

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

by

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(AgapeAliveMinistries.org)**

What Jesus Gave Us

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Gayle and Mike Mooney

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Agape Alive Ministries is dedicated to helping Christians enter into the blessings and peace that manifest through their intimate Agape Love fellowship with Father God, Jesus and Holy Ghost.

Introduction

Hello, I'm Mike. My wife, Gayle, and I wrote this book to share our heavenly Father's glorious plan for all of us. Whether you know nothing about Jesus or have spent many years fellowshiping with Him, it is our prayer that this book will help you see how to totally partake of, and fully enjoy, everything that Jesus gave us.

The Bible tells the story of mankind and our interaction with our Creator. The Old Testament tells of God's plan for us and points to Jesus's coming to earth to fulfill it. The four gospels announce Jesus' arrival, ministry, death, burial and resurrection, which lead us out of the Old Testament way of life into the New Testament way of life.

The First Century Christians didn't have the New Testament to live by. They were the New Testament. It is their experience of Christ living in them and guiding their thoughts and actions that is written about in Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. Their intimate love walk with God is *Pure Christianity*. Through it, they lived the miraculous, abundant New Testament life of Christ that God now offers to us.

When Gayle and I began to understand and practice the concepts we write about in this book, our lives changed. All things became possible. You too can walk in God's New Testament life of love, peace, power, protection and prosperity and positively affect the lives of those around you.

We use scriptures and personal examples as we share God's wonderful plan. We also cite additional scriptures for you to look at. I did most of the writing. Gayle did the editing, adding stories and insights of her own.

To get the most out of the book, we encourage you to examine each topic with Jesus. Let Him show you the reality and practical application of what we write about. If you talk to Jesus about His New Testament writings, and then apply what you learn to your life, you will become a love-walking, God talking, miracle manifesting daughter or son of God. Be blessed as you comprehend and receive what Jesus gave us.

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Part 1

Just Like Jesus

Jesus personifies who and what God is. We need to be just like Jesus. This is God's plan for us. (Genesis 1:26; Romans 8:29).

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Chapter 1

ANSWERING THE BIG QUESTIONS

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Let's begin with the Big Questions. The ones we all can't help thinking about and often worry over. The ones that end up driving our life. Questions like: What is life really all about? What is our purpose in life? How do we succeed at life? Where do we wind-up when we physically expire and leave our body?

Of all the questions, the last one is the most important one. One day, no matter how much we deny, fight against or try to transcend this reality, our natural life will expire and our self will pass out of our physical body. But where will it go? This is our biggest question. What happens when we physically expire? We can either squarely face it and constructively deal with it now, or we can run from it in the hope it will go away and leave us alone. But it never goes away.

My wife, Gayle, always sort of knew the answer to this question was to be found in Jesus. I, on the other hand, spent many frustrating years searching for the answer among the various false gods and goddesses of natural life. Since I came to Jesus, and Gayle increased her fellowship with Jesus, we have without a doubt answered all our questions. We now know why we are here, what life is really all about, what our purpose is, how we succeed at fulfilling our purpose and where we go once we exit our bodies.

Our personal experience of pressing into Jesus proves the truth of Matthew 6:33 which says, "***Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.***" Romans 14:17 says, "***the Kingdom of God is ... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.***" As soon as we began to seek the Kingdom of God and let it

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operate in our lives, we began to experience God's peace and joy, as the Love, Spirit and Word of God filled our lives and answered all our big questions. Everyone will have their own story of how they came to know Jesus. Here are our stories. Perhaps you'll be able to identify yourself in parts of them.

MIKE'S STORY

Looking back, I can see that my bumpy road to God began when I was twelve with a daydream I had about the street outside my window. A short block over from where I lived was Jerusalem Avenue. The Jerusalem Avenue bus ferried New York City commuters to and fro from the Long Island Rail Road train station in Hempstead east through my town, Uniondale, out into the growing suburbs of post World War II Long Island. I could see and hear its traffic from my second floor bedroom window. My Jewish buddy, Hershel, told me that in Hebrew the word Jerusalem meant to flow with peace. I began to think of Jerusalem Avenue as a peaceful flowing river of traffic that led to somewhere wonderful, somewhere I wanted to go.

