It is His job to find you and honor His Word. Believe that He will. It isn’t so much dependant on who you are and what you do, but it is His job to give you this gift. It is just your job to receive it.

I believe too that another reason why people who seek the Baptism of the Holy Ghost don’t receive it because they try too hard. If you are someone who finds it hard to give up control, then it will be hard for you to submit to God’s Spirit and yield so that you can receive the Baptism. One of the reasons why God gives us this gift is because of the battle that we have with our flesh. The only way that we can overcome our flesh is to yield totally to God’s Spirit. That is how we receive the Baptism. The word Baptism itself means to be totally and completely submersed.

When we hold onto a little bit of our self control, a little bit of our will, a little bit of our dignity so to speak, then we block God's Spirit from being able to totally fill us. When we trust God to the point and we release ourselves in His love to receive, then we can be filled with Him. We will never find complete victory in our life over our flesh until we do that. The key to submission is realizing how much you need this. When you get good and tired of your flesh and the mess that it makes for your life, then you will be more willing to yield to God.

We need to realize that on our own, doing our own thing, not submitting to God's Spirit is why the church today lacks victory. It is why we lack victory in our personal lives. Until we submit to God's Spirit, we will not be able to do God's will, serve God, reach out to His people to minister to them. We will not be able to obey God's Word. On our own without submitting and yielding to His Spirit we can't keep ourselves from sinning, no matter how bad we want to do so. Yield your flesh and let God's Spirit fill you up.

I know people who have sought the Baptism of the Holy Ghost for years. They have been in scores of prayer lines. They have read every book that they could get their hands on. They have tried so hard to receive it. Then they would just finally give up. That was exactly what they needed to do. They needed to quit trying. They needed to get into neutral gear. When they did, when they gave up trying so hard, God was able to do His work in their lives.

Sometimes there are some people have had a struggle with receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. This may be because they have problems yielding to anyone. This may be because they have been so hurt.

They have been so hurt by people that they have trouble yielding to God. God is love. If we have trouble yielding to other people's love because of scars that we have from being abused or hurt, then we won't be able to yield to God's love. If this happens to you, then ask God to heal you. He can heal the scars and wounds in our hearts just as He can heal the bumps, bruises, and diseases of your body. Ask Him to help you yield to Him. Ask Him to help you to receive His love. Seek His love. Yield to that love, and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost will come on its own.

Stop trying to receive it. Have you ever chased somebody down that wanted to give you a gift, and beat them up to take it away from them just when they were reaching out with it to give it to you. I guess not. Sometimes that is how we do God. This wonderful gift is one that He is holding out to you through His Word and His Spirit. When you receive a gift it is an act of yielding. When you give a gift that is something that you do. When you receive a gift, you just let it be placed in your lap. Yield to God. Submit to His love. Receive this gift that He has for you.

Chapter 4.

The Benefits of Receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

One of the best ways to start a chapter about the benefits of the Holy Ghost is to turn to Acts to the story of the early church. In Acts 1:5-8 Jesus gave His last recorded sermon. In verse 5 we read, “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” In verse 8 we read, “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” It happened just like He said, all of it down to the letter. We read later on in Acts chapter 1 that all the disciples, about 120 of them, were gathered together in the upper room in one mind and accord. And there came a sound from heaven as of the rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house. Chapter 2:4 says, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Now there is a little more here than most nominal churches teach, nominal being churches that don’t teach about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. They were filled, and they began to speak in other tongues. We will read more in a chapter coming up next about what a power station speaking in tongues is. It is real. It is the assurance that you have received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Now a lot of people read this and they say, “Well, that was just for the early church.” Now why do you suppose that God would do such a thing as that? Why would He give such a powerful gift to part of His people, and deprive us of it? Especially since we ourselves today are the ones that need it the most.

being that we are the last days generation. Does that really make sense to you? I have another reason why we know that it wasn't just for them that day in Acts. Read in the scripture, it happened over and over. I have another one, and that reason is the most important reason to me. You see, it happened to me. So I am not prone to hear those people who say, it can't happen to day, because I know that is a lie that the devil came up with to keep people from experiencing it themselves.

Let's get back to those disciples who were gathered that day. What happened as a result of their receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost? Just like Jesus said they received power, and they had boldness to obey God. I think that they really needed that. Look at what they were going through in the early church. Not so many years later the great Roman persecution of Christians began. I remember reading stories about what the Romans did to the Christians. Not only did they watch and cheer while the wild animals tore them to bits in the arena, they tied them to stakes and burnt them alive using them as lights to light the arena. God knew that they needed boldness. He also knows that we need it today. We know that the world is only getting worse, and will get worse still. The end time prophecies of the Bible speak a little about what we will face. The scripture bears out that we will face persecution ourselves, and we see this beginning. We want to believe that all this will only come after the church has been raptured, but it doesn't look like this is what is happening. Either way, the Lord is soon coming. How much of the tribulation we will have to go through has been debated. The answer to that isn't as important as the answer to the question, "Are you ready now, and will you be ready to go when He comes?" Are you ready? Are you ready?

We are in what has been called the great falling away. Every day I talk to people who once served God, but for some reason or another are no longer doing so. Will you be able to stand, or will you give way and take part in what the world is doing? Will you be able to stand or will you compromise? Will you be able to stand? Do you have the power that you need to make it until Jesus comes again? The disciples, and those added to the church that day when the Holy Ghost fell at Pentecost received the power they needed. Will you do the same? Or will you argue that it isn't for you?

Peter preached to them in Acts 2:38, "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Was Peter just preaching about receiving the Holy Ghost when we are saved, or was he talking about the whole package? This was his sermon that he preached when the Holy Ghost fell. He was describing what had happened. Jesus told them this would happen when they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. They had been speaking in tongues. Was that how salvation happens? This wasn't talking about salvation. To all of you that have been taught that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues was just for those people, I want to remind you of Peter's words, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Doesn't that include you?

How did that change their lives that day? Acts 2:41 says, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized and the same day there were added unto

them about three thousand souls.” Wow, what a service! What a revival! That was surely powerful. They went on from there in spite of persecution, and all they faced to spread Christianity around their world. They received boldness to stand that day. And stand they did. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost gave them the power and the boldness to do so.

Do you think that the disciples would have been so powerful in their influence in the early days of the church if they had compromised to the world and become defeated by sin? How do you think some of the early Christians would react if they were resurrected from the dead, and they walked into an average church service today? The first thing they would see would be the compromise with sin that has filled today’s churches. They would hear the preachers preaching that it is fine to sin, teaching their congregations how to justify themselves. They would see the weak Christians that we have become because of our compromise. They would then see that we no longer praise the Lord. That was one thing that they did and were found doing on the day of Pentecost. What about that part where it says they were “all with one accord”. We can’t even get a single congregation together in one accord, let alone gather all denominations together. In verse 41 we read, “Then they that gladly received his (Peter’s) word were baptized.” How many times do we see people in most congregations gladly receiving God’s Word? In Acts 2:44-46 we read, “And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” Verse 46 ends with, “...with gladness and singleness of heart...” Look how far we have come. Today, we can’t even get people to church because everyone is just too busy with the world to come.

We can't even give up our lives enough to get to church on a mid week service, and barely can we get there on Sundays. Forget Sunday night services. I can remember one church we were in that had something 6 nights a week. There was something going on for everybody. Boy, those days are over. We have come a long way from that first Pentecost, and I'm not too sure that it has been in the right direction. If we were to let the Holy Ghost again come into our services, if we were to get the boldness and power that brings, how would that change our lives and the lives of those around us, the lives of those we love? Isn't it time to find out?

If that early church had been full of sin, would they have been able to start this thing, and spread it around the world? If they had given in to the whims of their flesh, would they have stood the tests and overcome? If they had been selfish and full of their own wants, would they have pushed their lives aside to make this their full priority? Would we have churches today, if they had had not done as they did? God knew this was important, that is why He gave them the tool to help them overcome their flesh. Is it less important that we today do the same? We may not be starting the church like these early Christians, but we are standing in one of the most important places in time Christians have ever stood in. We are the last day church. We will in our lifetime see the coming again of Jesus. Those left behind will face terrible times such as this world has ever seen. Will some of those left behind be your husband, your wife, your children, your grandchildren, your friends, your neighbors, your loved ones, the people you work with, the people you see every day? You hold in your hands the keys to loose them and lead them. What are you doing with those keys? Are you using them in your life?

Are you declaring the full counsel of the Word of God with boldness and power, or do they even know that you are saved and what that means when they look at your life? Isn't it time to get all the power that God has for you?

The church today is so full of compromise. So full of sin. Holy living isn't a popular message. We don't want to make anyone uncomfortable. Because of that we don't stand up against sin. We don't live righteous lives before God. Do you know one of the main reasons people who are lost tell me that they don't go to church? The hypocrites in church. They don't see anything worth having when they look at most churches, they only see the hypocrisy. We need to get out of our sin. We need to become filled with God's Spirit and learn how that can help us to overcome our flesh. Those early Christians had learned how to overcome their flesh. Look what happened. We need to do the same. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost gives us the tools needed to do this. Without that, our flesh will rule. When our flesh rules, even though in our hearts we want to do what is right, we can't. If we don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to enable us, then we will either make excuses for failing, justify our sin, and settle for a seem right way of life, or we will fall into out and out rebellion against God. Neither will get us to heaven.

The Bible says over and over that the Holy Ghost will bring us comfort and peace. So many people today are bound with fear, anxiety, and stress. We need the comfort of the Holy Ghost. All those other things are bondages that the devil puts on us. When we receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, we have power to put the devil in his place. We have power to overcome these things.

When we have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, we can pray and intercede for people in a powerful way. The Holy Ghost Himself prays through us in His own language. Have you ever wanted to pray for someone, but you were hindered because you didn't know how to pray. The intercession of the Holy Ghost is the most powerful prayer that anyone can ever pray.

The most important benefit of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is walking in the full counsel of the Word of God. When we don't receive the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, then it is easy to fall for a lie. When we settle for things that aren't true, that makes us susceptible to believe a lie. The Holy Ghost is our teacher. When we shut Him out, and bind Him up, then He can't lead us into truth. The scripture tells us plainly that we can believe a lie and be damned.

Another important benefit of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is the fruits of the Spirit. Sometimes we just can't do right. It isn't in us to do so, until the Spirit of God lives in our heart. Then He brings His nature into our hearts that is called the "fruits of the Spirit". His nature comes in us, but we still have our nature. Walking in the Spirit is submitting our nature to His nature, letting His nature rule in us and through us. That is how we walk this walk. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost helps us to be able to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

The Holy Ghost is very valuable. The gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is one to prize and obtain. One of the powerful tools that come with the Baptism of the Spirit is the gift of speaking in tongues. Read more to find out what that is, and how it can empower you and your prayer life.

Chapter 5.

What Is Speaking in Tongues?

Chapter 2:4 says, “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” That is the first mention of speaking in tongues. This is written in the section of scripture that talks about the day of Pentecost. On that day, two things happened because of their speaking in tongues. Every man, no matter what his nationality and language, heard that message in his own native tongue. There was not a person there that couldn’t understand what was said. Another thing that happened, news of what happened there was spread around the world. That was a supernatural happening, and everyone there knew that it was a miracle of God, a sign that God was surely in their midst. Those two things still happen today when people speak in tongues. We’ll talk more about how people can hear a message in their own tongues.

First we will talk about how since this is a supernatural thing, people know that God is truly in their midst. That is one of the outcomes of speaking in tongues. People realize that God is supernaturally in their midst. Speaking in tongues is not a natural thing. When the Spirit of God speaks directly through His people, you can know that it is something that He is doing. That is one of the reasons why people have trouble accepting and understanding this gift of God. People want things that they control. They don’t want things outside their own fleshly understanding. Sad to say, because of this they miss out on most of what God can do for them. They also fail to yield to God’s Spirit, and never find the victory that comes when they do. If we don’t yield to God’s Spirit we can’t walk in the Spirit. If we don’t, then we let our flesh rule our lives and we suffer the consequences of this. Supernatural things have to be understood and taken by faith. Supernatural things must be understood by faith. One example of supernatural things is salvation itself.

Walking in the Spirit is another of those. When I first heard about speaking in tongues, I didn't understand it with my mind, but I knew in my heart that it was something that the Lord had for me, and it was something that I needed. So I reached out past my mind, trusted Him, and received it. That is what it means when we say we have to take it by faith.

When we speak in tongues, the Holy Ghost prays directly through us. He uses His own language. There are different kinds of tongues. We read in I Corinthians 12 a list of Spiritual gifts. In that list, in verse 10 we read, "...to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues". That is one purpose of tongues. I have been in church services where there was a lot of music, a lot of prayer, a lot of noise, and all of the sudden a holy hush would fall on the congregation. God was ready to speak. Some blessed saint of God filled with the Holy Ghost would begin to speak in tongues. You could feel the power of God's anointing fill the church. Another saint would be given the interpretation of what was said. Many times this would be the very word of encouragement someone needed to hear. It would be the word of direction that someone had been seeking the Lord for, and only they knew the prayer in their heart, but God knew, and He spoke to them. I have known people to get delivered from things that had bound them for years, because of that Word from the Lord. I have known people to receive healing, because they were set free from the bondage that had held them in sickness, because of that Word from the Lord. Nothing is as powerful as that Holy Ghost message, direct from the throne of God. That is one purpose of tongues.

There are different kinds of tongues. In I Corinthians 14:4 we read about an unknown tongue. "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." Verse two discusses this.

It tells what this means. It explains what an unknown tongue is. “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him...” That is a prayer tongue. There is sometimes when we speak in tongues that no one will be given an interpretation. This is a prayer tongue. God is praying directly, and our understanding what is said isn’t what is needed. Talk about a powerful prayer. Have you ever had a burden to pray for someone, but had no idea of how to pray? God knows. His Holy Ghost will pray, and intercede through you. When He does, bondages are broken, deliverance and healing come, crooked places are made straight and streams flow in the desert. God knows exactly what is going on and when His Spirit prays through you it will be exactly what is needed. Talk about something that can stomp the devil. The devil can’t understand and interfere with Holy Ghost filled prayers. Some times, too, I believe that the Holy Ghost prays in a language that the devil can understand. Nothing can bind the enemy like a Holy Ghost filled speaking in tongues prayer. Powerful.

Mostly in a church service the tongues, the messages that are given, will be ones that will be interpreted, not an unknown tongue. The Bible says that it won’t help the people understand if they can’t hear what is being said and understand it. So mostly there will be an interpretation, someone who is given the interpretation of what was spoken. Paul said in I Corinthians 14:18, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all.” He goes on in verse 19 to say, “Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” Prophecies are words from the Lord. Some prophecies are about future events, but many of them are not. They are simply direct words from the Lord. Guidelines for the use of prophecies and speaking in tongues in services are found in I Corinthians.

It is found in chapter 14. That is a good place to read to learn about tongues and how they fit in services. It closes with this in verse 39, “Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.”

I can remember a service when our pastor, Brother Goad, was holding a tent meeting. We had just pulled into a town that we had never been in before. The crowd that first night was skeptical. There had been some preachers come through who more or less were cons, and had taken advantage of people. So the ones who showed up at the service were suspicious. Brother Goad began to speak through the Holy Ghost. He began to prophecy. He talked about seeing someone laying on a stretcher in a hospital and seeing someone being covered up with a sheet. Suddenly a man screamed out from the back of the room and ran to the altar. Just that day, he had been to the hospital with major problems that were life threatening. While he was there, a man in the bed next to him had died, and he had watched them pull the sheet over that man’s head. He knew that could just as easily have happened to him. God had dealt with him and that is why he had come to the meeting. When Brother Goad said that, he knew that God was speaking to him. That is what it means to prophesy. That is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Yes, there is a lot of false stuff that is done in the name of the Spirit but that doesn’t take away from the real. This man had scoffed God because of the false prophets, the liars that had come to town. But when the real thing came, he knew it was God. God proved himself. That man got saved, later on his whole family got saved. God started a revival in that town that spread to the next town, and over 50 people were saved. We went back to that little town for years after that. Some of those people are still serving God and that was over 25 years ago. Brother Goad could have stood up and given a message that he had memorized, preaching a message with careful polished words, and none of that would have taken place.

When God speaks, there will be something going on. That is why there is prophecy, and that is why we speak in tongues. That is also why we need the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to be able to minister. Yes, I am talking to ministers in the pulpit here, but I am also talking to every child of God. We have already talked about how God put us here to be a light to the world, and to touch the lives of others. Or we might put it this way. God calls each one of us to let His Spirit minister to others through us.

I mentioned earlier in the chapter that there is a tongue that is actually a language that people speak, so that others who speak that language can understand what is being said, just like happened on the day of Pentecost. I remember a church service where an elderly lady was slain out in the Spirit, and began speaking in tongues. There was a girl there whose husband was Hispanic. This elderly lady didn't know a word of Spanish, but she began speaking in perfect Spanish. I knew enough Spanish to know some of what she was saying in the natural without having someone interpret in the Spirit, but there was no need for interpretation. That message was directly for that girl whose husband was Hispanic. The Lord spoke and called that man by his nickname, a name that none of us knew in the natural. He told that girl that if she would stay faithful to Him and dedicate herself to Him, her husband would come to church and serve Him. That was a known tongue. What an impact that had on that lady.

This story is another example of that kind of tongue. A man was walking outside the windows of a church. He was from an Indian tribe who at one time spoke a language that nobody speaks today. He heard from inside the church a little girl's voice telling him in his native language that he needed to stop running from God and give his heart to Him. Talk about stopping him in his tracks. He ran into the church and to the altar. He knew that God had used that little girl to speak to him.

We talked about how we can pray in tongues, which is the Holy Ghost praying directly through us in His language. That is the most powerful prayer that you can pray. I remember someone telling how they were on a plane. During the trip, the Holy Ghost started interceding through this man. He had no idea why, but he yielded to God's Spirit and let Him pray. This went on for some time. When they landed, he found out that there had been a systems failure. Then for no reason, the systems failure had fixed itself. Did it have anything to do with his praying in tongues? What do you think?

Someone shared with me the story about how the Holy Ghost had started interceding through him one night. He had no idea why but he yielded and let the Holy Ghost have His way. Later on that next day he found out that a good friend of his had been stabbed at the very time that he had started interceding, praying in the Holy Ghost in tongues. His friend had nearly died, but for some miraculous reason, his condition had reversed. Did it have anything to do with his praying in tongues? What do you think?

One of the key reasons that we pray in the spirit has been mentioned over and over in this chapter. When we pray in the spirit we have to yield to God's Spirit. When we learn to do this, it can change our lives. Our human flesh wants to do its own thing. Human nature is stubborn about giving up its way. That is why so many people, those who have the Baptism and those who don't, fail to have victory in their lives. They won't yield to the Spirit of God in them. They won't listen to the voice of God. They won't let the Spirit of God lead them. Because of this, their life is always in turmoil. They constantly make the wrong decisions. Their flesh controls them. They are plagued with panic attacks, depression, anxiety, and all sorts of emotional problems. These things bind their health.

The church as a whole today is plagued with these things. When we learn to yield ourselves to God's Spirit, these things are not as powerful and they are not able to control us. The Spirit of God controls us instead. These things are actually demonic oppressions. The devil can oppress Christians. He can't possess them, completely control them, because they have the Spirit of God in them. He can bring a devilish spirit down over their head like thick blanket that chokes out the Spirit. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and speaking and praying in tongues takes that thick blanket and rips it away. God delivers. Flesh can't bind. His Spirit controls and brings victory. Speaking in tongues can strengthen you and bring spiritual victory in your life.

We have talked in this chapter about walking in the Spirit. Let's keep on with that subject in our next chapter. What does it mean, how can it bring you victory in your life, and how do we do this?

Chapter 6

Walking in the Spirit

This chapter is a section from a book, *“Walking in the Spirit”*. I have kind of pieced together a few chapters here. *The other day, I was thinking about this book, about what I should write, and how I should explain what it meant to walk in the Spirit. I came home from work. It had been a long day with the devil up in my face every minute. One of those days you struggle to get things done. All I could think of was that I wanted to fix a bite to eat and put my feet up. After all, the last time I’d had time to eat was about 8:30 that morning and it was about that time in the evening now. I didn’t feel good besides all that. I was trying to catch some kind of something. I just wanted to put my feet up and drown myself in the old “boob tube”. God started dealing with me, speaking to me in my heart about something I needed to do instead. Oh, believe me, I wanted to stuff my fingers in my spiritual ears (that’s flesh). But I have learned to respect God’s leading because of the blessing that it brings, and because I love Him more than I love my own flesh, I listened to Him. (That’s walking in the Spirit.) He told me instead of turning on the TV tonight that I needed to turn on the CD player with some good Gospel music. I obeyed Him. I thought to myself, what is so important about listening to music (that’s walking in the flesh), but obeyed the Spirit (that’s walking in the Spirit). Pretty soon I was caught up in the music and praising the Lord for how good He is. I soon forgot about the battles of the day and about how my body felt (that’s walking in the Spirit). Victory started flowing in to my heart, body, and mind. The chills and aches of the fever that had been pestering me all day soon left. (By the way, I woke up the next morning feeling much better.) I got my blessing from the hand of God. Then He directed me into doing something that would bless and touch the hearts of others. That is God’s way.*

When we center our thoughts on our own selves, and we receive a blessing, and that's the end of it, sometimes we only get half a victory.

When we turn around and bless others as well, our victory is complete. I got my mind off my problems of the day and on to Him. I got outside of myself and into Jesus and the Holy Ghost, and then into ministering to others. That's walking in the Spirit. That's when this chapter of this book was written, and that's when God gave me the glimpse of what He wanted me to say throughout the book. I had my own idea of how it should be and I was stuck there. I had started the book nearly a month before this happened, but I was totally stuck. I had laid it to the side. But on this night, I put myself in neutral because I felt so tired I had nothing of myself left. I let the Holy Ghost write through me. That's walking in the Spirit. Now I know without a shadow of a doubt that someone will read this chapter, and this book, and they will get an understanding of what it means to walk in the Spirit. I don't say this to brag about my own great power of persuasion, but I say it because I let Jesus do the writing, and He does a great job. I believe that someone who has struggled for years to understand this vital key to living a victorious life in God will have their life changed. Maybe that someone is you. You who picked this book up and read it and took it to your heart. And that too is walking in the Spirit.

Now let's replay my evening. What if I had let my flesh take over? What if I had turned on the old TV, hit the couch, put my feet up, and forgot all about everything because, "God, I just don't feel well." What about the victory I gained? What about the healing touch that came? What about this chapter, and the book that came from it? What about the people who will read this and receive something from it? If I hadn't have obeyed God and walked in the Spirit, I would have gotten a big nothing. I would have gone on in our struggle and in my battle. We can see from this a very important lesson.

If we continue to walk in the flesh, failing to obey God and walk in the Spirit, we will grow weaker in our Christian experience. If we never learn to walk in the Spirit, we will eventually be totally defeated, easy prey for the enemy to destroy. The end result would be that we lose our eternal souls. So tell me, is it important to walk in the Spirit?

I heard someone tell about a lady that had been caught in one of the Twin Towers Buildings during the 9/11 tragedy. She had gotten up that morning and had spent time praying. So she started her day walking in the Spirit instead of the flesh. She was what we call “prayed up”. When the plane struck the building, she grabbed her things and started running. The other people in her room asked where she was going. She told them, “God told me to run and to run in this direction.” They answered, “If He told you to do that, then we are behind you.” Over 50 people were saved that day because they followed a Spirit filled, Spirit led woman. What about those around you? Is the example of your life leading them to safety? Do you daily have victory, in spite of your battles? Do people see in your life a direction that they long to take? You can be that kind of person, you know. God’s Spirit is powerful enough to provide you with all you need. He has the peace, strength, love, joy, hope, victory, faith, and long-suffering, all you need. I guess another illustration that we can find in this true story is the destruction that following flesh can bring. We all know that not everyone was saved. Why? Even if they were Christians, were they prayed up and in the Spirit? Were they listening to His voice that day, or the voices of others? Were they hindered by bondages in their life so that they weren’t in an obedient relationship with Him on that day?

The Bible tells us that these are the things that walking in the flesh will bring into our life:

- 1. Strife (“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions....” I Corinthians 3:3).*

2. *Not understanding or receiving the things of God ("But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Corinthians 2:14.)*
3. *Spiritual death (For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Romans 7:5)*
4. *Much more.*

To sum it all up, check out this section of scripture in Romans 8:5-17. Here are some of the highlights. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Therefore brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." I guess this is enough to make us all want to walk in the Spirit.

You may have many days when you come home from having a battle. You may have many times when God asks you to do way beyond what you feel like you are physically or mentally capable of doing. You'll be called on to minister to folks around you, when you don't have any idea of what to say. You'll have traps of defeat and sickness that the enemy will lay to defeat you and to steal your joy, or even your eternal soul. You'll have times when the devil will sit on your shoulder and tell you that you aren't worthy. You can't walk in the Spirit. That is only for spiritual giants, not for squirts like you. You'll have days when the devil will try even to steal your salvation by making you feel, or think, that you aren't saved.

That's when you can shake yourself, get your eyes off the devil, and off of yourself, and look at Jesus and God's Word. Stay close enough to Him so that you can see Him, and so that you can hear His voice. Let the Holy Ghost daily move in your heart and mind, not just in church on Sunday. Put a priority on moving when He says move. That is walking in the Spirit. Talk to your flesh. Let it know that it will not rule, and the junk that the devil pours into your flesh will not overcome your spirit. Say, "Flesh, I have Jesus inside of me, and He is in control today, and everyday. Get down. I have a better way of life than the one you give me and through the Spirit of God within me, I will overcome you." That is walking in the Spirit. I Corinthians 3:16 says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Let God's Spirit rise up and be victorious in you. One of the keys to this is praying in the Spirit, praying in tongues. Praying in tongues helps you to put your flesh in submission to the Spirit of God who is praying through you

*Walking in the Spirit is a personal thing between you and God. It can't be between you and someone else, and God. A lot of people try to do it that way, and they miserably fail, usually winding up making it hard on the people they are trying to follow. I've talked to so many people that tried on their own to be what they thought was spiritual. Many times their life was based on an idea they had gotten from other people who they thought were living spiritual lives. They did their best in the flesh to live up to the spiritual expectations of people around them. They weren't able to do so. The devil easily defeated them, before they got started. What was the problem? It was all about themselves and other people. Where was God? Where was His Spirit? You cannot perform a ritual on the outside and be something for someone on the outside, and that be real at all. This thing has to come from the heart. It has to come from a real, everyday relationship with Jesus. He has to be **number 1** for real in your heart.*

If He isn't, it won't work. He has to be your love, your guide, your hope, your peace and joy, and your focus. Then you won't be doing it for others, you'll be doing it for Him. It will be real then. You can't walk in the Spirit unless you want to do so enough to commit yourself to Jesus. If you don't know Him personally, you won't really want to walk in the Spirit in your heart. Then is when we do it for everyone else. But when you get close enough to the foot of the cross to catch a glimpse of how wonderful His love is, it will be easy to turn loose of old number 1 and grab hold of Someone who will turn your life around. That is where walking in the Spirit starts. Are you ready? Run toward His love. He'll definitely catch you.

We have talked about how our flesh can be like a spoiled brat that tries to control our spiritual life. Let's say you have decided to put that spoiled brat where he belongs and let the Spirit of God control your life. You have seen that the wages this flesh reaps are death. So what comes next? Some religions teach that to crucify your flesh and get control over it, you have to live in great self-denial, literally starving yourself into submission. Some teach you have to inflict pain on yourself to get in touch with your inner self. Some teach that you have to find your karma, our spirit person, through meditation. Some teach that you don't want to stifle your self. You should let the outer man live free and do what feels good so that you have freedom. What is the truth? As always, if you want to know the truth about how to live a victorious life, go to God's Word. The Bible teaches that when we are saved, we are no longer alone and we have Jesus in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Colossians 1:27, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.") He is our hope. The first step comes when you realize that when you are saved, you have Jesus in you. You also have a flesh man which tries to override and control the Spirit of God that is in you.

You have to realize that you are your own worst enemy, and you want to do something about it. Then you have to be willing to submit your flesh and let the Spirit of God control you and your life. (I Corinthians 9:27, "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.") You have to be willing to submit yourself to God and commit yourself and your life to Him. You have to realize that old number one can't be number one any more. You have to recognize the problems this really brings into your life. You have to declare that from here on out Jesus is number one in your life above your own self, your own desires, and your own life. The first step in doing this is to fall in love for real with Jesus. Get close enough to Him so that He can touch your life, and you can see Him the way He is. Every day I realize how wonderful it is to serve Him. I'll see Him working in the lives of the people around me, and in my circumstances, and again I am proud to serve such a wonderful God. Nothing can bring you into the kind of submission to give up yourself other than the love of God. We serve a perfect God Who loves us this much. He wants the best for His children, and you are one of them if you have accepted His salvation. Why not submit and do it His way? What better way can you find! Is our way better? Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." We struggle in so many ways to prove that we are able and capable to control our own lives. In less than 40 words, God proves we aren't.

We have to realize that we want God to control our life, then we have to realize that there is no way that we can do this on our own. There is absolutely no way for human nature to submit and allow God to control. Sorry, we aren't natured that way. We can't on our own put that spoiled brat where he belongs. So what is the answer?

Do we just keep on doing our own thing, excusing our sins, until we face judgment? Have you tried to walk in the Spirit on your own? Have you tried to live a Christian life in the flesh? Have you failed? Then you know what I am saying. The only way that we can walk in the Spirit is to allow God to crucify our flesh. We have to be willing to do it, and then He has to do that work in us. Believe me, He knows how to break the will of our flesh. He has been doing it for a long time. We can't break our own selves. This walk in God has to be a spiritual walk. It has to be in the supernatural, not natural. We have to believe in God to do His perfect work in and through us and trust in Him that He will do it. Galatians 2:20 ends with these words, "...And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." That's how we do it.

The devil shakes at God's children who know who they are, and who are determined to walk in the freedom that God has given them. The devil wants us to be off-centered, out of focus. He tries to get us to focus on who we are in the flesh. He tries to make us think that God's love and His Word and promises for us are based on our having to be perfect to attain them. He gets us to focus on our flesh, and the defeat that the flesh brings. He doesn't want you to find the power of that Spirit man inside of you. We become bound because instead of looking at God's perfection, we keep our eyes on our own imperfection. Instead of looking at what God is perfecting in us, he causes us to focus on what God hasn't yet finished. We get out of focus and start centering on ourselves instead of focusing on God. This is walking in the flesh. This will all lead to our destruction and defeat. To overcome satan we have to walk in the Spirit, and not the flesh. We have to be centered and focused on God's Spirit in us. We have to lay down the flesh to let Jesus rise up in us and we will see that it doesn't matter who we are—God's Word and His love works. We'll talk more later about how to overcome the devil.

That chapter quoted from my book, *Walking in the Spirit*, describes what it means to walk in the Spirit and the victory you can find by doing so. It also talks about the dangers of walking in the flesh. The key to walking in the Spirit is possessing the Baptism of the Holy Ghost which fills you up to the brim with God's Spirit. A tool that enables you to submit your flesh is praying in the Spirit, praying in tongues in the Holy Ghost. Submitting your flesh to His Spirit so that He can pray through you helps you to be able to submit your flesh in other areas of your life as well.

When you walk in the Spirit it isn't nearly as easy to sin as it is when you walk in the flesh. I remember a children's home that I once worked at. This children's home constantly put God's Word in these kids' faces. They were always quoting scriptures and memorizing them. Verses like, "the soul that sinneth shall die". They were told what they should and shouldn't do, but they were never told how to do this. They were never told that the Spirit of God could fill them and keep them, and enable them to do what was required of them. To them, it was a hopeless thing. Sad to say, this home rejected the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Matter of fact, they openly taught that this was wrong. This left the only door that gave these kids hope slammed shut. Needless to say this was one rebellious bunch of kids. Rebellion is created when we are told over and over that we have to do something that we know in our hearts is impossible to do. Nobody told them how that we could through Christ and through the power of the Holy Ghost overcome sin and put down our flesh. Nobody told them how to walk in the Spirit. All they knew was that they couldn't do what they had to do. So many churches do the same today. The church needs to see the value of the Baptism and speaking in tongues, walking in the Spirit and the victory that each of these can bring to our lives.

We have touched on what is coming up in the next chapter throughout this book. We have talked about how important that we serve God for real in these last days. We have talked about how if there has ever been a time when we need to be filled with the Holy Ghost and ministering to those around us, that time is now. Hey, I am not just talking to preachers and missionaries here. I am talking to all God's children. God has called us all. You can't say that God hasn't called you. If you can say that you do not know anyone in your family, in your community, at your job, or anywhere else who is not saved, then you don't have anything to do for the Lord. If you can say that everyone around you is ready for the rapture, then you don't have anything to do for the Lord. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost can bring you into being a powerhouse for the Lord. You can turn your world upside down for Jesus. Keep reading.

Chapter 7.

Obeying God and Finding the Power to Do So

When was the last time that you wept because you had a burden for someone? Maybe that person was a loved one, someone close to your heart, who was messing up their life (and maybe yours too) with sin? You wanted to pray the most powerful prayer that you could pray, but you didn't know exactly how to pray. You wanted to speak to them, but kept quiet because you knew if you said the wrong thing it would do more harm than good. You wound up doing nothing at all as you watched them destroy their life on a fast track down.

When was the last time that you stood at the bedside of someone you loved, and you knew that they weren't saved? You grieved because you wanted to reach them, but it seemed that there was nothing to do, so you did nothing, and carried that regret for a long time after they died.

When was the last time that you watched someone close to you slowly dying with sickness? You read in the Bible how God healed, but you felt that you didn't have prayer with the power that you needed to pray for healing.

When was the last time that you felt strongly that the Lord had a gift for you, a talent, something that He wanted you to do, but you shrank back from doing it in fear, thinking that surely He had the wrong person? When was the last time that you felt in your heart that you were called to preach, but you were not bold enough to step out and obey? You carried this feeling constantly that you were letting God down, but didn't know how to change things. Or that you were called to sing, or teach, or minister in other ways, but you lacked the boldness that you needed to step out and obey God.

When was the last time that someone close to you faced a dangerous situation, and you knew that you needed to pray a powerful prayer of protection, but you weren't sure how to pray? You just knew that it was important to pray the most powerful prayer you could pray.

When was the last time that you watched the devil attacking your family and you knew that if you didn't intercede he was going to destroy it? You knew that you had to pray a prayer of deliverance, and take authority over him but you weren't sure how, and you didn't know that you could take that authority.

When was the last time that you knew that you had to step out in faith in a situation and do just the right thing with authority to stop something bad from getting worse, but you didn't have the knowledge to do what was needed or the boldness and authority that you needed to correct the situation?

When was the last time that you knew that you needed to stop a sin or a habit that was binding your life, but no matter how hard you tried you couldn't break that sin or habit on your own? You knew that you had to, and it constantly worried you that the Lord would come back and you would be left behind because of that sin, but you were powerless on your own to stop it. You prayed and prayed for deliverance, but it seemed hopeless and you were ready to give up on serving God, but you have tied a knot at the end, and you are hanging on because you really want to serve Him.

When was the last time that you were weary with fighting depression, anxiety, fear, panic attacks? You knew that these things were from satan, but you didn't know how to overcome them, and you felt powerless to stand against the attacks. You are tired of the defeat they bring you, but it seems that you take two steps forward and then back.

You start to overcome them, you take two steps forward, but you get knocked three steps back.

All these instances are reasons why the Lord gave us the gift of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. He gave us this precious gift so that we could become bold in His Spirit, and in the power of the Holy Ghost. So that we could pray the exact prayer that was needed for the situation. So that we could intercede and watch the sick be healed. So that we could take authority over the devils of hell that try to attack and destroy families. So that we could take authority over spirits of depression, fear, anxiety, and all those things that are so plaguing God's people today. So that we could have the boldness that we need to step out and obey God, and the peace in knowing that His Holy Ghost inside of us would minister to the people's need through us. So that we could not only have strength in bad situations and peace to be able to keep our heads, but we could have just the right advice, just the right thing to say to make a bad situation turn out good. So that we could find the power to overcome our sin and habits, and overcome our flesh. So that we walk in the Spirit of God instead of our flesh and find all the power that brings. So that we could obey God. That is one of the main reasons that God gives us the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. So that God can operate in us through His Spirit. So that we can overcome our flesh and let God reach out through us. So that we can obey God in power and strength. Why do you need the Baptism of the Holy Ghost? So that you will never again have to face one of those moments like those in the beginning of this chapter, if you get filled with the Spirit, and submit your flesh to Him, in obedience to Him. If you do have the Baptism of the Spirit, then this chapter will still strengthen you as you are reminded of the power that you have. If ever we need to obey God in His boldness and power, that time is now.

How does all this happen? How can it work for you.?

How does the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and the gift of speaking in tongues empower us? Does it? What does the Bible say about it? One of the most powerful sections of scripture in the Bible describing how the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a tool to empower the church is found in I Corinthians chapters 12-14. This not only gives us directions for our own individual lives, but also directions for the church. It gives us a picture of what church services should be like. In I Corinthians 12:7-10 we read about the manifestation of the Spirit. This manifestation, or outward showing, of the Spirit brings about different gifts that enable us to be powerful workers both inside and outside the church walls.

I have been in churches and around people who do not believe in the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. I have heard them talk about their spiritual gifts. I have heard some talk about what they thought their gifts were. I have seen them operate in their gifts. Then I have been in churches and around people who had the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. When they operated in the gifts of the Spirit, they didn't have to wonder what their gifts were. When they operated in them, the Holy Ghost with all His power operated those gifts. You can believe me there is a powerful difference between these two groups. When those who had the Baptism laid hands on the sick and the Holy Ghost prayed through them, someone was healed. When they gave a word of wisdom, or knowledge, when they were done speaking you knew that God Himself had visited His people and spoken through Him. He was in their midst in a powerful way. There was no doubt. When they prayed a prayer of faith, and that gift manifested itself, you knew that God Himself had prayed through them using them as an instrument. You knew that the fullness of His Holy Ghost resided in that vessel. You knew that there would be an outcome of that prayer. The gifts are: a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, divers tongues,

interpretation of tongues, all working by the Spirit of God in complete unity, no confusion that flesh brings, but God's Spirit lifted up all in all.

Now that you have a better understanding about what it means to have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, then you know that this section of the scripture, I Corinthians 12:7-10, can only be talking about the gifts that this can bring. You can't sort part of this scripture out and throw it away. The gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues is there to stay. You have to deal with that and accept it as it is. That lets you know what this scripture, and what this chapter as a whole is talking about. How can these gifts be used in the church without our flesh messing the whole thing up? That can only happen when we are filled with the Holy Ghost, letting Him flow through us, submitting our flesh in obedience to God. That is God's plan for the church. Not only is it God's plan for the church inside the walls, but it is God's plan for us as we reach out to a lost and dying world. Through these gifts we can carry His light to split the darkness. We have many times in this book talked about how the church is failing to do this. Instead of reaching out with the power of the Holy Ghost, we are hiding behind our four walls. Or we are so bound by sin or the devil that binds us with depression, fear, and anxiety, that we can't serve God in victory ourselves, let alone reach out to the world. It is time that we individually and as a church become filled with God's Spirit to the brim, and carry these gifts to our brothers and sisters inside the church walls, and to the rest of the world. It is time.

If you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, then there is one guideline as to how you should covet the gifts of the Spirit. There is one guideline as to how you are to use the gifts that God gives you. This is found in I Corinthians chapter 13. It is known as the Charity Scripture, or as the Love Scripture. This is a very familiar scripture.

It starts with these words that most of us know. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity I am nothing.” Then it goes on to explain what charity is, how it reacts to people, how it works in our lives through the power of the Holy Ghost. It closes with verse 13, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” Why does God give us the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the gifts that it brings? Why does God fill us up to the brim with His Spirit? Does He do this so that we can sit on the church pew? Does He do this so that we can hide away inside the church walls? Does He do this so that we can watch our brothers and sisters inside the church walls suffer with depression, sickness, and other bondages? Does He give us these gifts so that we can watch those we love who are bound with sin, destroy their lives and the lives of those we love? Does He give us these gifts so that we can wink at their sin and say that we accept them as they are while they are destroying themselves, or does He give us these gifts so that we can stand up in His righteousness and offer them victory through His power? Does He give us these gifts so that we can slink down in compromise, or so that we can be a light, a reflection of what we can be in God? Let’s rise up, be filled with the Holy Ghost and obey God.