At night I would lay awake in my bed and listen to the Jerusalem Avenue buses float by my house and think about the place of peace and beauty they were sailing to. Where was it? What was it? I imagined it could be a wonder filled woods where all the animals were friendly and my every need was met or perhaps a beautiful beach with sparkly blue water and dolphins dancing in the waves. It wouldn't be until the summer before my senior year in high school that I got to go to the end of Jerusalem Avenue.

That summer I took Driver Education. One morning, as I pulled onto Jerusalem Avenue, my teacher, Mr. Jerry, who also worked a late night job and could hardly keep his eyes open, told me to drive the car for an hour and then bring it back to the high school. At that point, he promptly fell asleep. Far in front of me I spotted a Jerusalem Avenue bus. My heart melted

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as my head filled up with the glorious vision of woods and friendly animals, a white sandy beach and dolphins dancing in the waves.

Instead of turning onto one of our regular routes I followed the bus and caught up to it as it drove out of Uniondale into the neighboring town of East Meadow. I checked to make sure Mr. Jerry was asleep. He was. I passed the bus and stared far into the distance looking for another bus to guide me to the goodness and glory of the end of the line.

My heart sang in gleeful anticipation of finally finding the beautiful, peace filled heaven on earth I had long dreamed of. As Mr. Jerry snored, I kept my eye out for cops and pressed the big blue Ford faster and ever faster on in quest of the end of the line.

After a few miles I spotted another Jerusalem Avenue bus way out in front of me. I wove in and out of cars and trucks changing lanes and surging ahead until I passed it and sped on.

Jerusalem Avenue narrowed from four to two lanes. Increased traffic slowed me down. No bus in sight. A truck with a flat tire ground traffic to a halt. I pulled around it. With the road clear ahead of me, I sped on. A few minutes later I spotted a bus. It was turning right off of Jerusalem Avenue. Turning? How could a Jerusalem Avenue bus turn off of Jerusalem Avenue? What was I to do, follow the bus or follow Jerusalem Avenue? Then I remembered, it was Jerusalem Avenue – The River Of Peace – not the buses themselves that would lead me to the place of wonder and beauty I wanted to go. I passed the road where the bus had turned and pressed on.

Jerusalem Avenue turned into neighborhoods. No more stores or businesses, only kids, cars and yards. Then it just stopped. Jerusalem Avenue suddenly turned right and became another street. No wooded wonderland, no dolphins dancing in the waves, just houses with a lot of hot, smelly, fly covered garbage cans standing at their curbs awaiting the arrival of the garbage truck. My nostrils complained. My heart sunk. My teeth clenched and my anger rose, as my childhood dream of

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living in heaven on earth was destroyed by the garbage and stink of reality.

Even though I was only seventeen, I'd already been in enough hassles with people and scrapes with the law to know that garbage was a big part of the reality of our lives. The stress and strain of people hassling and hustling one another to get what they want regardless the cost stunk! I was no longer a child, yet my heart continued to long for the surety, security and peace I was certain was out there. However, the more I sought it, the more elusive it became.

I tried "flower power" but underneath its pretty petals was nothing more than people manipulating people for booze, dope, sex, money and political influence.

I took the straight route. I got married, worked full time, and graduated college with a teaching degree. But I was so caught up in booze-fueled self-will run riot living I couldn't hold onto a job. Nor could I hold onto my wife and daughter.

I joined the military during Vietnam. Boot Camp sobered my body but not my mind. I still longed for some better way than the war of life. Vietnam ended. My wife and daughter returned and we all ran off to graduate school with the G.I. Bill.

Two years later, with a masters from one university and doing graduate work at another university, I still wasn't sure I was on the right route for my life. The judge agreed with me and said my next DWI would result in prison time. As I continued to seek peace and counsel through the spirits of the bottle, my wife sought the counsel of her parents.

While I was spending a few days away from home searching for myself, her dad drove 1,000 plus miles and loaded up his daughter, granddaughter, and everything we owned into a moving van. I returned home to an empty apartment and a note that proclaimed, "We've had enough! I'm filing for divorce!" I decided to be my own judge and jury and pronounced a death sentence upon myself. I determined that killing myself was the only way I was going to quit making a

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mess of other people's lives and hopefully obtain peace of mind.