Chapter 8.

Overcoming Satan

If you have been a Christian long at all, you know that we have an enemy. That enemy is our enemy because, bottom line, he is an enemy of God. He hates us because he hates God. In I Peter 5:8 we read, “Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” The Bible tells us that the devil: afflicts the righteous, blinds people from being able to see the truth, fights the saints, tempts us to disobey God, inflicts disease, opposes us, and more. The Bible tells us that through God’s Spirit, we have victory over the devil. James 4:7 tells us, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Ephesians 4:27 tells us that we must not give place to the devil. Ephesians 6:11 tells us to “Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The rest of that chapter tells us what that armor is. We can see from these verses that we don’t have to be afraid of the devil. We can see that we don’t have to give in to him and let him destroy us. We can see that we can have victory over him. We have to resist him. We can’t give in to him and stand against him at the same time. To stand against the devil we have to stop sinning. We can’t live in his world, and act like him, walking with his crowd, and expect to have victory over him. If we mess with him, we will be destroyed by him.

How can the Baptism of the Holy Ghost help you to fight against satan? In our flesh, we are no match for the devil. But when we get filled up to the brim with God’s Spirit, and we walk in the power that brings us, and we submit our flesh to the Spirit of God so that there is nothing for the devil to grab hold of, then we are powerful. We aren’t weak. We are no longer victims, but powerful enemies. When we pray in the Holy Ghost letting God’s Spirit pray

That is a powerful prayer that can even back the devil down. When we operate in the gifts of the Spirit, that pushes the devil back. When we obey and let the Spirit of God flow through us and out to touch His people, that pushes back the devil. Through the Baptism of the Holy Ghost we can stand up against this enemy in victory. We don't have to be defeated. We don't have to let the devil destroy us or back us into a corner. Not when we are filled with the Spirit of God.

I was talking with someone who had been a trained soldier in the military for many years. He said the first thing that a soldier in the natural needs to do to be able to overcome and push back the enemy is recognize the enemy. In the war that we are having now in Afghanistan and Iraq that has been a major problem. When kids carry machine guns and bombs, and the soldiers don't have uniforms, but are dressed as everyday people out on the street, that makes it hard to fight them. The major problem that our military has faced there has been being able to identify the enemy. That is one of the major problems that the church faces. We don't know who the devil is. We think that he is the guy in the red suit with a pitch fork. That is why he is able to sneak in and steal our soul, our families, our mental and physical health, our lives. We need to be able to identify him to be able to stop him. When we have the gifts of the Holy Ghost operating in our lives we are able to identify the enemy. One of the gifts of the Spirit is discernment. That means we can discern between bad and good spirits. We can spot the enemy when he is creeping into our lives, into our church, against our loved ones. Because we can spot him, we can stand against him. We can pray in tongues, and let the Holy Ghost bind him. We can have the power and strength of God we need to overcome.

What are some of the things that the devil does today to hinder and destroy Christians? Let's talk about some of them. We won't talk about them so that we can worry.

We'll talk about them so that we can overcome them. I know a lady who, up until a little while ago was so bound by depression and anxiety that she would barely leave her home. We began to minister to her. She had accepted all this because she thought that it was physical problem that she had, and that it was an emotional problem because of things that she had gone through. We helped her to see that it was neither. It was a spirit of the devil that had set against her. She identified the enemy. She learned that she had the weapons that she needed to fight against him, and she learned how to use those weapons. I mean to tell you, when she found out that this thing was what it was, and that it was something that she could stand against, she stood. That devil isn't binding her life any more. He tries to, but she is so sick of his mess that when he tries to, she stomps him in the ground through the power of the Holy Ghost.

I know someone who watched her children and her husband become bound with spirits of addiction. The devil is behind addiction. That is why it is important not to give into addiction. Whether or not that devil causes you to be bound by illegal or prescription drugs, it is still a devil, and his mission is to steal the quality of your life. (By the way smoking is one of the devil's finest tools to destroy Christians. Through smoking he can steal your money, your peace of mind, your relationship with God, and as you push off God's conviction he will eventually steal your soul. Anything that the devil can use as a hook in your jaw to reel you in like a fat fish on his line is something that God will convict you about. Problem is, if you ignore God's conviction about smoking, then it is easier to ignore it in other areas of your life. Eventually you will ignore it until you lose all the victory in your life. And if you let a little thing three to four inches long control you, then you may as well know the devil will control you in other areas of your life. The Bible says not to give in to addictions. Don't let anything control you except God.

When people can pick up something that says right on the pack that it can kill you, light it up and stick it in their faces every few hours, then that is addiction. I see people come to the food bank at the ministry to get food for their children, because they are out of work and can't afford food. The last thing they do before they enter our building is throw their cigarette out. The first thing they do when walking out is light another one up. If that isn't addiction, then what is?) OK I'll get back on task here and quit meddling. Let's get back to the lady we talked about at the beginning of this paragraph. This lady finally got tired of this spirit of the devil called addiction that was stealing her children and her husband. Her children and her husband were all using drugs and alcohol. She stood up and said no more. She learned that she could stand against this devil and declare victory in her family. She learned about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and how that could help her to do so. She got filled up with the Holy Ghost and let Him intercede through her. She let Him pray through her in tongues. She refused to accept anything but victory for her family. Today they are all in church serving the Lord.

I know a young man who had a calling on his life. He knew that God wanted him to be a preacher. He ran from it for a long time. Problem is when you run from a calling, you also run from God. He lost his peace of mind and his relationship with God because he was running. Finally he got tired of running. He found out about how the Baptism of the Holy Ghost would give him boldness. He found out about how the Baptism of the Holy Ghost would give him the tools that he needed to be a powerful minister. Today that is exactly what he is.

I know someone who watched their mother die with cancer. This threw her into a tail spin when she died. She was bound by grief to the place that she pushed the rest of her family away, and she nearly lost her own life.

Grief overcame her. Through the darkness of that grief a light started shining. She began to realize that the last thing that her mother wanted her to do was to be the way she was being. She learned how the Spirit of God could bring us comfort. She received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and rose up from her grief.

Now I don't want anyone to think that I believe that if you don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost that the Holy Ghost can't help you in your lives. I know that the Holy Ghost can lead and guide you, and comfort you, even if you don't have the Baptism. But I also know that living without the Baptism, and living with it can be compared to running a car on low grade gas, or running it using a high octane power packed gas. You will have a lot more power. Being completely filled with the Spirit of God, or just having what the Bible calls a measure, which is what you need to overcome the things that you face in today's world? But there is even more than that. We have talked earlier about what it means to submit your flesh and walk in the Spirit. The Bible tells us plainly that your flesh can destroy you spiritually unless you submit it to the Spirit of God that is in you. We have talked more about this in the chapter about *Walking in the Spirit*. When we are saved and we have a measure of God's Spirit, it is hard to submit. When we are Baptized with the Holy Ghost, filled up to the brim, we have consciously made a decision that we are submitting to God, letting Him fill us. We submit to His Spirit in a full and complete way. We allow Him to control us. This is what lets us be able to overcome our flesh. We also are saying that we want God's control in our lives more than we want the control of those around us. No longer is our experience with God based more in the church people, the pastor, and those whose prayers we rely on than on our own spiritual self. In other words, I know some people who have no faith in their own prayers. Before a crisis in their lives has finished, they are already on the phone with the prayer line, or with

the preacher, or with others that they count on to pray for them. They have no confidence in their own spiritual well being enough to pray for themselves, or to pray for others. Because of that they are always a drain on others. They never uplift others by helping them carry their burdens, but they always load their burdens onto others. The thing about that is this. What happens when the crisis comes and there is no one there to pray? What happens when the crisis is a hidden one, only seen in the Spirit, and they don't know to ask someone to pray? What happens when the danger is immediate and there is no time to depend on anyone else? What happens when those people whose prayers you rely on are too overwhelmed with their own load to carry anybody else's, too busy worrying with their own problems to take yours to heart? Do you want to be power packed in your outreach, in your ministry, or do you want to be a drain on others? Let God fill you up with His Spirit.

I know a church that was a so-so church. Nothing dramatic. Just existing. Problem was, there was sin in the camp. They couldn't get anybody new to come, because the general opinion of the people in the community who were in contact with the people of that church was, "Why should we go to church there, they are just a bunch of hypocrites." Problem was, the people in the church wanted something better but didn't know how to get hold of it. A new minister came. One that knew about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. They noticed that his sermons were different. They noticed that he spoke with boldness and power. They also noticed that his life was different. This new preacher was different. He began to share with them about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and how it had brought him victory. Even though there was a number of them who rejected hearing about it, many of them were hungry to know more. Before long many of them received the Baptism. Through it they were able to overcome the things that have kept them so bound.

Through it they learned how to minister to one another, and pray for one another in tongues. The quickening power of God came into their midst. They became a powerhouse for Him. No longer were they the laughing stock of the community, but they became a lighthouse on a hill, shining to guide the lost to Jesus.

I know another church that was like the one in the last paragraph. However, they didn't receive teaching about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. There was no power to sustain or hold them. As the years went by, they grew more and more dead. Eventually the church closed. They had been a congregation since in the late 1800's. The fire died, the people died, and the church died. There was no life giving water flowing. There was no fountain of living water to sustain them. They lost their young people because they went on to find life. There is nothing sadder than an empty church.

You can find victory to overcome sin through the Baptism. You too can find victory over satan. You too can be a light. Keep reading and you'll find out about God's Washing Machine, and how it can clean us up so that we can be that light.

Chapter 9.

For Those Who Have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

One of the saddest things I see are Pentecostal churches today. Wow, after my having written this book, that is a bummer thing to say. Why am I saying that? Pentecostal churches have the knowledge of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Pentecostal churches have the knowledge of what it means to walk in the Spirit. Pentecostal churches have the knowledge of how to pray in tongues and the power that brings. But they aren't walking in what they know. They are too busy compromising with the world to walk in what they know. They are too busy kicking their sin under the rug to walk in what they know. In the area where we live, when you walk into most Pentecostal churches, there is nothing to see that would let you know that you have walked into a Holy Ghost filled church. They have gotten Baptized with the Holy Ghost, but they have so pushed the Spirit of God to the background that flesh rules in their midst. I can honestly say that this is worse than if they had never had this truth. The anointing of God doesn't come near when churches become this way.

What can we do when this happens? We need to go back to the old landmarks. I read a sign on a church that said, "Not Your Parent's Church". I am assuming that they meant something good when they put that sign up. I am here to tell you that if it could hold my parents, then it is good enough to hold me. The old paths are the ones that work. There is one old path that we had better get on, and that path is what the Bible refers to as the straight and narrow. One of the characteristics of God is that He never changes. He doesn't blow around like the wind, wavering here and there. You can also know that God has never changed His Word. Matter of fact, Revelation gives a warning to those who think that it needs to be changed. So God hasn't changed, and His Word hasn't changed.

So if His Word hasn't changed, then why should the church change and get all modern in its understanding. Sounds to me like those churches who are contemporary in their understanding have missed out on God and missed out on His Spirit. My point is, if they have, then I sure don't want to be a part of what they are doing.

One of the saddest reasons that I hear why churches compromise, Pentecostal and other churches, is because they want to draw in young people. So they play rock that sounds like the world (forget that the lyrics are Christian, who can hear them). They let them dress like the world. They compromise on what they call sin so that they can draw a crowd. They talk and act like the world. When the young people do come, what do they get? A warped version of the world. The young people don't need more of the world, they need to be introduced to the Savior who died to save them out of the world. They need to find out what it is like to belong to the crowd that is going to heaven. They need to find something that will hold them through these troubled times. You think it is hard to go through the things that we face today, how hard do you think it is for young people? Are you giving them something that will hold them? Are you showing them what is wrong, and what is right, and how to walk victorious in the life style that will bring them victory in their lives? Are you giving them a light that will light their path, and the paths of those around them? Or are you just trying to fill your seats so that you can say that you have a dynamic youth ministry? Let's get real church. When we go back to the old ways, to the full truth of the Word of God, to the place where we call sin sin and wrong wrong, to the place where we repent at the altars, to the place where the power of God falls in our midst, to the place where we lift up Jesus and He is Lord in our midst for real, then He will draw all men to Himself, and you can believe that some of those will be teenagers. And when God draws them, He will change them, fill them, and He will power them up.

Then they can go out and draw more people in.

Pentecostals, how can we turn all this around? How can we invite the Spirit of God back in our midst? It has to start in two places. First it has to start in the pulpit. If the pastors are out for numbers, and tithes in the offering plate, and they are afraid to make a stand for what is right, then there will be no anointing in the house. Pastors, if you are compromising and not standing up for what is right, then you will not make it to heaven, I don't care how long you've been a preacher. Can you imagine the preachers that will be in hell who every day will have to look in the faces of those people they have deceived? God says it would be better for you to have a millstone tied around your neck and be cast into the sea, than it would be to offend a little one in the kingdom of God. Get real preachers, get real teachers, get real evangelists. Repent of your sin. Repent of your compromise. Ask God to fill you with His Holy Ghost so that you can minister life to the people who sit under you, so that you can minister to God's sheep. You will be accountable.

The second place a change has to start is in the pew. I don't care if no one else in the church wants the power of God, you can. If you obey God and you are made fun of because this is something that you want, then you need to find another church. Church, we need to stand together and get real. We are the body of Christ. We need to unite as one body. We need to put our altars back in the churches and we need to use them. We need to seek God's face. We need to get real when we talk about the fact that we know Jesus is coming soon. We need to act like we believe this. We need to spend time praying and uniting in prayer. Remember the days when we would pray for hours. Remember the days when we would start services early so that we could have a time of praise and worship. By the time church started, we were already united in one mind and accord, ready to receive from God.

The Holy Ghost was already working in our midst. The gifts of the Spirit were already in operation. People were flowing in unity, supernatural things happening. Souls were saved. People were delivered from drugs and alcohol. Devils were cast out. People were healed. The crippled walked, the deaf would hear, and the blind would see. These days can be more than a memory. They can be a reality in our lives if we will make ourselves ready, and if we will welcome God in our midst. Now is the time.

The devil's number one tool in stealing the power from the church is to cause us to think that there is no use, that we can't make a difference. We need to realize that just because things have changed it doesn't mean that God has, it doesn't mean that the power and anointing of God has changed, it doesn't mean that the Word of God has changed. This world needs a Savior as much as it ever has. This world needs a deliverer as much as it ever has. This world needs a light, the power of the truth, healing as much as it ever has. Let's rise up. Let's let God fill us up and empower us. Let the Holy Ghost do His part.

Chapter 9.

God's Washing Machine

There is a doctrine that has taken over the church. This doctrine teaches that there is no sin. Whatever is right for me may not be right for you, and whatever is wrong for me might not be wrong for you. It teaches that there are no absolutes as far as sin goes. It goes along with the belief that you don't want to bring up people's sin in church because it will make people feel uncomfortable and they won't want to stay. When you give into that doctrine there is no hope. It is the Holy Ghost who cleans us up and gets us ready for heaven. (By the way, this doctrine usually is accompanied by believing that everyone gets to go to heaven, or that there is no hell. I say better to be safe than sorry. Even if you haven't read your Bible to find out there definitely is a hell and that hell is reserved for those who aren't obedient, then you would be a fool to live in a way that will cause you to go there, on the chance that it might be true that there is one.) We can't on our own, in our flesh, clean ourselves up making ourselves spot free without wrinkle or blemish. The Bible says that these are the people who will get to go in the rapture. Jesus is coming for a church "that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish". We know that He is coming soon for that church. Do you want to be found making excuses for your sin when He comes back, or do you want to be ready when He comes? If so, then we need to get into God's washing machine and let Him clean us up from the inside out. He can make us ready. He can present us to His Father as spotless, washed in His Word and by His Spirit

We have talked a lot in this book about how we are to overcome sin, not give in to it. We have talked about how we can find power to overcome through the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Let's read about what Paul says here.

He talks about this in Romans chapter 7. Read the whole chapter. He talks about how the motion of sins worked in our members to bring forth the fruit unto death. Sin brings about death. He says that sin is in our members. It is our nature to sin. But that we can find deliverance from that law of sin. Paul talked about how he knew that he had to overcome sin. He talked about how there was battle inside him to do good, because his nature was to sin. Because of that battle he called himself a wretched man. He said in verse 25, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Now this doesn't mean that we are excused to do whatever we want to and that we are forgiven if we do. It doesn't mean that we can sin with our flesh, as long as our mind blocks it out. He isn't saying that it is OK to continue in sin. There is a song that says, "Sin will take you further than you ever want to go. Sin will cost you more than you ever want to pay. Sin will keep you longer than you ever want to stay." Think of how sin binds peoples lives, how it destroys people and their families. Why in the world would God tell us it was OK to sin? That isn't where this scripture is going. Hold on a minute as we travel into the next chapter to see.

In Romans 8:4 we read, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." We go on from there. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually indeed is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." We go to verse 13, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Mortifying the deeds of the flesh surely doesn't mean giving in to sin or to defeat.

Why do I know this? Let's back up to Romans 1. We read in verse 18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Verse 28 says, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which were not convenient." Verse 32 says, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." God doesn't wink at our sin. The Bible is full of scripture that talks about how God will judge us because of our sin if we don't get out of our sin. That is why justifying our sin is so dangerous. God doesn't excuse our sin, He forgives us, but He doesn't excuse it.

I knew a boy who used to travel and sing in our ministry meetings. He had a shirt that explained his life's philosophy. He had this shirt when he was a young boy. "Doing whatever I can and getting by." Sad to say that is the philosophy of a lot of Christians. They don't want to get victory over sin. They want to keep their sin, and still get to go to heaven. They want to get by. Today that young man is in a mental institution. Sin cost him dearly. It is dangerous to live a life on the edge, getting by with what you can.

So how do we overcome sin? How do we overcome our flesh that is so prone to sin? We read in Romans 8 that God gives us the power to overcome our flesh. He fills us up to the brim with the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. We have more Spirit of God in us than we have flesh. We go on from there to submit our flesh, its desires and "want tos", to the Spirit of God. We have to submit our will and let God control us. He changes us and gives us power to overcome from the inside out. We pray in the Holy Ghost and that strengthens us. His Spirit helps us to overcome. He quickens us, and He empowers us. He cleans us up.

He cleans us up from the inside out. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is God's Washing Machine. Yes, the Spirit of God does this even if you don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. But we don't have the full measure of God's Spirit that we can have with the Baptism. We need all the cleansing power that we can get. We need the super suds. We need to do more than just get by. That often isn't enough in today's world. We need to get the high powered suds, and the super sized machine that will definitely get the job done.

Yes, I see people who have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost who are still bound by sin. Why is that? These people have not really committed themselves, and submitted themselves to God. Not fully. There is a corner of their lives that they are holding out on. There is that sin that they don't want to give up. They profess themselves to have the Baptism, but they may not possess it. They may speak in tongues all service, but what they do in their own prayer closet may not be what they do in church. They don't want to give up their will and way to God. The Spirit of God is in them, but they want to hold on to the flesh instead of giving it to God. They want to do their own thing instead of God's thing. They cannot find the victory that the Baptism can bring until they let go of their flesh and let God's Spirit control their lives.

The other night I was burdened for an attitude that I had that was not God. I knew that the devil was trying to use it to bind me. I tried to talk myself out of that attitude, but it didn't go away. Anytime you yield to bad attitudes, you are doing just the same as that young man, doing what you can to get by. Wrong attitudes can destroy you as quickly or quicker than the things that you do that are sin. Wrong attitudes are what you might call silent killers. They are the things that nobody sees but you, but they are not less deadly because of that. These are the things that can destroy us not only spiritually but mentally and physically.

Hate, bitterness, rebellion, jealousy, fear, doubt, unbelief, strife, all these things can destroy your soul if you give into them. Instead of letting them rule in our lives and making excuses for them, we need to get into God's Washing Machine and let Him clean us up. I couldn't on my own fix my attitude. I knew it. I was grieved in my spirit for my attitude. God was convicting me. I knew that I had to change. All I could do was pray in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost began to pray through me. I could feel that water washing away. I could feel that bondage leaving me. God cleaned me up through His Spirit. We have to let God's Spirit convict us of wrong attitudes and feelings. We have to be willing to let go of them. We have to let God's Spirit clean us up and deliver us from them.