You see, though I had been raised in a Christian home, I had never established a personal relationship with Jesus. Church was something I went to because my Dad forced me to go. I went to church until I graduated high school and then went to the bars instead. I never read the Bible nor knew much about evil, Satan and hell outside of what I saw in cartoons. However, I had a mother and father who knew different. They knew to have faith in God and daily prayed for me. For many years they prayed I'd give up trying to do things my way and begin to do things God's way. Their prayers were answered at 3:00 a.m., January 6, 1977.

I was fully bound and determined to do what I thought was right and depart this forlorn farce of life. As I wallowed in self-pity and seriously sought a way to kill myself, there suddenly appeared in front of me a creature with the body of a man and the head of a monster. He stood in the midst of a black mist. His yellow eyes pierced my heart with more fear than I had ever felt. My nerves exploded. I began to violently shake as the truth of who this was flooded my mind. It was Satan. This was the monster that made my life a wreck. He owned me and would make things even worse for me if I killed myself and wound up with him for eternity. I cried out in fear. When I did, Satan vanished.

So, killing myself was out, but the prospect of prison still loomed large in front of me. "Unless I could stop drinking," spoke a quiet voice within my head.

"Stop? How could I stop drinking? It's the only thing that can give me some semblance of peace," I said.

"I can give you peace," the voice replied. "Call Alcoholics Anonymous."

In the past I'd gone to a few AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings under pressure from my wife or judges. The meetings weren't much better than going to church. I thought they were full of a lot of do-gooders trying to get me to do good. But that

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night I was desperate. I had seen Satan and realized the seriousness of my situation. I had been given a reprieve from hell. The question now was what would I do with it? I knew I didn't want to keep living in the hell of myself. Alcoholics Anonymous provided me with the hope that maybe, just maybe, if I did what AA taught me to do, I could stop drinking and avoid prison.

The next evening, I attended an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. This time not because I was forced to but because I wanted to. At the meeting I sat across the table from a man who'd been in AA for over 20 years. As he talked about how messed up his life had been, I felt he was telling my story. Then he said how much better his life had gotten since he'd turned his will and life over to God. He said his sponsor had been one of the early members of Alcoholics Anonymous who had worked the program with him not only through the guidance of the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous, but also with the Bible.

The still, small, peace filled voice, which had stirred the hope in my heart the night before, now urged me to ask the man to become my sponsor. A sponsor in AA is a mix between a friend, a coach and a pastor. My new sponsor immediately introduced me to the core biblical truth he had learned from his sponsor. A truth so powerful, he said, that when he began to faithfully employ it, he was able to obtain and maintain not only physical sobriety and stability but mental, emotional and Spiritual sobriety and stability as well.

This truth is seen in the eleventh step of Alcoholics Anonymous, which reads, "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Over the years I have come to realize that 2 Corinthians 10:5 is the biblical source for Step 11.

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2 Corinthians 10:5

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

As I maintain conscious contact with Father God, Jesus and Holy Ghost, They tell me which thoughts to cast out and which thoughts to keep. By keeping God's thoughts and eliminating all other thoughts, I transform my mind to think and act like Jesus.

AA's Bible based Steps led me straight into God's plan for man. First I became God's child through making Jesus the Lord of my life. Then I entered into a one on one personal, intimate, thought by thought, Agape Love fellowship with Father God, Jesus and Holy Ghost. They taught me to live in and work through the Spirit and faith of Jesus and only think, speak and do the Word of God. This gradually grew me beyond a child of God, who merely sits on the sidelines and watches God do things. I progressively became more and more conformed into Jesus' Son of God image and started miraculously ministering God's Good News at home, work, church and in my community (Galatians 4:6, 2:20; Romans 8:29).

I am now led by God's Spirit rather than my soul. Satan and the selfish, self-centered, self-willed ways of my manhood seduce me less and less. I seldom wallow in the garbage of natural manly life. I fellowship with God and I share with others how to remove the garbage in their lives by placing it in the secure receptacles of repentance, prayer, praise, worship, and God's Word.

I have traded my manly garbage for God's glory and now live in heavenly places in Christ Jesus on earth. No longer do I moan and groan with doubt, debate, anger, confusion, poverty, pain and the frustration of failure. Now I praise Lord Jesus for His gifts of Spiritual security, mental stability, emotional peace, physical health, financial solvency, personal

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fulfillment, and productive ministry. I have been blessed with a new family – a Godly wife of over 40 years and our four beloved children. I finally have a good relationship with my first wife and eldest daughter. I belong to a local home church with a great pastor, and have many beloved brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the earth.

I'm no special person. I'm simply a man who got desperate enough to become willing to go to any lengths to do what it takes to trade my garbage for God's glory. Though you may not have experienced what I have, all of us strive and struggle to discover who we are and how we can fulfill ourselves. We all want to succeed at and live the best life we can. Through Jesus, we can successfully do so.

GAYLE'S STORY

Gayle's story is much like her cool, calm, cerebral self. There were no big deals on the outside of her life to drive her to Jesus. It was all an inside job. Reared in a religious Christian home, she was acquainted with ceremonies and traditions but not Jesus. Not in the intimate way that Father God has in mind.

Gayle met me in graduate school while I was still a ripped roaring mess. As I sought sanctuary in AA and learned to turn my life over to God, Gayle, like everyone else, began to see a new and different me. I'll let her pick up her story.

"I certainly never had to go through the circuitous path that Mike went through. I thought my life was pretty good. I was a relatively happy person. I was perhaps overly shy but really didn't mind it. Looking back, I can see that I was living on the periphery but I just didn't know it. I had always loved God, but I knew Him as some huge compassionate figure in the sky who looked after me and who I prayed to when I had a need. I had been taught as a child that God loved me so much that He sent Jesus to die for my sins, but I'd never been taught I could actually have a relationship with Jesus. When I met Mike, I was blithely sailing down my life path not knowing something was missing, that there was something more. I had seen Mike

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when he was still actively drinking – while he was that “ripped roaring mess” he just talked about. Then I watched him slowly change. He didn’t get upset as easily, didn’t get annoyed or angry as much.

One time we were just sitting there and he suddenly, forcibly said, ‘No, go away!’ I was startled but then he smiled and said, ‘Just talking to a thought.’ Talking to a thought. I had never heard of such a thing. I began to sense that he knew something I didn’t. I remember my mom would talk about the power of positive thinking but I hadn’t realized that negative thinking could have just as much power. In the town we were in most of the AA meetings were open. That meant anyone could attend. Mike asked me to come with him to a meeting. My first response was: ‘Why? I am not an alcoholic. I hardly ever drink.’ And then I thought: if AA helped Mike change so much then maybe there was something there. What I found amazed me.

The people at the meeting talked about insecurities, condemnation, trying to please people but always falling short. It was almost like looking in a mirror and seeing things deep inside me for the first time. I heard everyone’s stories, I heard how the twelve steps of AA changed them. About half the people there did not have a problem with alcohol; they had a problem with their thinking. Alcoholic or not, the solution was always the same. Admit you are powerless and turn your life over to a higher power. As I applied the principles of AA – which I discovered were straight from the Bible – my fellowship with Jesus grew and my relationship with Michael deepened. I did not know what I had been missing or how much my life needed *tweaking* until I learned to talk to Jesus about all manner of my life. If I was happy, if I was sad, if I was hurting, if I was curious – it didn’t matter. Jesus truly is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

I learned to express myself and be open and comfortable around people. I had never before considered that I felt inferior or not worthy until I began to see myself as Jesus sees me: a

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mighty daughter of God, a warrior who can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. This became my reality. I have seen how much He truly loves us and how much He wants us to prosper in all ways. I have found happiness, contentment and a peace I never had before. I know all things will work out for good; I know I can get through anything and that ultimately no harm will befall me if I just focus on Him. My *good life* that I thought I had has become *amazing and miraculous*. I am thrilled to be able to share Jesus with others.”

SO WHAT’S YOUR STORY?

You too can trade your way for God’s way and enjoy life in abundance. Throughout the rest of this book you will learn about God’s plan to Spirit-birth you and grow you up into Jesus’ image. You will come to know how good God is and that He loves you and only wants to bless you. You will begin to understand and believe that God can destroy all the sin of your past and all the evil in your present and will progressively raise you from faith to faith and glory to glory into the image of His dear Son, Jesus Christ.

You can be transformed from thinking and acting through the loser mentality of Satan-infected man to thinking and acting through the winner reality of Jesus-inspired man. The mind of Jesus