As an added little note here about attitudes and emotions, I am writing this in the middle of what is one of the worst winters on record. Also, in the middle of one of the worst economic times that there has been in decades. Lots of people are out of work and struggling just to be able to feed their families. Talk about a time when negative emotions are running wild. People are literally becoming violent they are so eat up with stress. The bad weather is not helping either. People have been stuck in their homes for weeks not able to get out. That isn't helping their money situations either as many of them who do have jobs have a job where they are dependent on good weather. Another thing making all this worse is since the economy has gone bad, families have moved in with other family members. More than one family under one small roof is often a formula for disaster, especially if part of the family isn't saved. Everywhere I go I'll catch pieces of conversation like, "The people in my house are really getting on my nerves. I can't take this any longer staying in. We are all so stressed out with worry and that isn't making things better but worse." People are beginning to get violent and I believe that this will only get worse as time goes on.

Now is the time for us to let God's Spirit rule our emotions. If we don't, we may pay a dear price. I know a young man whose father let all his stress get to him to the place that he took his own life. This young man never got over this. He tried to for years. One day he took his own life. Let God be the Lord over all of you including your emotions. Let the Holy Ghost wash you and fill you so that you overcome. Let God be Lord of your self, and your household.

I know a man who is full of hate for someone over something that happened years ago. He will not let this hate go. It obsesses him. Not long ago he had a severe heart attack. Now even doctors say that hate will cause physical problems. Cancer, high blood pressure, heart problems, have all been linked to bitterness and hate. We all know how fear and stress affects our physical bodies. Hate and bitterness do too. This hate and bitterness has nearly killed this man. He won't let it go. My question is, I know that hate and bitterness is sin. The Bible says it is. Since it is, I know that God's Spirit is convicting him of this sin, because that is what God does. He is pushing away God's Spirit. He is refusing to let it go, so he refuses to ask God to forgive him. As the Bible says in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us." If we don't forgive, then God can't forgive us. We take ourselves out of that when we refuse to give it up to God. He will not get in God's washing machine. Now my question is this, when he dies, and it could be any day because of all this, will he make it to heaven? I have my doubts. Sad to say, this man is a preacher. His witness is not very good because of all this. He is not letting God's Spirit do His work in his life.

Don't run away from God's Washing Machine. I know a lot of people who will run away from the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, they turn and run away from God's Spirit.

They do this because they want their sin. They are afraid to go to services that hold Spirit filled meetings like those we read about in I Corinthians where the gifts of the Spirit operate. They run from that kind of church and flock to churches that do not have the power of the Holy Ghost operating in their midst. They are comfortable there. They want to hear that everything is all right, they can keep their sin and still go to heaven. We have talked throughout this book about scriptures that prove this isn't so. They are living on the edge. I pray that before it is too late, they realize the truth. If they do, then the truth can and will set them free. Let God's washing machine wash you, clean you, and make you spotless. Let His Holy Ghost purify you.

Closing

The Bible promises that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is for you. It is a gift that God has for you. It will strengthen you, empower you, and make you boldly able to stand in these last days. You don't have to deserve it. You don't have to earn it. You don't have to beg for it. You just have to open wide your heart, your mind, and your spirit and receive it.

We read in Luke 11:9-13, "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Are you asking? Are you seeking? Are you knocking? Then you will receive, you will find, and it will be opened up to you. Just keep on asking, seeking, and knocking. You can count on that promise. You have God's Word for it

Book Three

Such Were Some of You

© 2010
Sandy Haga

Table of Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
<i>Dedication Page</i>	<i>263</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>267</i>
<i>My Testimony</i>	<i>273</i>
<i>Such Were Some of You</i>	<i>279</i>
<i>The Power To Stay Free</i>	<i>283</i>
<i>Sanctified</i>	<i>288</i>
<i>Justified</i>	<i>295</i>
<i>The Power of the Holy Ghost</i>	<i>299</i>
<i>The Power of Prayer and the Word of God</i>	<i>312</i>
<i>Victory</i>	<i>320</i>
<i>Joy</i>	<i>324</i>
<i>Yield</i>	<i>336</i>
<i>Closing</i>	<i>343</i>

SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU

Dedication

I want to dedicate this book to several people. First of all I want to dedicate it to a younger person that I know. This person started out young serving God, but became involved in lots of things that turned out to be like nooses around their neck. God saved them. From the time they started serving God, the devil used the scars from their sin against them. This person did not settle halfway in their relationship with God. They fell in love with Jesus and stayed in love. They allowed the Spirit of God to make them new. They did not want to stay bound in the sins of the past, and God delivered them in a mighty way. They were able to say, "I used to be bound in sin. I used to be bound by habits. I used to be bound by the people who were around me. I used to have a life that was miserable because of all this. But God made me new. I am still made new. I am free." I want to dedicate this book to that person and all those like them.

I also want to dedicate this book to the gentleman that came into my office where I work at a Christian school. His daughter goes to school there. I could tell that his sin had caused him to have a hard life. I knew that he drank, that I could tell. His life had been hard. He looks years older than what he really is. But there was something special about him. I could tell that the Lord could really use him. If he would let the Lord, He could deliver him and give him a totally new life. If he would let the Lord work in his life, he could change and be a whole new person. I told him this. He really couldn't see it. He wanted to believe it could happen, but he was too afraid to make a start. He was afraid that it wouldn't work for him. I could see it on his face. I want to dedicate this book to him and all those like him.

Most of all though, I want to dedicate this book to this older couple that I know. They go to church regularly. They talk about how they are Christians. They are so bound up in sin and don't see it. God deals with their hearts to lay down their habits and things that control them, the things that the devil uses to keep them bound, but they ignore Him. They have little victory in their lives. They are bound by fear and doubt. They do not stand in faith in their relationship with God because deep down they know that they aren't living where they should. Their relationship with God is shaky. I have watched them through the years. I have prayed for them for many years. They take a few steps closer to God, then their habits and sin jerk them back away. I believe that they are convinced in their heart that this is the way to serve God. They justify themselves into thinking that they have to settle for this kind of relationship, that they are doing the best they can and that is good enough. They are miserable. They justify the wrong things they do, and because of this they will never be able to say, like the first person I mentioned, "Praise God I am free. Thank you God for delivering me and making me to be a new person in you." I was praying for them, and God showed me that they had become so settled in their own way, that they no longer sought His way for their lives. As they got older, they became stubborn in their ways, with their neck set against giving in. God or nobody else can get them to change. Now God or nobody else can even get them to see that they need a change in their lives. I want to dedicate this book to them. They are why I am writing this. I am writing it to every person who is on the edge of sliding into this kind of relationship with God.

We have many choices that we make every day in our lives. We choose what we are going to wear, how we are going to do our hair, what we are going to eat. We make hundreds of choices a day. The choices that we make with our spiritual self is more important that we know.

It is so much more important than the choices that we make with our physical self. We settle into physical habits that keep us unhealthy. We settle into spiritual habits that destroy our soul, and eventually doom us to eternity in hell. We take no more thought in this than we do in eating right. We become set in patterns, we take on habits that are contrary to God's Word, we justify our selves in all these things, we go our merry way until one day either here or on the other side, we have to answer for all these things.

If you are tired of being who you are, even if you are a Christian, and you are ready for a change, this book is dedicated to you. There are so many Christians who know that they are not where they should be, but they have no idea of where to go from there. There are so many that have tried to do better, they have failed so many times that they are on the edge of just giving up and giving in to settling for halfway. There are so many who have begun to justify the things that they are doing wrong, and it is scaring them, but they have no idea of how to get out of it all. There are some who realize that there is something better, there is victory that they can find, but it is like a puzzling journey and they have no idea of how to get there. This book is dedicated to you. The Bible promises that we can be made new. This doesn't just mean when we are saved, but we can be made new every day. We can be delivered. We can find victory over sin, and over habits that bind us and destroy our health and soul. We don't have to settle. We don't have to justify our sin. We can rise above it all and become new. Those who desire to do so in your hearts, this book is dedicated to you.

Introduction

In I Corinthians 6:11, we read “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” It may be hard to believe that you could write a book using one verse as the main text, but that is what the Lord has impressed me to do. Wow. The Bible is so cool. It is that full of things that can change our lives. It is meat for our lives. I am convinced that it can even save on our grocery bill. That may be an odd thing to say, but hear me out. People run here and there trying to fill up on things that give them some sort of satisfaction. They shop here and there trying to buy something that fills up a longing or emptiness in their lives. They eat trying to fill themselves up from a hunger that can't be filled with food. They obsess in all kinds of activities trying to give themselves meaning for why they are here, trying to fill up their time with something that gives them a purpose. Still they stay empty, hungry, and searching. I am not just talking about sinners here. This is also true for a lot of Christians. How many people do you know who fill up on everything but God's Word and they stay empty inside. They spend thousands of dollars a year, and still stay empty. They pick up habits that cost them thousands of dollars a year, which can eventually cost them their lives. If they would only fill themselves up with God's Word, they would find a purpose, meaning for their lives, peace, security, deliverance, and freedom from worry and fear. And they would through that save thousands of dollars.

I hope that through reading this book that you find something that will change your life. I try to fill all the books that I write with the Word of God. There is no other book that can fill your life like God's Word, which can change you like it can. How many books do you know that you can write a whole book from one verse? (Of course I have added lots more verses to it too.)

Let's start with a little bit of background. Any time that you are studying God's Word you need to do some background work. You need to study the whole part. A lot of people confuse themselves with the Bible because they pick out only one verse, only one part and get their whole idea of what is being said from that one part. To really understand the Bible, you have to see it as a whole. It is one book from start to finish written by one author. Now you might argue with me here that this isn't so, but it is. The Holy Ghost of God inspired the Bible. Even though He used many human hands to write it, He inspired what was written. To really understand a particular verse, you have to research out other verses in the Bible that have to do with this subject. You have to search the other verses in the area of that particular text that you are studying. If you just grab the Bible, read a verse or two without taking time to study it out, you can easily misinterpret what it is saying. Also, if you don't allow the author to explain His book to you, you can get it all wrong. Flesh can't interpret the Word of God. People can't understand it unless the Holy Ghost interprets it. If they haven't been saved, if they aren't willing to lay sin down and walk in obedience to the Lord, if they aren't submitting to the Spirit of God and daily listening to His voice, they won't hear His voice when He opens up the scriptures to them.

So to start our background study we need to go to verse 9 which says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Boy what a list. This really shoots down the idea that a lot of so called modern churches have that it doesn't matter what you do, you can still enter in God's heaven. I saw a huge sign on a huge church that plainly read, "Not your mother's church."

I guess that the idea behind what they were trying to say is that they weren't old fashioned in their ideas of what they accept as being sin. Matter of fact, a lot of churches have taken the word sin out of their vocabulary. You hear preachers and churches say, "Now we don't want to make any one feel uncomfortable. They won't want to come if they do. We don't want anyone to feel like we regret their choice of life style. What may be right for them might not be right for you. Everyone has a choice." They take the altar out, and they take the words "repentance" and "conviction" out of their vocabulary. They become a social club far removed from God's Word and His Spirit is not welcome, because His Spirit brings about conviction. Then they watch their members reap the sorrow of their sin and they watch their children mourn because of their sin, and they justify what they have done. They justify how they have become as a church.

Romans talks a lot about sin and what it does to people. Romans 7:11 says, "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." How many people do you know that sin slew them, sin destroyed them, sin destroyed the lives of those they loved. Until the church gets real about sin they will suffer the consequences of sin. There is an old saying that says, "Sin will take you further than you ever want to go. Sin will keep you longer than you ever want to stay. Sin will cost you more than you ever want to pay." Why is the church so powerless today? Why does the world look at the church and turn around like they have smelled something bad? Why are we not drawing the world to the church? Because the world has drawn the church to it, and it has won. Until we come out from our sin, and call sin sin, and let the Holy Ghost come back into our midst to convict and change, then what do we have to give the world that is any different than what it has? It has sorrow, it reaps the wages of sin. It wants to know how to be set free.

One of the students at our Christian school made the comment that he wasn't sure if he wanted to get saved because he wasn't sure how he would know what was wrong and what was right for him to do. He was afraid he would get it all confused and mess up. This was a key thing as to why he wouldn't make a commitment to serve the Lord and ask Him into his heart because he saw Christianity as being a list of do's and don'ts. Serving God is much more than that. It is a relationship with a Heavenly Father who calls us beloved, who draws us to Himself, who keeps us in the palm of His hand. It is a relationship with Jesus, who died for our sins, what greater love is there than that. Every day, it is a life changing experience that is filled with adventure, peace of mind, purpose, and so much more than you could ever write. It is way more than just a set of rules to live by. But thank God that there are rules. Those rules are made to keep us, to stop us from destroying our lives, and the lives of those who love us.

Those rules are made to protect us. Why does God say to abstain from sex before you are married? Ask the young unmarried mothers who come to our school office who are not ready to be mothers. Ask someone who has aides. Sin has consequences whether we want to admit it or not. Stay away from sin, and you will stay away from the consequences. Ask someone who has suffered the consequences of drug addiction, or alcoholism. Ask people who have been caught up in a gay lifestyle and even though they have a big smiling front they put on to the world, their lives are a mess of controversy, trouble, heartaches, and gut wrenching agony. Ask someone who has allowed their life to be filled with addictions, whether legal or illegal. Ask someone who is walking a tight rope of depression or anxiety, filled with fear. Ask someone who is tormented with sexual addictions that tear their family apart. We sometimes aren't willing to find out what sin is.

We want to leave out the part of the Bible that talks about sin. Do you know how many people get their lives so messed up? They don't start out doing the things that destroy their lives because they think that it is bad. They start out by saying, "Just this once won't hurt me. This is fun. I know these people destroyed their lives by doing this, but that won't happen to me. I can do this and be smart." Most of them didn't even start out by thinking that though. They started out by not thinking at all. They definitely didn't start out by thinking about what sin is, and what God has to say about it. They definitely didn't start out by asking God to give them strength to stay away from sin. They definitely didn't start out by allowing God's Spirit to help them.

Do we have to be like the student who was afraid to commit to the Lord because he was afraid that he wouldn't know what was right and wrong? Only if we fail to read God's Word in its entirety, not leaving out the part about sin. Only if we silence God's voice. Only if we stop His Spirit from convicting us. Only if we stop God's Spirit from working in our heart and mind. Then we need to be afraid. To know how to avoid sin, we have to admit that sin is sin. Then we have to find out what sin is. We have to admit that it is wrong to be able to do any of this. That is the first step.

Verse 9 that we quoted above talks about sin. It says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." That is very plain. Sin won't enter into heaven. If we don't admit our sin, allow God to convict us, and repent, we can't carry our sin to heaven. In verse 11 we find good news. We find victory over the power of sin. We find deliverance.

Let's go back and read our verse again. In I Corinthians 6:11, we read "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the

name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” You know what I think is the most powerful word in that verse. It is the word “were”. It says such **were some of you**. I love that word **were**. Coming up you’ll read my testimony about what I was and how God has delivered me. Not only did He deliver me, but He has kept me. I am not what I was. A lot of people try to walk as a Christian. Things get hard. They look at all the lists of *don’ts* and get so tangled up in them that they think there is no way to do what is required of them. They read about the things they aren’t supposed to be and give up before they get to the list of things they can be. Keep reading and find out how you can get to the place where you can say, “That is something that I was.” Let’s read on to find out how.

Chapter 1.

My Testimony

An illustration really helps people to understand what is being said. I guess that the best way that I can illustrate what I am saying in this book is by giving my testimony. I have not always served the Lord. There was a time in my life when I left following Him to do my own thing. I was saved when I was in the 6th grade. I went to the altar. I asked the Lord to come into my heart. I was baptized, but that wasn't what saved me. The act of my asking the Lord to forgive me of my sin and to come into heart was what saved me. Romans 10:9-11 told me how to be saved, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." I believed what the Bible said. I asked the Lord into my heart and He came in. With a child like faith, I received God's promise of salvation. I had grown up in church. I knew about what it meant to become a Christian. I accepted the Lord into my heart. I started out on fire for the Lord and served Him through my high school years.

Then I hit college, and I hit it hard. I had been sheltered in my life from a lot of what the world had to offer, so when I went away to college, I learned a lot more than what I learned in my textbooks. I tried everything that there was to try, and did everything that there was to do, and there was a lot to do. It only took a couple of years for me to destroy my life totally. I was an alcoholic by the time that I was 20. I had tried every kind of drug there was to try, and there was a lot to try. I was so bound by the time that I was in my early 20's that my life was a total wreck. I destroyed my mind, my body, and most of all my soul. I watched people die, people who I cared about died from being in the life style that we had chosen.

One day I woke up and I realized that there was no hope for me. I realized that I could go no further down. Then is when I began to look up.

I began to remember. Parents, when the scriptures say that if you train up a child in the way that they should go, and when you do, it won't depart from them, that is a powerful promise. Proverbs 22: 6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." From my own life, I know what this verse means. I definitely departed from the Word of God. How many parents do you know who have watched their children depart from God's Word. Did this promise in God's Word fail them? No. Don't give up on your children when they turn away from serving the Lord. Keep them before the Lord in your prayers. Give them to Him and let Him be the Lord over their situation. Let God work in their lives. Let His Word and His promises to them and to you work. His Word will not depart from them. It didn't depart from me. When I was in the middle of a drunken stupor, I would remember scriptures. When I was in the middle of doing whatever I was doing, the Bible would come to my mind. I would be in a bar and remember going to church. I think that is why so many singers who sing in bars start up in a chorus of *I Saw the Light*. They are remembering where they should be. They are remembering God's Word. They just aren't doing anything about it. Some of them have been traveling the road they are on for so long that they think they are too far from home to go back. But they haven't forgotten the way. God's Word is still echoing in their hearts and minds.

I remembered the way back home. I just had to admit that I needed to go. I had to admit that my life was a wreck the way it was. I had to say, "Lord, I have sinned. My way isn't working. I am ready to do it your way." Until I did, there was no hope for me to change. I had to admit that I was sinning, and that I needed to get out of that sin.

Why are some of the people that I bar hopped with over 30 years ago still trapped in that same lifestyle all these years later? Why have they watched their lives crumble and see no hope to change? Why have their families paid the price for their sins? Why do they still suffer and those they love suffer with them? Because they have never admitted they were sinning. And they never found hope to change. Sin is sin. You will pay the price for sin until you admit it is sin. You can't come away from something until you admit that it is bad and it is destroying you. This means before you become a Christian and after.

Christians today are so bound in sin. This doctrine that claims that you can do anything after you become a Christian because God will forgive you, is so damnable. Christians are wrapped up and tied up and tangled up in everything but Jesus. They are like Lazarus. They are dead and wrapped up in grave clothes. Sin is like grave clothes. If you continually make excuses for your sin, you will eventually die in your sin, after having paid the price by letting it destroy your heart mind and soul. I actually tricked myself into thinking that it was fine to do what I was doing. I destroyed myself, while all the time I justified what I was doing. One day, I came to my senses. One day, the Lord finally got through all that to show me how bad things were. I admitted that I was tired of being bound. I admitted that I was tired of my sin, and down deep in my heart I wanted to be free from it. I didn't want it any more. That is where it starts. A lot of people can't get free because deep down, they still want that sin. They still get a little kick out of walking all around it. They won't let go. It will eventually be the hook in their jaw that satan uses to reel them in to destroy them. I didn't want it any more. I had come to the place where I could go no further down. I admitted that I needed help. I admitted that I had no hope, and that without God's help, I couldn't go on the way I was going. I remembered. I remembered God's Word. I remembered His love.

I remembered the God that I knew when I was a child. Like the prodigal son, I turned toward home. This time I went toward that faint light that I could see. I had moved so far from that light, that it was a faint light in my memory, but it still was shining. When I went toward it, I found Jesus there where He had been waiting all the time.

It was like Lazarus. Can you imagine Lazarus' side of the story? He was dead, laying in a tomb. I think it may have been a little like what I went through. I can imagine that he too saw a light. He may not have had his eyes open yet, but he saw a light brighter than any he had seen. As he opened his eyes and began to be aware of what he had around him, he probably realized that he was in a tomb, and I'm sure that he knew that he had been dead. Then he heard a voice. It was a voice he knew and remembered, and loved with all his heart. It was calling his name. He knew what happened. Jesus was there. I had been dead in my sin. It had wrapped me up and bound me as tight as the grave clothes that Lazarus had wrapped around him. Everything was as dark around me as the darkness in Lazarus' tomb. You know when you get into the life style that I had, I stayed up all night and partied and slept all day. Sin creeps in during the night hours and eventually keeps you up all night. I watch young people who stay up all night gaming and being on the internet, and they get in a habit of being up at night and sleeping during the day. That is an invitation to trouble. That is a way of life that opens the door to sin. Parents, if you think that they are fine doing this, that they can't get in trouble staying in their room and doing nothing but internet, then you are being foolish. Guess again.

I had been in the dark so long, that I almost couldn't stand the light. It was a shock to me to see that light. It didn't shine into my eyes, but it shone into my heart and soul and mind. It was a light that had a promise behind it. It was a light that drew me to it. Then I heard that special voice.

I heard that voice in my spirit and soul. I remembered it. I had heard it so many times. It was calling my name. It was telling me to get up and come. I was so bound up. I was tied up in my sin. I wanted to go free. I wanted out. I didn't want to die there where I was, and I knew that if I didn't get free, I would die. I was tired of being bound. I was ready for a change. A change came. His name was Jesus. I stood up, and like Lazarus, my grave clothes began to fall away.

It wasn't all easy. The devil tried to keep me wrapped up. When you have laid in a tomb, it is easy to just stay there and die. You can fool yourself all day long that you are fine where you are. I had done that for years. This time though I was in reality. I was ready to get out, and no devil was stopping me. I ran to the Lord. I was hungry for Him. I wanted all there was to get. I wanted to learn all there was to learn. I wanted to run away from the things that I was leaving behind, and I wanted no more of that. Whatever it took to get away from the sin, those grave clothes laying there on the floor of my tomb, I wanted to do. There was no half way, compromising for me. I wanted it all, all the way. The devil tried, but he couldn't get a hold on me. You see, when you start compromising, justifying yourself in your sin, even when you start settling for less than God's best, you allow the enemy to begin to slip in. He can set up right in your heart and mind. He can sneak right into those holes in your armor. Like a cancer he starts small. Then he begins to grow until he chokes out all the good cells, replacing them with his warped cells. Don't start settling for less than the best. Don't compromise. Don't get into an easy chair. Stay on the front line. Stay fired up for the Lord. Stay in love with Jesus where He is number one to you. Stay close to Him. When you are at the feet of Jesus, the devil has a hard time stealing away your soul.

What was the key to my getting delivered? I admitted my sin. I admitted that I needed the Lord. I wanted change.

I was tired of being the way I was. I wanted deliverance. I turned to Him. I didn't go to Mohammed for help. I didn't go to Buddha. It wasn't the new age movement that I saw when I was wrapped up in my tomb. It wasn't the voice of religion, or church tradition that I heard in my darkness. It was the voice of Jesus. If you have found yourself wrapped up in sin, there is hope. Listen for His voice. When you are sick and tired of being sick and tired, when you are tired of your grave clothes, He will be there to deliver you. God's Word says that He is married to the back slider. Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you....I will bring you to Zion."

It took a while for me to come all the way out of my grave clothes. I think that it is true for lots of people. That is why some people who start out as Christians go so far then let go, saying that there is nothing to it. They can't serve the Lord. I was too afraid of what was behind me to do that. I wasn't letting go no matter what it took. It was kind of like being over a pit filled with lions. I knew that they would tear me up if I fell in, so why in the world let go. Whatever it took, I was in this thing to stay. How did the Lord get me all the way out of my grave clothes? That is a story for the next chapter.

Chapter 2.

Such Were Some of You

If you remember our key scripture, it is I Corinthians 6:11, “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Jesus found me, called me out. My part was to go toward that voice, to be determined that it would be the voice that I was following from now on. Through the precious blood that was shed at Calvary, I was washed and made clean from my sin. Jesus forgave me and washed me clean. One of the problems with excusing away your sin, and staying in it, is that you are never forgiven. You are never fully made clean and washed. I was clean. I was forgiven. You won’t ever catch me going along with the doctrine that has crept into the church that we don’t need to mention the blood of Jesus. Without the blood of Jesus, we could never be made clean. It is the gateway to everything that we as Christians can receive from the Lord. If we don’t go in to the gate by the blood of Jesus, then we can’t get in at all. Don’t take my word for it, study out the Word of God. Get a concordance and study out about the blood of Jesus. Get God’s Word for it. Take Jesus own word for it. He said in Matthew 26:28, “And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

God said in His Word that Jesus shed His blood for me, I received that and my sins were remitted. Webster’s defines remit as being, “To forgive someone, to free them from debt or penalty.” That explains what happened to me, what happened to everyone who has confessed, and repented of their sins, and allowed the blood of Jesus to cover them. We have been set free from the debt or penalty that we had been paying because of our sin. I was set free then, and I am set free now. A change that lasted.

That is why I can say, “such were some of you”. I was what I was, but I am not now. If this has happened to you, then you were what you were, but you aren’t now. Praise God. Regeneration. Making new. That is what God specializes in.

Another word that comes to my mind when I think of remission of sins is forgiveness. Forgiveness is a wonderful thing. Guilt destroys people. They carry such a load of guilt. People carry guilt when they do something that they shouldn’t, and they carry guilt when they fail to do something that they should. Guilt tears people apart. It destroys them and their relationship with people around them. I was watching a TV show. In that show, the main character was being destroyed by guilt. Another well-meaning character explains to him that guilt is something that we don’t need to have. This character told the guilty feeling one “Only God makes us feel guilty. If you don’t believe in God, then you don’t have to feel guilty”. The character in the show stayed eaten up with his guilt, and became suicidal not caring about his life because of his guilt. I wanted to tell him, “Hey, God is the answer, not the problem. God takes away your guilt and delivers you from it.”

I see people in real life, every day, who are eaten up with guilt. Sad to say, some of them are just like the guy in the show. They are convincing themselves that because of this guilt, they don’t want (or can’t have) God in their life. Someone really close to me is going through this. He is not living where He knows He needs to live, at the feet of Jesus. Because of that, sin has crept into his life. He has allowed his sin to separate him from God because of guilt. When we have altar call at church, when the Spirit of God is moving in our midst, he runs out the door. I asked why and he answered, “I can’t take part in that part of the service because I feel so bad for how I am.” It is that part of the service that will deliver him from being what he is. That is the part when the Holy Ghost comes in the service.

That is what will keep us free. Instead of running away in his sin, he needs to run to God, accept His forgiveness, and run to be delivered. He will stay wrapped in those grave clothes until he does. I pray that he sees the Lord standing in the door of his tomb before he dies, or before the Lord returns, which could be any day. I don't think that he likes himself as he is because he is ashamed. I do think that the devil has him so bound that he can't see past his sin. He can't hear that voice that I heard because the devil has him too bound to hear. He can't hear God's word and His promises because he is too bound. He is afraid to admit how bound he is, and see his need. He is too proud to admit his need. At one time, when he was first saved he was free. He gets more bound as time goes on. Several times, the enemy has almost succeeded in talking him into just giving up. Several times, the enemy has almost succeeded in getting him to jump sides and just go ahead and give into his sin. One day, if he doesn't get free, the devil will succeed. You can't stay bound without that happening. You can know that this is the devil's plan for him. He just hasn't made up his mind entirely that he wants to let go of the little things that he is holding onto. He hasn't entirely made up his mind that they are as bad as they are. He is trying to hold onto both worlds, and the one is outpulling the other. I hope that he stays free. It is hard to say.

Staying free is as important as getting free. That is where a lot of Christians miss the boat. They know that God saves them, and makes them new. They know about the salvation experience, but that is as far as they go. Because of that they don't stay free. I knew that I had to stay free, so I asked God to show me how. I was willing to do what I had to do to keep from going back where I came from. I wanted to stay as I was. I wanted to stay a new creature in Christ. God had made me to be one. He promised me in His Word that it was so. I had read in II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:

old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” I accepted that promise by faith and I watched Him change me. I was willing to change. I let go of my will and accepted His will for my life. I submitted myself to Him, and let Him become Lord of my life. I was tired of my way, and did it His way, and it worked.

I needed one more thing though to stay changed. I needed to experience something that the disciples in the early churches experienced. Thank God that it wasn't just for them, but it is for us today. Keep reading to find the key that totally set me free, and still keeps me free today.

Chapter 3. The Power to Stay Free

One of the hardest things that I had to overcome was my addiction to drugs. Not just any drug, but my addiction to pot. I guess that was because I was partly convinced that it wasn't as bad as the rest of stuff. I partly convinced myself that God made it, so why could it be bad. Why would He mind that I smoked it? Never mind that it was illegal, and I risked a chance of going to jail, and permanently damaging my future by using it. Never mind that you can't get pure marijuana, but it is filled with everything from different more addictive drugs that dealers put into it to hook you on other things they have to offer you to rat poison, and anything you could imagine. My question is, if it was so harmless, then why was it the hardest thing that I had to quit, keep in mind I was an alcoholic, and a drug user. (By the way, my answer to any one who gives me the line about-God made it so it must be OK is this. God also made dog poop. Here have a bite. How about a little glass of pus, that is a natural God made thing, too.)

One of the things that I had to let go of to totally be delivered from my old lifestyle was my friends. I didn't want to change crowds. Alone with God was much better than with my friends without Him. I couldn't see that. While I was compromising to keep my friends, some of them died. I knew that they had gone to hell without God, and I knew that I could maybe have prevented that from happening. That helped me to wake up. Another thing that helped me to get out of that slump I was in was stopping listening to rock music, or any other kind of music but gospel. To this day, I don't listen to anything but gospel. Why was that so important then and now? Music was an important part of my life. It is like food that you eat. When you take it in, it becomes a part of you. It is the same thing with TV and movies that you watch. Watch what you eat.

It is the same thing with gaming you do. Also, it is the same thing with the crowd that you fall into. What you are around constantly will rub off on you. I was running away from my old way of life, still carrying a ball and chain around my foot that was a part of that way of life. I was filling my mind with songs that talked about the way of life that I had, ones that reminded me of the things that I used to do while in that life style. I was choosing to fill my mind with the message that the drug taking, drinking, sin living rocker was preaching which was just as powerful for his side of things as the messages the preachers preached on their side of things that I was listening to. Until I cut loose my music, I couldn't totally get delivered. I don't care if you do listen to country, and it isn't as bad as rock, or so you say. Most of it is about running around drinking and bar hopping with somebody's wife. I don't care if you don't listen to the lyrics, or even if you can't even tell what they are saying, the lyrics are still going into your brain and spirit. Christians have no business listening to anything but gospel. It is that good. And it is that good for you.

The most important key that I had to deliver me and keep me delivered was the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Through the Baptism of the Holy Ghost I found the power that I needed to stay free. To explain this I am including here a chapter from my book, *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost*.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is an experience that is a key experience to enable and empower the church today. If there has ever been a time when the church, the bride of Christ, needs to have power, victory, boldness, faith, and the quickening power of the Spirit, that time is now. All these things are brought about by the Baptism of the Spirit. Sad to say, a lot of churches teach that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was an experience that only the Christians in the beginning days of the church could have.

My question to those who believe that way is this. Why would God give early Christians an experience to empower them, and take it away from us today? We could be called the last day church. Do we need that power today? Why would God deprive us of something that we need?

If you don't have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, you might be saying to yourself, "But I thought that we got the Holy Ghost when we got saved." That is true. When you get saved, you get a portion of God's Spirit. Jesus comes into your heart through the power of the Holy Ghost. God's Spirit enters into your heart. That is the beginning. Let's start by explaining just what the Baptism of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit is all about. I call Him the Holy Ghost because that is what the Bible mostly calls Him. The Holy Ghost is a person. He is a part of the trinity of God. God is made up of three persons, three parts, much like an egg. An egg has a shell, the white, and the yolk. If you separate one egg, you have three parts, but there is still only one egg there. God the Father, Jesus His Son, and the Holy Ghost, are all three parts of God. You are a person. You have a spirit that will one day go back to God, and you have your flesh part, the part that people see. You may have a son. That son is a part of you, a part of your flesh. Your DNA, your blood, your genetics, and all the things that parents pass into their children is in your son. He is a part of you. This is much the same way as God, Jesus, and the Holy Ghost are connected together. That connection between them is so strong that they are one. They operate as one. One will never step out on His own, but they are all in total and complete agreement. That is something that we humans can't understand on our own. There is an old song that goes like this, "He's God in the Father, He's God in the Son, He's God in the Holy Ghost, He's God all three in one. I know God is God, and He won't ever change." Here is one example of part of the trinity, how they fit together.

John 17:21 says, "That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Jesus is saying here that He and His Father were one. He was also saying that He was dying on the cross so that we could be one with both of them. That is a lot of love in that passage. I guess you could say that the stuff that holds God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost together is love. That is the same stuff that holds us together to make us one with God.

When you get saved, you are born of the Spirit of God. God's Spirit comes into your heart. Jesus comes into your heart through God's Spirit. So you are right if you say that God's Spirit comes into your heart when you are saved. But there is more. If you have been baptized or filled with the Spirit of God, then you know what I am saying. Baptized with the Spirit and filled with the Spirit are both terms that refer to the same experience. There are three reasons why I know that being baptized or filled with the Holy Ghost means more than just salvation. I know because I have read the full counsel of God's Word and it is all through the scriptures. Also, I know because it has happened to me. The third reason I know that it is so is because millions of people down through time have experienced the same thing that I have experienced.

When you get saved, you get a portion of God's Spirit. When you receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, you get baptized, filled, empowered, filled up to the brim. Here is a little bit of what the Bible says about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. We will be studying scriptures throughout this book. This isn't something that I've made up to entertain you. It is found throughout the Word of God. It is valuable truth that may make a difference in your life between victory and defeat as a Christian. If you already have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, then this book will still be a blessing and a strength to you as you are reminded about what power, strength, comfort, and all that

you can find because of it. For more read the book, The Baptism of the Holy Ghost”.

Through the power of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost I was able to stay free. I was not only delivered from the devil that had nearly destroyed me in the past, I was also able to turn and pounce on him. I was able to become victorious as a Christian and do something for the Lord. God is good. Thank you God for delivering me and using me. Through the power of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, God can not only keep you free, but use you in a powerful way to touch the lives of those around you.

Chapter 4.

Sanctified

In I Corinthians 6:11, we read “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” We have talked about how we are washed. Let’s talk about what it means to be sanctified. Sad to say, sanctification isn’t something that you hear being taught in churches today. That doesn’t take away from the fact that it is a key to being able to get free and stay free. Webster defines sanctify as being, “To set apart as being holy; consecrated. To make free from sin.” When we get saved, we become holy. Now you may not feel holy. You may not at times act very holy. You are holy, not because of who you think you are, or what you do, but by who you have in you. When you get saved, you take in to your heart the Spirit of God. You carry in your vessel the Spirit of God. You are holy because He is holy. Colossians 3:12 tells about a list of things that we are to put on. We are to put them on “... therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved.” Webster had it right. We are to be holy, sanctified.

In I Thessalonians 4:3-4 we read, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...” “That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour”. We need to be set apart for the Lord. The Bible says in II Corinthians 6:16-17, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.” We are to be of the world, but not a part of the world. We are to separate ourselves from the world. I know people who have a hard time doing that. They really can’t let go of how things are done in the world. In their minds, they need to be up with what everybody else is doing. If it is popular to do, they need to do it. They know that it is for them as well.

If it is how everybody is thinking, they need to think that way. I watch that kind of thinking do them in. They are allowing a way of thinking and acting that is contrary to God's Word control them. They are allowing what everyone else is doing control them instead of allowing the Spirit of God to control them. I watch them reap the sorrow that comes from living that way. We need to be willing to be separate from the world. When we are, then God can sanctify us and deliver us from all that.

Now this is the main key for receiving sanctification. You must let every thing go that is contrary to God's will for your life. If you hold on to it with both hands, God can't take it out of your life. God can't clean you up from things if every five minutes you are laying back in the mud. Don't kid yourself into thinking that God can deliver you from anything that you are getting your kicks from. Let it go and give it to God, then God can sanctify you.

Here are the key things that God uses to sanctify us: the Word, the Spirit, the Blood, and our faith in all of them. Here are scriptures for each. Jesus Himself in John 17:17 talks about sanctification. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Ephesians 5:26 tells us, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

God's Word will sanctify us. If you fill up on God's Word, it will drive out the rest of the junk that creep into our mind and heart. God's Word is like an ever-flowing fountain of cool water that refreshes our heart, and renews our mind. When I am just fed up with the weird thinking that tries to creep into my mind and from there it can creep into my heart, I start drinking from His Word.

This world and the people in it have some weird thinking. If you aren't careful you can fill yourself up with this and let it become a part of who you are. TV, secular music, all this stuff is junk. Too much junk food, and not enough good food will starve you to the place that you are too weak to stand. If you take more of this world's junk into your spirit than you do God's Word and Spirit, then you will starve to the place where you are spiritually too weak to stand. God through His Word can renew you. God can sanctify you and cleanse you, making you right through His Word. Now, I heard a preacher that is from the US, who is working in some country in Africa make a profound statement. He showed a film from one of his meetings where they were passing out Bibles. These people were literally in the aisles physically fighting to get a Bible. This evangelist said, "I no longer work in the US. I no longer hold meetings in the US. There everyone has several Bibles, most of them drawing dust on their shelves. They do not read it or reference what it says."

We said that people here are not hungry for the Word of God. They have foundered on it. They settle for the easy way out of just listening to whoever they hear that is convenient to listen to. They don't know enough of God's Word to find out whether that person they are listening to is speaking the truth or not. They are easy prey to false doctrine because of this. Their diet is not good solid food. They are weak and easy prey for the devil. We need to get out our Bibles, dust them off, and feast. We need to let the Word of God sanctify us. This doesn't happen with just a monthly application. We need to apply it regularly. How regularly do you fill your spirit up with the world's junk? Don't you need to take in at least more word than junk.

God also sanctifies us through His blood. In Hebrews 13:12 we read, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." What does all this mean to us, to you?

We have already talked about how important the blood of Jesus is to us. Without it, we could not be saved. Without it, we could not be forgiven. Without it we could not be sanctified, cleansed and set aside to be holy.

God also sanctifies us through the power of His Holy Ghost. He fills us with His Spirit, and when we yield to His Spirit instead of to our flesh, that sanctifies us, cleanses us and sets us from the bondage of the flesh. If we aren't willing to yield then He can't do all this. It is human nature to want our own way, and do our own thing. If you are doing that, then you can't be sanctified. You have to yield to be set free from the things that harm you. Too many people try to do it on their own, their own way. They fail, then blame God. If you yield and do it God's way, then it will work. We try so hard to do it right that it hinders God from doing His work in you. We can't sanctify ourselves. God has to do it.

We need to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh to stay sanctified. The Bible tells us that these are the things that walking in the flesh will bring into our life:

1. Strife ("For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions...." I Corinthians 3:3).
2. Not understanding or receiving the things of God ("But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Corinthians 2:14.)
3. Spiritual death (For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Romans 7:5)
4. Much more.

These are just some of the things that we could list.

To sum it all up, check out this section of scripture in Romans 8:5-17. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Therefore brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” To be sanctified we must be led by the Spirit.

We must also allow the quickening power of the Holy Ghost to flow in our lives. The quickening power of the Spirit will knock our flesh and the enemy that tries to control it out of the way. Praying in the Holy Ghost, praying in tongues, letting God’s Spirit flow and bless and anoint us, those are ways that the quickening power of the Holy Ghost will flow. Yield to God’s Spirit. Go to church in a church that teaches this, and allows God’s Spirit to flow. If you are in a church where God’s Spirit doesn’t flow, then it is harder for it to flow in your life. I knew someone who went all their lives to a little church that didn’t believe in the Baptism of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, or in letting the Holy Ghost move in the services. She believed in all this and in healing, but she settled for that little church that she had always been a part of. She traveled and attended Pentecostal services, but couldn’t get out of the rut of that little church. She got cancer. I am not sure, but I can’t help but feel that if she had let go of being in a church that denied the power of God, she might have lived a lot longer. If you are in a church that doesn’t let God move, then get out of it. It could eventually be a death trap to your eternal soul.

All the gifts of God, and the things that His Word promises us operate by faith. They operate because we believe.

That brings us to the key that unlocks sanctification. Acts 26:8 says, “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” God here in this scripture is talking to Paul about how He is going to use him to set the Gentiles free. Here we read that we are sanctified by faith in Jesus and the work that He has done, and is doing in us. We are saved by faith. We are filled with the Holy Ghost by faith. We are sanctified by faith. Everything that we receive, we receive by faith. We don’t receive it because we believe in our own good. Our own good can’t earn it. We have to receive it because we believe that the Lord can and will do it through and in us. We get too “me –centered” in this thing. We keep our eyes more on what we are doing, or on what we aren’t doing to look at what He is doing, and trust in that. We need stop being the center of our world and let Him be the center. We can’t do all this on our own. He has to be the author and finisher of our faith. He can do it and He will. Most of the time we try so hard that all we accomplish is tying His hands. Let go and let God.

An important thing to remember is that the enemy is a master of disguises. He can make you think that God isn’t working in your life. The devil can condemn you into feeling that you aren’t sanctified. He can cause circumstances to make you think that you aren’t free, when it is him that is binding you and not your own sin or flesh. There is a difference between conviction and condemnation. Condemnation will ride you to the grave. Conviction will offer you deliverance. You can be free if you allow God to convict you and draw you closer to Him. If you give in to condemnation, you will be driven further away from God. It is the devil’s trick to try to convince you that you are far from God, when you are only a prayer away. Don’t let this happen to you. When you feel this, pray. Run to God and not away from Him.

He will let you know if there is something going on that you need to seek forgiveness and deliverance from. That is when it is important to remember the next thing in our scripture. It is justification. Read to find out what that means and how it is a key to keep you free.

Chapter 5.

Justified

In I Corinthians 6:11, we read “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” Let’s talk about being justified. It is easy to read words that come up in scripture and never study out what they mean. This is one of them. Webster defines justify as meaning “to be free from blame”. We talked in the last chapter about how the devil condemns us. In Romans 8:1 we read a key verse that tells us how we can fight against this. Let’s start reading in chapter 7 to get the background for this verse. Paul is talking about how he knows to do better but was failing to do it. “If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” In chapter 8 verse 1 we read this key verse, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

This is a lot of scripture here. Paul was talking about how no matter how he tried, he couldn’t on his own do and be what he was expected to be. He couldn’t do it on his own.

How many times have you felt like he described? He said that sin by his very nature dwelled in him. He wanted to do better, but he couldn't. He wound up doing the things that he didn't want to do, and not doing the things that he needed to do. He called himself a wretched man because of the battle that went on inside him. I see Christians like this every day. I know myself what this feels like. A lot of people give up because of this struggle. They haven't learned about the things that we have talked about so far in the book. They haven't learned about how God can wash, sanctify, justify, and free us through the power of the blood of Jesus, His Word, and the Holy Ghost. They are trying to do this on their own, just like Paul talked about. They are wretched. After a while they see no point in trying to serve God. Or they justify their own sins. When God justifies our sins, that is one thing. But people sometimes justify their own. They excuse themselves with all kinds of excuses. That doesn't set them free. That doesn't deliver them. That doesn't change them. It leaves them in the same deadly rut, a rut that is deadly to their physical and spiritual selves.

I excused myself, I justified myself, for years when I was in my sin. I did this until I allowed myself to get to the place where I wrecked my body, mind, soul, and spirit. I was a walking basket case because I justified, excused myself. I fooled myself into thinking that I was without blame. When I finally admitted to myself that I had messed up my life by my sin, then was when God was able to get me out of it. Until I did that, God couldn't help me. When I admitted my sin, realized that I needed God's help, and I was willing to do it God's way, then God could lift me up. There are two kinds of justification. One is when we play games with ourselves, and excuse our sin, when we justify ourselves (this is called self-justification). The other is when we accept salvation, God sets us free, and He justifies us. When God justifies us, it is just as if we had never sinned. Our sins are all gone.

That means that we are without blame with Him. That means, as it says in Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation”.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” What is this saying? It says that we have all come short of the glory of God. There is no way that we can be good enough, or do things good enough to earn salvation. The Bible says that our perfection is but filthy rags in the sight of a perfect, holy God. We can’t be good enough. We are justified through the grace of God because of the redemption that we find in Jesus. Jesus died so that all our sins, past and present could be forgiven. Through this we are justified just as if we had never sinned.

I heard a preacher say that we didn’t even have to repent of our sins and ask God to forgive us because He had already done that at Calvary. He said that we no longer had to ask God to forgive us because it was already done. I don’t think that is what God is saying here. There are too many other verses that are to the contrary to that. Also, that doesn’t make good sense. Why would God be content to let us go our merry way destroying ourselves with sin (and that is what sin does to us), letting us continue on saying, “It is fine to sin my children, don’t feel bad, don’t repent, just keep on, you are forgiven.” Even human parents love their children more than that. Why would God care less for us than that? There is a line here. Romans 2:13 says, “(For not the hearers of the law are just

before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)” We have to do more than just hear the law. We have to keep the law. When we fail, God forgives us. We have someone who died for that. But we don’t ever take advantage of the sacrifice that He paid. He justifies us, just as if we had never sinned. But He doesn’t make sinning easy.

Romans 5:1 tells us that we are justified by faith in God. Romans 5:19 tells us that we are justified by His blood that He shed.

Chapter 6.

The Power of the Holy Ghost

Here's our verse again. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." We have talked about how we are washed, sanctified, and justified. Let's talk about what the Spirit of our God. How does this work in our lives to bring about these things? How can the Spirit of God help us to keep the change that God has made in us? How does it enable us every day to be made new? How can we then boldly go and reach out to others and help them to change as well? This is all coming up in this chapter. We have talked a lot about the power of the Holy Ghost. I think that this subject deserves a chapter all to itself. Through the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to overcome our flesh. We have talked about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that is on an individual level. It is an experience that you can experience. In this chapter we are going to talk about how the church needs to be empowered by the Holy Ghost.

When we talk about church, there are two parts to the church. Your church may be the individual body that you belong to. It isn't the four walls of the building that your church is housed in, it is the group or people, the body, that is within the four walls. There is also the church of God. I am not referring to a denomination here, but I am referring to the entirety of the church being the bride of Christ which reaches out into the four corners of the world. In this chapter we will talk about how the Holy Ghost empowers both parts of the church.

As an introduction to this chapter, I am including the words to a song titled *Today's Is the Touch I Need*. It talks about the importance of having a touch of God's Spirit, letting God touch our lives, our hearts, and minds with His Spirit.

TODAY'S IS THE TOUCH I NEED

Verse 1

*When I steal away in the wee hours of the morning,
I lift my hands and the Holy Ghost comes down.
He quickens me and cuts the chains away
Of the things that can hold me bound.
It's not the touch from yesterday's anointing
That gives me today's peace and strength.
It's not the memory of yesterday's anointing
Today's is the touch I need.*

Chorus

*Lord quicken me with your power.
Let Your Holy Ghost fall on me.
I need Your strength and Your peace,
A touch of Your healing.
Today's is the touch I need.*

Verse 2

*So many Christians today are dead in their sin.
Living so far from God's Spirit.
Not hearing His voice or feeling His touch.
How will they know when He comes again?*

The song talks about how the Holy Ghost gives us deliverance, healing, peace, strength for our labor, and so much more. That touch that comes from heaven is the touch that I need to get me through. It enables me to work for the Lord. Working for the Lord isn't always easy. There are times when it feels like the devil would press in and choke the very spiritual life out of me. That is when I steal away in the wee hours of the morning. I lift my hands up to heaven and the Holy Ghost pours down. Or when we have a Pentecostal devil-stomping service at church and the Holy Ghost falls down on us as a body of believers. That is a wonderful thing. I love having church.

You can go to church and just be there, or you can have a service that God's Spirit blesses, when God Himself comes. Matter of fact, I dread being in a church where God doesn't come, where the Holy Ghost doesn't fall, and more often than not today's churches are that way. If God doesn't come to that church, then something is wrong, and I don't want to go there.

If I hadn't learned about the power of the Holy Ghost I am sure without a doubt that I wouldn't be here serving the Lord today, and I am just as sure that I would have died in my sin and gone to hell. As I stated earlier, I needed that extra power to overcome the life that I had gotten myself into with all the bondages attached to it. I am convinced that most Christians are the same as me. They may not have had the lifestyle that I had, but they do have the end-times world to face. Today is not easy. Being a Christian today is not easy. Facing the bondages that this world offers day in and day out is not easy. Most Christians deal with it by putting their head in the sand like an ostrich. The bad thing about doing that is that their hind part is the one that is sticking up for an easy target.

The church world today is eaten up with doctrines that are filled with compromise. I am here to tell you that if you aren't standing up for something, then you are falling for anything. A lot of the church world today is falling for whatever is coming down the pike. They aren't studying the Word of God, spending time in prayer. Serving God isn't a priority for them in their daily lives. They act one way during the week, and another way on Sunday. I heard somebody say that in our town, it is the so-called Christians who keep the X-rated movie sellers and the liquor sellers in business. Do you remember the time when the churches would hold such a revival that the liquor joints were put out of business? I am afraid that those days are long gone. No wonder the power of God isn't found in most churches. God's anointing isn't found in most.

Sad to say, I am not just talking about churches in our town, but in the world. That is in itself a fulfillment of prophecy.

The Bible says that the end days before Jesus comes again will be just like the days of Noah. There is a lot of sinning going on, and it isn't just in the world, but in the church. There are a lot of doctrines that justify sin. If you think that God winks at sin, then please get your Bible out and read II Peter chapter 2. It closes with verses 20-22, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." You can tell that this scripture isn't talking about the world outside the church. It is talking about people who have known God, but turned away from righteousness.

I am reminded of the man who died. When the people who found him went into his house, it was filled with pictures of Jesus, religious things, several Bibles. The man drank himself to death and died with a fifth of liquor in his hand. What a way to face reality with God. It's time that we get right and get real, church. The Lord is coming soon. Look at what is happening in the Middle East. Every day I can see scripture being fulfilled. It is time to get right and get real. Jesus is coming back for a church without spot or blemish. Where do I get this idea from? Ephesians 5, 26-27 tells us, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." That's God's Word.

No we can't be perfect, but we had better be in the Lord's washing machine, and on the ironing board.

What is it that washes us clean and keeps us spotless? It is the blood of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Ghost. We need to let God do His work in the church today. We have paid the price for our sin. We are watching another generation, our children, pay the price for *our* sin. I work at a Christian school. I have such a terrible time making sure that people come to school fully clothed. It is the style today for young people to wear a matching bra with their top, so that it shows and it is color coordinated. How sad. What is sadder is their church going parents who come in. They are as bad or worse. Then they are so surprised when their teenagers come home and tell them that they are pregnant. And they have been going to church regularly. They were dressing that way because they wanted that kind of attention. That is the kind of attention that they got, and they have had to pay for that kind of attention with a price that wasn't worth it. I have never seen an unwed, young mother who was ready to be a mother. Parents, wake up and get right and get real. Either do that, or watch your children pay a price for your sin of compromise.

Church isn't a ritual. Too often people go to church because they want to feel good about what they are doing the other 6 days of the week, or 7 if you count Sunday evening. A lot of churches do like this. They have their little thing that they do in church. They are always out by 12:00 because if the preacher isn't done by then, the congregation complains so. Remember the days when the Holy Ghost fell and service went on until that evening. Everybody was so busy feasting on the manna from heaven that no body noticed it was lunch time. Remember the days when the altar was filled with people being saved. (When was the last time that someone was saved in your church?) Remember when miracle after miracle happened. Remember when people were delivered.

They were set free from drugs and alcohol. Remember when you were on fire in your relationship with the Lord. Remember when you had your first love. Nothing was more important to you than spending time with the Lord in the power of His Spirit. Remember when the church gathered around the altar grieving and weeping for the souls of those they loved. Remember when spontaneous revival would break out and carry on for weeks. Why are those things just memories? We have gotten so far from God that His Spirit no longer falls in our midst.

Is there hope for us? II Chronicles 7:13-14 tells us, "If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people. If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." God made the promise to Solomon that if Israel forgot God, and He sent pestilences against them to punish them and turn them back to Him, if they would seek His face and turn from their wicked ways, He would hear them and heal their land. That is a powerful verse for today. If ever we need our land to be healed, it is today. We need our church to be healed. We need the power of God back in our midst. Like the words of the song said that I put earlier in the chapter, it isn't the memory of yesterday's church that will get us through this battle that we face in this last day world, but it is today's touch that we need.

I can remember some years back the Lord gave me a dream. Now I am not overly caught up in dreams. Some people really go over-board on that. Most of the time the Lord just speaks to me. When He wants to make an impression on me, and say a lot in a small conversation, He shows me things. I get a glimpse of something that He wants me to see in picture form. He knows that I am simple and sometimes it is best to show me a picture. Every now and then He gives me a dream, but not often.

In this dream we were in a church holding a service. We were singing. Now usually when our group sings, there is something going on in the church. People feel something because of the anointing. We are a lively bunch. But in this particular church, even though the anointing was there, the people's expressions never changed, they never responded, they never showed any type of emotion at all. Then I began to look closer at the people. They were dead. They were physically dead. I remember the fear that I had when I looked at those people. I ran out of that place. Since then I have watched that dream come true over and over and over again. Church after church has died. They are spiritually dead. They no longer let the Holy Ghost quicken them. They are so far removed from the Lord that they no longer hear His voice and obey Him, not only in the church, but in their personal lives. They have forgotten what it means to walk in a personal relationship with God, letting His Spirit touch them. Outside their doors the buzzards are flying, circling, waiting to pick them off one by one. Their numbers are dropping and they don't even realize that the devil is destroying them. We are supposed to be the light of the world. We are supposed to be the salt of the earth. Luke 14:34 tells us, "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Jesus, Himself, said these words. The dung hill was where they dumped human waste, and other such stuff outside the walls of the city. If we can't season the world, then we are fit for the dung hill.

I have put here a section from a book titled *Water That Doesn't Run*. It can be found on this website at www.freechristianonlinebooks.com. It describes how the church is supposed to be. It describes how we as Christians are supposed to be like. When we become this way, we know that we have changed, because we are reaching out to help others to change because God has changed us.

I remember hearing a true story about a lighthouse on the coast. The lighthouse guarded the coastline. It began to lose its focus. It became a party spot, the place to be. Before long the light wasn't kept on. No one considered it a priority to keep it going. They were all too busy having good time. They lost the reason for their existence. Ships began to run into that rocky coast. Soon another lighthouse was set up to make up for the one that had failed to keep to its post. It wasn't long before the same thing happened to that new lighthouse. The world crept in to it as well and it lost its focus. Another lighthouse was built. Soon there was a whole string of lighthouses all up and down that coastline. They are still there today.

Church, you are a lighthouse. You are to be a light not only to a lost and dying world, but also to the brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. We are to warn the world, and the body of Christ, of the dangers of the rocky coast of sin. We are to warn them to stay away from the world, yet often we become so engulfed by it that we no longer can warn them. Is your church a light to the world? Are you a light as a part of that body? Are you a refuge for those who long to find shelter from the world? Are you drink to the thirsty and rest and refreshment for the weary? What is the purpose of your existence? What is your purpose and focus as a church? What is your focus as a person, as a child of God? What do you concentrate on the most? Are you lifting up Jesus so that He is drawing all men to Him, or are you lifting up worldly activities and social gatherings so that you can draw a bigger crowd? If you are, the crowd you get will be there for all the wrong reasons, and they will generally do more harm than good in the long run. Is that cool, refreshing, living water from the throne of God flowing out from you to those that are around you?

Here is a section of scriptures that sums up this thought.

It is found in Matthew 25:34-46. Read this section of scripture. It is summed up in verse 40, "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Who are these brethren that the Lord is talking about here in this verse? Certainly it would be our neighbor who is in need. What about that young person across the street that is going through such a hard time? What about that young single mother? What about that widow with no family left? What about those lost and dying without the Lord, but who might one day serve Him, if you'll only give them a chance by reaching out to them? Let that water flow. It will not only change the lives of those around you, it will change you as well.

Peter and John were walking by the gates of the city one day. Read this story in Acts 3:1-10. There was a man there who had been lame from his birth. His only place in life was to sit and beg from those that passed by the gates of the city. Peter and John passed by him. They noticed the man. Or rather we should say that the Holy Ghost in them noticed this man and prepared a miracle for him. The man turned to them expecting to get gold or silver, some type of coin. What he received was a miracle. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none but such as I have give I thee." He had empty pockets, but he sure had a spirit that was full of the Spirit of God, and that was even better. The Holy Ghost in him reached out and touched the man and he was made whole. He went away praising God for His gift. What a witness. For us to be able to give, we have to be able to recognize what it is that we have to give. We have within us the Word of God. We have within us the power of the Holy Ghost. First we have to be filled to be able to pour anything out. We need to take in the Word of God so that we can pour it out. We need to be filled with the Spirit of God so we can pour it out.

The gifts of the Spirit do operate in the church. They are used to minister to God's people. You can read about how they operate in the entire chapter of I Corinthians 12 as we mentioned before. Verse 11 lets us know that these gifts operate through the Spirit of God by the will of God, not by how and when we pick and choose. They do not operate to lift up whoever is being used by the Lord, but to minister to the body of Christ. In other words, they don't operate to give us something to be proud about as something that we personally have accomplished, but they operate in love to minister to the body of Christ. When the gifts operate in you, never get a prideful attitude because God has chosen to use you, but be humble before Him. The gifts of the Spirit will flow together and fit together in the body of Christ. They will never cause confusion. They will always match the Word of God, because the Spirit of God will never operate in opposition to what the Word of God says. If confusion reigns in a service because the gifts of the Spirit are in operation, then this makes you to know that the author of the confusion is flesh, and not the Spirit of God. The devil is ruling the flesh, not the Spirit of God. If this happens what is done is not done by God. We also have to remember that the gifts of the Spirit are not given to the perfect to use. God will not give any gifts to those who consider themselves to be perfect. How do I know? I know because nobody is perfect. He gives gifts to those who seek to perfect themselves in Him. There is a big difference in the two.

How do we find our gift? How do we seek for it? I Corinthians 12:31 tells us, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." This the preamble to what is one of the most famous love passages of all times, I Corinthians chapter 13. If you want the gifts of the Spirit to operate in your life then you need to seek the love of God. When you have the love of God so that you hurt for the needs of those around you, then the gifts will operate in your life. God will work through you.

If you are seeking the gifts of the Spirit because you don't want to get left out, or because you want to be special, or because you feel it is something that you should do, then the gifts are very unlikely to operate in your life. They are given to minister, and you can't minister without the love of God. Seek the love of God for others, and perfect your love for Him, then you will find the gifts of God.

Pastors, if you don't have the gifts of the Spirit, you need to seek for them. How can you minister to your sheep in the flesh and be effective? Teachers, how can you teach effectively without the outpouring of the greatest Teacher of all, the Holy Ghost? Youth leader, how can you reach these young people who so desperately need the touch of God if you aren't filled with His Spirit? Lay person, how can you reach that lost family member, or that lost coworker without the right words to say, and that right touch that can only come through the Savior Who died for them? If the lame man would have reached out to you and all you had to give him would have been silver and gold, then would his life have been changed? Church, we need to get out of the flesh and let the Holy Ghost reign in our midst. As a body, we need to let Jesus minister to His people. We need to be filled up with His Spirit and let Him reach out through us. That will get the job done.

What other things can we give to those around us? We talk a lot in the church about giving our tithes, and if we want to be blessed financially, this is very important to do. The tenth that we give will keep the other 90% that is ours from literally being cursed. Malachi 3:10 says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Luke 6:38 says, "...give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto

your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” II Corinthians 9:6 says, “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly. And he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” If you want to receive a blessing, give. Give, even if you are giving out of your need. Many have been the times that I gave when I had nothing to give, and God supplied my need and more. We need to remember, though, that there are many other things that we can give besides our money. What other things can we tithe? What about our time? What about our talents? (By the way, if you shrink from using a talent that the Lord has given you, He may turn and give it to another. I have seen this happen.) When we speak about our talents, often we think only of musical talents and gifts to teach or preach. What about that talent of working with children, or working with the elderly? These are definitely gifts. What about that gift of the ministry of helps, just being a help to those who are carrying a load? We have been blessed through the years to have some people in the congregation who had a gift of cleaning. No kidding. This is a wonderful gift. Every church has to be cleaned. We have had some people that when they came through and cleaned, they not only cleaned away the dirt until the place sparkled, but they also swept the devil out with the dirt. Things would shine physically and spiritually. They loved doing this and when they did, instead of doing it begrudgingly, they did it with joy and with prayer. As they cleaned they would bind the devil and pray for those in the ministry. The devil and the dirt would both leave. There is the gift of joy, the gift of bringing a rejoicing. There have been people who when they were in our midst, they brought joy with them. The worst jobs got lighter when they were around.

There are many talents and gifts. In I Corinthians 12:24 we see that the more comely or attractive, or more noticed parts of the body may not always be the most important.

They may not seem like they are the back bone of what is going on. Our toes are tiny and seem unimportant. On the other hand, talk to someone who has lost their toes as to how important they are. Never compare what you do, or your gifts with others in the congregation. God doesn't give them to you to compare them with others and feel either unimportant or important. He gives them to us to use for His glory. Use them and give the results to Him. Use your talent or gift for the glory of God and watch it grow.

When God's power operates in your life, when it operates in your church, then you and the church will both make a difference in the lives of those around you. You will shine like a light. Let God's Spirit work in your life. Get filled up with His Spirit. Let Him use you. Then watch your world change. Let God wash you, sanctify you, know you are justified, and let His Spirit work in your life.

Chapter 7.

The Power of Prayer and the Word of God

Here is another way that the Spirit of God brings victory to your life. How can you keep that victory that we talked about in the last chapter that enables you to make a difference in the lives of those around you? How can you keep that change that the Lord works in you? Take time just a minute to think about your daily spiritual diet. Everything that you take in to your spirit affects you in some way, for the good, or for the bad. Think about this week. How many hours did you spend watching TV? Was the stuff that you watched good for your spiritual health or bad? How about music, how many hours this week have you spent listening to music? Was the music that you listened to good for your spiritual health? How about what you read? How about what you did? Do you spend time on the internet? Was that good for your spiritual health? Make a chart. On one side list the things that were good for your spiritual health with the time spent this week doing both. On the other side list the things that you did that were good for your spiritual health with the time spent doing each of those. Things that you would put down for good spiritual health would be prayer, reading the Bible, fellowshiping with Christians who lift up each other in the Lord, good old Gospel music.

If the things that were bad for your spiritual health were junk food that you took into your physical body, and the things that were good for your spiritual health were the good stuff that keep your body strong and healthy, then how healthy would this weeks diet have been if it were a physical diet? How healthy would this past week, past month, past year have been? You can go from that to figure out how strong you really are spiritually. You can go from that to see how easy it will be for the devil to come in and destroy you, or you can see how hard it will be. Your spiritual diet is more important than you realize.

We spend so much time concentrating on our physical health. If we fall apart spiritually, our physical health will fall apart, no matter how hard we try to keep it healthy. If your spiritual health is bad, your mental health will be bad. Everything will fall apart.

That brings us to this chapter's topic, *Prayer and the Word of God*. We've talked about both throughout this book, but they are important enough to deserve a whole chapter. Let's talk first about the Word of God. The Bible talks about itself as being spiritual food. Jesus said in Luke 4:4, "...It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." When He said this He was talking to the devil while He was in the wilderness. During the first temptation the devil told him to turn stones into bread so that he could eat. He had been fasting for 40 days and nights. Jesus used the word of God to stop the devil's temptation. He knew that the Word of God was more important than daily bread. (If we had that frame of mind, a lot of us would be a lot thinner.) When you look at that scripture you will notice that it says *every* word of God. When someone is totally in love, they hang onto every word of their true love. If they miss a word, they make sure that they find out what was said. Their attention is totally on their heart's desire. That should be how we are with God. We should dote on His every Word, the words we read and the words that He speaks to our heart. He should be our heart's desire. He should be our main priority. When He is, the rest of our relationships will be so much better. We will carry His Spirit, and His victory into all our relationships. We will be strong in Him and strong in His Word. We will stand against temptation in His strength. We will be able to overcome our flesh in His Spirit because we have feasted on the good food, food that feeds our spirit. It is so important to spend time feasting on God's Word. I can hear some people saying now, "You need to get a life. Who has time?" Making God a priority makes time.

The attitude that we have will affect what we get out of anything we do. My mother used to give us things to do when we were kids. It may be something like sewing. I hated to sew because I always wanted to be outside playing. I didn't put much effort into it, and had a stinking attitude when I did it. Needless to say I am not a seamstress today. Can barely do repairs, let alone do something else. Forget making a dress. I spent hours at it, but didn't learn a thing because I begrudged every minute that I spent. Whether it is sewing, or reading the Word of God, or spending time in prayer, if you do it begrudging it you will get even less out of it than I did with my sewing. If you delight yourself in the Word of God, you will reap great benefits. Psalm 37:4 says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." Delighting yourself in the Lord is the key to your prayers being answered. If you delight yourself in fellowship with the Lord in prayer, you will reap great benefits. Rejoice in reading the Bible. Rejoice in prayer. Both are ways to fellowship with the Lord who desires to fellowship with you.

The Bible says that God created man in His image so that He could fellowship with him. John 17:20-26 is one of the most beautiful passages in the Bible. This section of scripture is Jesus talking to His Father just hours before He went into the garden of Gethsemane. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for

thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” Why did Jesus go to the cross? In this section of scripture, it tells us why. It also tells how much He desires our fellowship.

God desires your fellowship, your fellowship and your obedience. The Bible says that we are the bride of Christ. In those days, a bride took great pains with her appearance and her attitude when she went in to be with her groom. It took hours for her to prepare for an audience, to prepare for their time together. It was a great honor. Keep in mind that in Bible times, a man could have several wives. She had to be her best when she had an audience with her husband. She didn't take her time together with her husband for granted. It should be a great honor and a high priority for us to spend time with the Lord. How much do we love Him? That is shown by how much time we spend with Him. Wouldn't you say that's true?

Prayer is much more than asking for things. It is easy to get into that frame of mind, the “give me” frame of mind. We pray when things are going bad, or when we need something. We are weak spiritually and we wonder why. If you only spoke to your beloved when you wanted something, what kind of relationship would you have with them? How deep would be your relationship? The Bible says that God delights in our praise. Praise Him. Spend time telling Him how you thank Him for what He has done, and for who He is. The Bible says that He inhabits our praises. He delights in our praise. If you look up the word “praise” in a concordance, you see that most of the time the word praise is used is in the book of Psalms. David spent a lot of his time praising the Lord. God referred to him as being, a man after mine own heart.

True prayer involves yielding our will to God's will. How is that so? Prayer is conversation between you and someone that you hold dearer than your own life. If you are married, then you know when someone speaks to you, or you speak to someone who loves you, you yield to that voice. Many a husband and wife has had a change in their lives because they yielded to the voice of their "other half". If we never yielded to their voice, what a mess our lives would have become. It isn't all about being heard, but it is also about hearing one another. True prayer is the same way. Should we listen less to God than we do our husband or wife.

Listening is an act of yielding. When we are full of ourselves, trying to prove ourselves, we don't listen. So often our prayers are all about us. We are telling God what we want Him to do. We don't bother listening to Him about the situation. If we do we find out quick what to do to fix it. We think that God has to do everything. We are like spoiled children expecting our Daddy to fix it all. We never learn how to take care of it. Obedience is a big part of our relationship with God. That takes yielding our will too. All too often Christians don't shut up enough to listen to find out what they need to do about the situation that they are praying about. God's voice is a still small voice. Elijah found that out. He had been running from a Jezebel who was killing all the prophets. When he couldn't run any more, he ran into a cave. There God finally got his attention. In I Kings 19:11-12 we read, "And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. Sometimes we don't hear the voice of God because we are busy doing our own thing. We may be like Elijah, when he was running away from the situation.

Or we may be just too busy to listen. We aren't yielded enough to God's Spirit to hear that still small voice.

God doesn't yell at us. He speaks softly in our heart. I am convinced that a lot of messes that we get into happen because we neglect to hear the voice of God. What if when we were kids (or even now when we are grown) we asked our parents for help? They told us what to do so that we could fix the situation. Then we whined for their help without bothering to do what they told us. How did that make them feel? They weren't too tolerable of that. But isn't that how we do God. A relationship is made of listening. A victorious life comes from yielding to God and listening to His voice. When we yield to God fully we can also pray in the Spirit, pray in the Holy Ghost.

Prayer in the Holy Ghost is a powerful prayer that can only come about by yielding to the Holy Ghost of God in you. We talked about praying in the Holy Ghost in the chapter that talked about the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Praying in the Holy Ghost can only be done when you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. When we pray in the natural, we pray with our own fleshly thoughts and voice. When we pray in the Holy Ghost, we yield our fleshly thoughts and voice, and let the Holy Ghost pray through us. That is the most powerful prayer that we can pray.

How many times have you wanted so to pray for someone, but you had no idea what to pray? You may have had a heart-wrenching burden for this person but you had no idea what to say in your prayers. God knows exactly how to pray. He knows exactly what to say. When the Holy Ghost prays through you it is a perfect prayer. It is a powerful prayer because the Holy Ghost is saying the words. The devil and his angels hear that prayer and take note. They back up from the situation because the Holy Ghost is praying. When you pray through in the Holy Ghost, when you pray until you get a release in your spirit that the situation is taken care of, you will see results.

It may not be at that minute, but God will move.

Another key to unlock prayer is faith. The Bible tells us that without faith no man can please God. If we don't have faith then our prayer isn't heard. Faith is like the wings that carry our prayer to God. Without faith we can't please God. Faith unlocks prayer. This is an acronym that helps us to define faith. **FAITH** means **Forsaking All I Trust Him**. When we stop putting our trust in ourselves, in the people around us, in the circumstances, and we start trusting God, we have faith. When we keep our eyes on the situation and not on God, we lose our faith. When we keep our eyes on ourselves, and our weakness, we lose our faith. Our faith should never be in ourselves. We can't do it. So what. Does that really matter? We don't deserve it. So what. Does that really matter? If we yield and let God deal with our heart, then we deserve it. Who says? He says. Faith means that we act like who we are. In I John 3:1-2 we read, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

An important thing to remember is that the results of our faith is not always instantaneous. Some of the greatest prayers that I have had answered were those that I had to wait on. I have prayed for things for years. When God answered them, it was in His time, His way, and I knew when it came it was a great miracle. I knew without a doubt that He had answered my prayer. Sometimes the answers to our prayers may be yes. Sometimes the answers to our prayers may be no. Sometimes the answers will be wait. Either way, God hears and answers.

Faith opens up miracles in our lives. Faith brings victory. One of the greatest miracles that we have is deliverance.

Deliverance and the change that brings is a great miracle. In the next chapter we are going to talk about how God can deliver us, change us, and set us free. Then those around us can look at us and say, “Such were some of you”. Sometimes God can set us free but we still carry the weight of what we were delivered from around our neck. The world calls it “having a monkey on our back”. We don’t have to stay bound. Faith sets us free for good. Faith enables to gain and keep victory. Read on.

Chapter 8. Victory

Here comes our verse again. Hey, by the end of this book you will have this memorized. “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” We have talked about how we can be washed, sanctified, justified. We have talked about how the Spirit of God can keep us and empower us to reach out so that others can have this same experience. We have talked about the importance of prayer and the Word of God in enabling us to grow in these things and enable us to help others to find these in their own lives. In this chapter we will talk about how we can find victory through these things, and keep it. That is our power to change, and to stay changed.

“Today is the first day of the rest of your life.” Whoever came up with that saying said a mouthful. How you live today will affect how you live your life. How you live today, everyday, will be what determines where you spend eternity. If you do not have victory today, then you will not have victory tomorrow. If you allow things to creep in to your lives that destroy your soul today, then they will be worse tomorrow. If you don’t put a priority on your spiritual self today, then you will be closer to hell tomorrow. We put off a lot of things. Sometimes I just get so tired that there are things at the end of the day that I just don’t get done. It may or may not make a difference whether I do them today, or whether I get them done at all. Some of those things aren’t as important as I may think they are today. But the things that are concerned with your spiritual health are things that you cannot put off until tomorrow. Taking care of your spiritual being cannot be put off. Taking care of your soul cannot not be put off. Obeying God, and doing the things He tells you to do can’t be put off until tomorrow. Today is the day.

Today you need to find victory.

When you are able to say with assurance, “I was that way”, when you are in the crowd labeled, “Such were some of you”, you need to stay in that crowd. The devil doesn’t like that crowd of people. He doesn’t like people who find the victory that is promised by the Word of God. He will do every thing that he can to steal that victory from you. One of the tricks that he uses is the chain of your past. Today is what matters with the Lord. When we take care of today, we take care of where we spend tomorrow. When we let the Lord take care of today, we take care of where our yesterday is. That is a mouthful. What am I saying? If we are walking in a victorious relationship with God, letting Him deliver us day to day from the things that bind us, letting His Spirit and His Word refresh and strengthen us, then what does our yesterday have to do with where we are today? The devil loves to use yesterday against a saint of God. He will remind you of every sin that you have committed for the last twenty years. He will remind you of every time that you have failed God. The Bible says that the devil is the accuser of the brethren both day and night. He will even accuse you in your sleep. Don’t turn around and see what he has there behind you. It is today that matters.

One of the things that the devil uses against many people is the fear of failure. We know that we failed yesterday, so even though it may have been years ago, we have that fear that we will do it again. We can’t let go of what is behind us. There is no place for having “what ifs” in serving God. We can’t say what if this happens to me again. That is where the devil gets in and says, this is who you are, this is what you did. From there he tells you, this is what you will do tomorrow. When you sin, when you fail God, let go of it. If you don’t, your enemy will be sure to use it against you. Romans 8:1 says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who walk not in the flesh,

but after the spirit.” That verse will enable to you to be able to say, “I was that way. I am in the crowd of *such were some of you*. Just because you were that way, it doesn’t mean that you are now. Let go of it. Let God have it. Don’t let the devil get it and use it against you. Don’t let the devil accuse you. Tell him to shut up because according to the Word of God and the blood of Jesus which covers your sin, yesterday is gone, and today is what matters. Tell him that you are serving God today. And because of that, you have a right to put your foot squarely on his head, and that right is promised by the Word of God. Tell him that in the name of Jesus you have a power over him. Tell him that because of the Word of God in you, you have a right to rebuke him. Tell him that because of the Spirit of God who lives in you, you have a right to rebuke him. Remind the devil of his future. He may be accusing you now, but because of that remind him of where he will be soon. Quote Revelations 12:10 to him, “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

After you quote the Word to the devil, then let the Holy Ghost in you rebuke him. God’s Spirit will rise up in you and in tongues rebuke him. (If you have the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.) Where is the devil then after all that goes on? Does that mean that he will leave you alone? No. He is like a pesky kid that bugs the fire out of you. Just like you have to do a kid, you have to be persistent. Eventually though that kid will leave you alone. At least for a while. But every time that he goes away will leave you a little more victorious than the last. Keep it up and he will be doing you a favor by bugging you. All he will succeed in doing is strengthening you in the Lord.

You can have victory over yesterday and who you were.

The only way that you can find victory over yesterday is if you move past that place. You have to move out of yesterday. If you stay stuck in your sin then you can't find victory today. If you stay stuck in a half way relationship with God, then you can't find victory today. If you justify your sin, and your old way, then you will never be delivered from them to find a new today. You have to move past those things. You have to let them go.

Come out from where you are. You don't have to stay there. You don't have to allow the devil to keep you there. Let God renew you. Another verse that helps me to remember that if I have submitted myself to the Lord I don't have to let my past, or my weakness bind me is Galatians 2:20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me". If you have allowed the Holy Ghost to convict you, if you have repented, and the blood of Jesus covers your sin, and if you are submitting to the Spirit of God in you, then you can say, "Nevertheless I live, but not I, but Christ in me". Jesus is in you. That is how we live in this live in victory. That is what you can remind the devil of when he reminds you of yesterday. Praise God for who He is and for what He is doing in you. Move on past what you were. Move past who you are. Let Jesus be all in all.

Chapter 9.

Joy

We have talked a lot throughout this book about faith and how important it is. Without it we cannot receive, or keep, anything from God. Faith has two parts. It means that we believe that God can do something. It also means that we believe that God will do it for us. Sometimes we allow the enemy, and our own flesh, to convince that we aren't worthy receiving anything from God. That isn't so, and we talked about how we are Beloved in God. We have talked about how we will have battles even though we are Beloved. We live in a not perfect world around not perfect people. We live in a world filled with strife and disease. That in itself presents battles. We are not perfect and we are inclined to disobey, which creates situations. The devil, our enemy, will also be sure that we have to go through things. We can go on and on about the trials and tribulations that can confront us. That is so easy to do. But that is not the topic of this chapter. Neither should it be the main topic of your conversation, or the main topic of your life. When we have trust in the Lord to carry us through the battles, when we know that "all things work for the good of those who loved the Lord", when we can look through the darkest cloud and see His Son shining, we can have joy through it all. Through the eyes of faith, we can smile in spite of it all. We can have joy no matter what we are going through. That joy will give us strength to be able to hold on to the victory that God has for us. That joy will give us the strength that will enable us to continue to say, "I was once that way."

Nehemiah 8:10 tell us, "... the joy of the Lord is your strength". There is a lot of wisdom in that verse. When we are down and out, not only are we weak spiritually, but we are also weak physically, mentally, and emotionally. Depression is so common these days. I believe that more often than not, depression is something the devil uses.

He uses depression to destroy people. Depression brings about physical problems, mental, emotional and more. When we concentrate on everything that is wrong with the world, everything that is wrong with our lives, everything that is wrong with our selves, we will get down. If we concentrate on Jesus, and everything that is right with Him, then we will be lifted up. If we walk in the flesh, we will be prone to think about all the bad. When we walk in the Spirit we will be prone to think of everything that is right. When we trust the Lord then we don't have to be filled with fear. When we have faith we don't have to go through the stress of worry. Stress and fear are killers. They will kill out your joy and your strength. Look through the cloud of doubt and worry, and let God's Son shine. Think of God's promises in His Word. Read His Word. Fill you mind and spirit with His Word. Listen to Gospel music and fill your mind with songs of praise. Praise the Lord. Spend time rejoicing in His goodness. Fellowship with Him. Pray through until you know that it will be all right. Sometimes we pray those halfway prayers. Pray until you know that you have touched the throne of heaven. Pray until you get peace in knowing that it is going to be OK. Then start praising Him. Start rejoicing.

The Bible speaks of joy as being one of the fruits of the Spirit. Now have you ever noticed that it says fruits OF the Spirit. That means it is one of the Spirit's characteristics. If you have the Spirit of God in you and you are yielding to His Spirit, then that will be one of the characteristics that you will demonstrate. You will have His joy. Now that will happen no matter what circumstances you are going through. You will have joy no matter what is going on around you. You will have joy in the middle of the battle. It won't matter what the economy is going through, it won't matter who is president. It won't matter what is going on in the country or world. It won't matter what the neighbors are doing.

It won't matter who is sick. It won't matter what is going on, you will still have joy. When you do, you will be a strong and victorious Christian.

I am reminded of this story. You may have heard it. A little boy saw a mule over in the field. He asked his mom if the mule was a Christian. Surprised she asked what made him think the mule was a Christian. He answered, "Well, he looks long faced like a lot of the people at church. I thought he might be a Christian, too." That is funny, but it is sad too. Sad to say, a lot of the world looks at the church and that is how they see it. A bunch of defeated, long faced people. We need to get our joy back. We need to get our strength back. We need to get our victory back.

If you have your joy, then you will be less likely to go backwards in your walk with God. If God has changed you to be new, if He has given you victory over an area of your life that was defeating you, then keep your joy. Your joy will be your strength that you need to overcome the trials of this world, and the trying of satan. I don't mean to just smile in spite of it all. The joy that I am talking about comes gut-deep from out of your soul. It is real. It isn't the joy that some Christians have because they put their head in the sand and refuse to be in reality about what is going on. This is joy that comes in spite of all that is going wrong.

Here is more scriptures about Joy. If you want to study the subject of joy, the first book to look in would be the book of Psalms. There are scores of verses there about joy. David had learned the secret of joy. He didn't have a lot of reasons during part of his life to rejoice. Things got pretty bad for him. Here is a chapter from one of my books, *The Enemies Camp*. It talks about how David went through a hard time in his life. Actually he lost everything he owned and those he loved. He didn't weep.

He didn't moan around. He didn't get all depressed. Instead of talking about how depressed he was, instead of going to his counselor, or psychiatrist, or instead of taking his depression medicine, instead of having an anxiety attack and falling apart, he encouraged himself in the Lord. This was definitely an enemy's camp for him. This was how he overcame it. *Many times when we talk about the enemies' camp, we recall the verse found in I Samuel 30:8, "And David enquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them? And He answered him, pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." We also think of this verse in I Samuel 30:19. The last part of the verse tells us, "David recovered all". We even sing these verses in a song. "I went to the enemies' camp, and I took back what was stolen from me. He's under my feet, under my feet. Satan is under my feet." We may not, however, realize the full story behind this scripture.*

We first learn of David in I Samuel 16:12-13 when Samuel was looking for the new king so that he could anoint him from God. "And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward..." We meet David as a young shepherd boy. The day that Samuel came to seek him out he was the one that was left out in the field with the sheep. It was as if his father presumed that he wasn't the one that Samuel was seeking. Indeed he was the youngest. But God had already seen him there in the fields. He had watched him take on by faith a lion and a bear single handedly. His heart had been touched by David's praises as he sat in the fields and sang to the Lord. Maybe this is what got God's attention. For whatever reason, David became a man after God's own heart, called and anointed by God. David not only found favor with God, but he found favor with the king.

It was no accident when Saul, who was king, called him to play on his harp to soothe the evil spirit that had come against him because of his disobedience. In I Samuel 17:23 though he was back in the fields with the sheep on the day that Goliath gave his challenge. His heart was pricked to stand up for the God that He loved and worshipped, and by faith he accepted the challenge. The giant fell. The Philistines as well as the Israelites knew that there was a God in Israel that day. It's something to remember here, later on in our story, that David's first battle fought was against a Philistine.

David soon became in position of being over the men of war in I Samuel 18:5. Soon the women of Israel were meeting King Saul with a song that didn't rate on his top 10 list. I Samuel 18:7 tells us the words of that song. "And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." Saul heard the song, and things went from good to worse for David. Saul's jealousy is still legendary today.

David won Saul's daughter Michal by slaying 200 Philistines. Then in our story, Saul's jealousy grew worse. So much worse that Saul tried to pin David to the wall with a javelin. This happened more than once. David decided it was time to leave. He left to save his life. Then Saul began to have one main goal in his life. That goal was to destroy David. I am not sure how many years this went on, but David ran for his life from place to place for years. Every time he would settle in a place here would come Saul. He gradually was worn down by his enemy. He became afraid of Saul.

We can overcome if we do not let fear overcome us. In Job 3:25 Job spoke some great wisdom. "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." What we fear will come against us. Fear is like a hole in the wall of our faith. I remember the story of a missionary who was in a hostile, fearful place. The enemy had camped against him.

The enemy had surrounded his home. The missionary and his people prayed that God would hold the enemy back. This went on for several days, and the enemy was held back. Even though there was no physical barrier to keep the enemy out, they didn't approach. However, after they became weary of the waiting and their faith wore thinner, the threat of the enemy wore them down and they became afraid. When this happened the enemy came in against them. When the missionary asked why they had waited, the enemy replied that before that night they couldn't get through the wall that was around them. But on that night there was a hole in the wall. There had been no physical wall, but the spiritual wall that God had erected from their faith held. It held until their fear caused a hole in the wall. Fear will cause a break to come in our spiritual walls. Another thing that fear will do is to cause us to act in ways that aren't sound. I have seen some of the most calm, wisest people, fly loose and make some of the dumbest decisions because of fear. God leads us with peace. The devil drives us with fear. Never let the devil drive you. Get God's peace before you make decisions. David let fear get to him. Let's look at the results.

I Samuel 27:1 tells us that David began to fear Saul. This was his decision based on that fear. "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to see me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand." It took several years for Saul to get to him, but the persistence of the enemy began to wear him down.

The devil will do just the same to us, if we aren't careful. Of all places, David chose to go to the land of the Philistines to hide. He chose to go to the enemies' camp to live. Seems to me that given David's history with the Philistines, that he would rather have faced the troops of Saul, than face a whole country full of Philistines. That doesn't sound reasonable to me. How does it to you?

To me, facing the Philistines would have taken more faith. Because of fear, David wasn't thinking with a clear mind. Another thing that amazes me about all this, is that the Philistines let David live there. He even gained favor with Achish the king who gave him a city to live in called Ziklag. He moved in with the enemy because of his fear, and compromised, settling right in with them. He moved to the enemies' camp and dwelled with them. If we aren't careful fear can drive us into compromise as well. We will move into the enemies' camp and eventually talk ourselves into believing that this is God's will for us. It is never God's will that we settle for less than the full riches and victory of the Lord. It wasn't God's will for David either. It was the enemies' plan. When we fall into the enemies' plan, we pay.

David was in a perilous position. When we are camping in the enemies' camp we have to explain and justify our presence to the enemy. If you are compromising to fit into a crowd you shouldn't be in, you will wind up compromising to fit in. You will have to become the baddest of the bad to keep your reputation low enough to fit in. David had to start looking bad to the Philistines to be able to live in their midst. I Samuel 27:8-9 tells us, "And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt. And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish." He went to the border of Israel and attacked cities who were traditionally enemies with Israel. He killed all the people there, so that there wouldn't be anyone left to tell about his attack. He took all the goods from the people that he had attacked to Achish, the king, and presented it to the king as though he had attacked Israel. He had settled in with the enemy, but he hadn't gone to the place where he came against God's people.

He had lost his integrity, but he hadn't lost his mind. Verse 12 tells us that Achish believed David. "And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant forever." That sounds like the devil doesn't it. He will boast that we are his servants forever. God, however, had better plans for this soon to be king.

It looked like David was faring pretty well in the enemies' camp. If you are compromising out of fear, and you fail to rise up and overtake your enemy, then your enemy will eventually overtake you. The devil can give you a false sense of security that it is OK to live there and settle in with the enemy, but eventually it will cost you. Things began to turn around to the worse for David. We get a hint of what is about to happen in I Samuel 28:1-2. There was to be a battle. This would be the war of all wars between the Philistines and Israel. King Achish gave David a place of honor, beside him leading the troops. David's game was up. He was either going to have to come against God's people, or he was going to have to face the Philistines who were already ready for battle. If you compromise with the devil, you will wind up coming against God's people, even if this was not in your plans. It may be through your disobedience or through your allowing a spirit of the enemy to attach itself to you and use you against God's people. I am a firm believer that God's people who have been born again with God's Spirit in them cannot be devil possessed. I also know that whatever spirit you yield yourself to in your life will be the one that will use you. Romans 6:16 tells us, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey; his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" If you have people in your church that live six days a week in a compromised state, then don't expect them to be used by God when they come to church. Watch them. They will be open to be used by the devil and not even know it. I need to stress again that they won't even know it.

Dealing with this kind of people is hard. Guard against letting satan use them. Work with them to bring them to the place that they begin to commit and submit to God's Spirit. If they refuse to, and if they continue to let satan use them, then put them out of your midst. This is scriptural. I see churches today that let this kind of people rule even in positions of leadership. The church itself may be so far removed from God that they don't see the damage that this person does. As a result, the devil controls the church. When this happens, there is strife and dissension, and ultimately the devil rules. These people are flesh centered and they will come against God's people. They will come against those that walk in the Spirit. David had allowed himself to be put into a position where it looked like he had to come against God's people to save his own self. His compromise had ended up with his being an enemy to God's own. However, God had a plan to rescue him. Praise God for His mercy.

The princes of the Philistines gathered together. They let it be known to the king that they wouldn't even go into battle with a Philistine killer. They reminded Achish of the song that they had heard sung about David killing his ten thousands. They even quoted it to the king, and to David, word for word. The devil will know who you are and your stand against him. What a tragedy to wind up in his camp and hear words of victories that you had left behind repeated back to you through the enemies' lips. Things were ready to get worse from there. David got out of that situation, but worse was on its way. That is just what happens right before God gets ready to move.

While David was in Jezreel, playing the fool to King Achish, the Amalekites invaded Ziklag, his home. Remember them. They were some of the tribes that David had attacked and killed men, women, and children so that King Achish wouldn't know who he had attacked. You can believe that they weren't happy with David. The enemy had attacked them while the men were gone.

When they returned home, this is what they found in I Samuel 30:1-4, “And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire, and had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had not more power to weep.” Verse 6 tells us, “And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons, and for his daughters...”

Verse 6 told us that he was greatly distressed. Have you ever been there? Have you ever shut your eyes so that you didn't have to deal with the devil? Because of the pain that he caused you, have you ever settled for a halfway experience? Have you settled for walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit, because the price that you had to pay for walking in the Spirit was too dear? Have you ever come home to find that the devil had stolen all you had? Have you found that he had stolen your finances, or your family, or your health? Maybe he has stolen your faith. Or he may have stolen that “first love” that you had for the Lord. Maybe you are going through this now. Sometimes these things have to happen so that we turn around and get the right priorities and perspectives in our lives. I believe that on that day in Ziklag, David got real with his situation for the first time in a long while.

The story of what came next is a light to all of us who might be walking in that same enemies' camp, that same dark tunnel. The Bible tells us in verse 6 that David “encouraged himself in the Lord”. It doesn't exactly say how he did it. This is important when you face an enemy. Don't give in to defeat. Don't look at the battle. Start praising the Lord. Start lifting up your voice to God.

Remember the times that He has delivered you and rejoice in Him. Keep you joy. Don't let the battle steal your joy. I am convinced that David didn't join in with all the weeping that was going on around him. He didn't have an emotional pity party. If he would have, this story would have a totally different ending that it does. I don't really know exactly what happened between the two of them, God and David, but I do know that when David turned around, God was there. The total direction of his life was changed that day. He then did something in verse 7 and 8 that he hadn't done in years. These verses tell us that David enquired of the Lord. If you look up how many times prior to Ziklag that David enquired of the Lord, and how many times after that, you'll find that it was many times. In every major decision he would enquire of the Lord what to do before he moved. If the Lord said not to go, he didn't. However, when we read about his coming to the Philistines, we find that there he didn't enquire. He didn't enquire from that time to this. Praise God, he was back on speaking terms with the Lord and the Lord was ready to change his life around. Verse 8 tells God's answer to David. "And David enquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." We read on to find that is exactly what David did.

I wonder if there were times in Ziklag that David felt like God had abandoned him. I wonder if he ever felt like Samuel's anointing him had been only a bad dream. Or maybe he held onto that as a vision to light the darkness of his days there in the enemies' camp. I don't think that it was a coincidence that three days after he returned to Ziklag in victory a messenger came to tell him that Saul was dead. Saul had been killed in battle. The same battle that David had nearly joined against Israel. The stage was now set for David to be king.

You may be going through your own enemies' camp where you have been living at your own Ziklag.

It may be cause you have shrunk back in obeying God and stepping out in faith to do something that He has for you to do. It may be that the devil has brought fear against you that has bound you. He may have driven you into Ziklag because he knows what you are about to do in God. Or it may be that you have let the devil rock you into compromise and while you slept there he has stolen your valuables. Either way, if you are in the enemies' camp and you are at a place where you have come to yourself, shake yourself and remember David. Encourage yourself in the Lord. Go back to the place where you left Him. When He tells you to pursue your enemies, go forth in His name. Overtake your enemy and recover all.

Just like David, we can overcome and recover all. We just have to keep our joy. We have to let our joy be our strength. Here are some more scriptures from the Psalms that talk about the power of joy. Psalms 5:11, "But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee." Psalms 16:11, "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psalms 30:5, "For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favor is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalms 32:11, "Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." The joy of the Lord is your strength. When you have looked at your enemies camp and you have faced it and overcome it, then you will be able to say that you are changed. You will be able to say that you are new. You have overcome the old Then you have to hold on to the victory that you have won. You have to hold on to your joy and the strength that gives you to be able to do that. And to do that you must continue to yield to God. We are talking about that in the next chapter coming up.

Chapter 10.

Yield

Most of my life I have been a hard-headed sort of person. I know what it is like to have trouble yielding. That has been a quality that God has used throughout my life, but it has also been a quality that the devil has used quite frequently. There has been little quit in me. God has used this. The devil has gotten in there because he has pushed me overboard using the very qualities that the Lord has used. I would start something that was good, the devil would push me headlong into it, and there I would be way past where I should be. I am reminded of a horse I used to ride when I was younger. His mother was a thoroughbred racehorse. His Dad was a pug horse that jumped the fence to be in with his mother. I helped break and train him. Now he was the fastest horse that I had ever seen. When we were kids, everybody in the neighborhood that had horses would all get together and ride, and a lot of times we would have little races. Even though this horse was the fastest by far, we very seldom won the race. Why? Because he never finished at the finish line. We would be way up on the hillside somewhere a mile away from the finish line by the time I got the bit out of his mouth. He would bite down on the bit and off he'd go. I would be his passenger. It was like riding a self-propelled jet. Wherever he wanted to go was where we went. He was fast, but useless as far as being productive. Forget winning the race riding him. We eventually sold him. I'm not sure that he ever really turned out to be useful. He had a lot of other bad habits, and never really let us break him completely. He was a pretty old horse, too. He had a lot of potential but that really didn't matter.

If it hadn't been for the grace of God, the power of His Holy Ghost and the fact that God knows how to humble and break his people, I myself would have been a lot like that old horse, full of potential but fairly useless.

That is why I understand this subject of yielding. Often we can't change because we won't yield. We won't let God have hold of the reins. We get the bit in our mouth and off we go, way left of the finish line. We wonder how things turn out the way they do in our lives. We don't let God break us. We don't give over our will and our way to Him. He can't shape and mold us. Eventually we get stuck in our rut, in our defeat, and we blame God because things turned out bad for us. If you want to change, let God break you. Let Him hold the reins of your life.

I am reminded of someone in the Bible who was a lot like this old horse. His story is found in Daniel. The part that I am referring to starts in chapter 4. Now this king was very self-reliant. He was a bad old dude. He controlled the known world at his time. Talk about a control freak. God gave him a dream (remember the statue dream), and he was going to kill every one that couldn't tell him what it meant. Thank God for Daniel. One thing about Neb, he did respect God. He listened to Daniel when he spoke for God. He recognized God in Daniel. Another story that you might remember about King Neb was when he threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the furnace. After that experience when he saw the fourth man in the fire, Neb made a proclamation that any one that of any nation or any language would speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they would be cut into pieces and their house would be made a dunghill because there is no other God that can deliver this way.

Not long after that Neb had a dream that really scared him. It shook him up. I am sure that he wasn't in the habit of getting shook up. Poor old Neb. Even though he knew about God he hadn't gotten a relationship with him. He hadn't even figured out that he needed to go to Daniel first, instead of last. He went to the usual crowd of magicians and astrologers and soothsayers, and of course, like usual, they couldn't help him out with this problem.

Then he listened last to what Daniel had to say. It wasn't good what he had to say. Daniel told him that he was going to become like a beast in the field. Daniel told him in verse 22, "It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth." Verse 25 says, "That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field...till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." A year later Neb made the statement about "...this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty". Within the hour Neb was driven from men. He lost his mind to the place that he was out in the field eating grass with the oxen.

I hear a lot of talk these days about how God would never do something like that to someone. I hear some people say that if He would, then they wouldn't want to serve Him. I am here to tell you that God can do whatever He please to do, and the thing that doesn't please Him is spoiling people, and coddling spoiled brats. He doesn't have to answer to me, or you, or anybody else. Why should He? He is God. My mother cared enough about me not to give in to me. If she would have, I would have had little hope to become a useful person. She started the process of breaking my will when I was little, thank God. I know someone who was very willfull. This person had parents who constantly gave in to them, coddled them, spoiled them. This person is grown now. I have heard them literally weep because they could not do the things they needed to do because their parents never made them learn. I have heard them weep because they didn't know how to act, or be the person that they should be because their parents gave into them and never corrected them. They were a disaster for years until they learned the things their parents didn't teach them. Why should God, or why would God, give into our every whim, and coddle us?

What if He would have given in to Neb? Can you hear it now? “OK Neb, now don’t cry. It is OK. You can have the kingdom. After all, it really doesn’t matter what happens. It is fine if you want to be God, you can. It’s just for a little while. It doesn’t matter what happens because you destroy it, or mess up the whole deal. After all, it’s just a little kingdom. You go ahead and be God.” Thank God, no matter if most of the people who serve Him thinks that He should be that way, God isn’t that way. He doesn’t put up with our junk. He is God, and He will be God, and we need to line up with that, or ship out. If we can’t handle someone being in control instead of us, we can’t walk with God. If we can’t yield to Him, then we can’t walk with Him. Neb found that out.

Now I have had a few times in my life when I felt like Neb. If you are serving God for real, and you are honest and yielding to God, you have to admit that you have had times when God got the bit in your mouth and took hold of the reins. Thank God. How do you think that Neb felt about the situation? After all, we don’t know how long he wandered around grazing in the field, but it could have been for years. What did he have to say about the situation? Did he pout about it? Did he get mad at God because things didn’t go his way? After all remember the sort of fellow he was. I guess the most powerful word in that last sentence I wrote is the little word *was*. Remember. We have talked a lot about that miraculous word. Let’s read what Neb had to say about his experience. Daniel 4:34-37, “The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting

dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”

If Nebuchadnezzar can praise God for what He did for Him, why do we go around mad at God if He acts like God? Why do we pout if He judges men for their sin? Why do we pout when He requires us to live according to His Word? Why do we get bent out of shape when He requires us to yield our way to His will? After all who are we compared to who He is? He created us for His glory. Yet we worship the created more than the creator. We act like little Gods. When we do that we are nothing but big fools. We don't call the shots in this life, or more importantly, we won't call the shots in the next life. We can yield to God or we will be worthless in this life, and in the next. As worthless as King Nebuchadnezzar. King Neb knew that God had worked a miracle in his life. Nobody could touch him. Nobody could get through to him. God did. And he praised Him for it. When all the extra things were added to him, the king didn't boast. He knew who was the Lord. He knew who God was, and he knew it wasn't him.

Jeremiah 18:2 talks about the potters house. “The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.” God was talking to Jeremiah about Israel. We too need to go to the potter’s house. We need to yield to God and let Him make us to be a vessel that is good to the potter, one that he can use. A lot of Christians today are so full of misery. They have little victory in their lives. They are so bound with depression, anxiety, all kinds of nervous disorders, their lives and the lives of their families are wrecks. They are falling apart. They are plagued with all kinds of health problems, because they are such spiritual wrecks. They think that they are doing all there is to do, and being all there is to be, and they try so hard at it. The problem is, they are not yielding. They are not letting God be God. They will not let Him have control of their lives. The sad thing is, they are not doing so great at the job themselves. They need to let go and let God. They need to let the Master Potter work His Work.

I think by now you have the idea about what this all has to do with changing. If you want to be able to declare, “I once was bound, I once had a battle with this or that, but God changed and delivered me”, then you have to yield and let Him change you. You have to yield to His Spirit. You have to yield to His Word. If you don’t, then God can’t work His fullest in your life.

There are stoplights in our lives that we run into all the time as Christians. There is a go light, and when we see that light we need to run. That means running to certain things. That also means running away from certain other things. There is the red light. When we see that, we need to stop, stop doing certain things, or having certain attitudes in our hearts. We also need to have a stop light for the devil. Sometimes we need to just say, stop, that is all.

That is the end, that is it. I am not going any further with this. I am not allowing you to control this area of my life. The most powerful color on the stoplight though, and the most tricky one, is yellow. It says yield. How many of you have had accidents because you pushed the yellow light, and because you did, you actually ran a red light? Don't push the yellow light in your life. Yield to God.

In Closing

In closing, I pray that the Lord uses this book to draw those people to Him who are halfway convinced that there is no hope for them. I pray that He uses it to draw those people to Him in faith that are afraid that they can't do any better, so they settle for halfway. I pray that the Lord uses this book to encourage people who may be faltering, on the edge of giving up. I pray that the Lord use this book to encourage those who may be settling for a half-way state of compromise because they feel like that is all they can do.

Write this scripture in your heart. I Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Let God do a complete work in your life. Let Him wash, sanctify, and justify you. Let Him make you to be a vessel fit for His use. Let Him fill you with His Holy Ghost. Let Him use you to make a difference in the lives of those you love so that they too can rise up out of their bondages and say "I used to be that way." Together you can declare-such **were** some of you.

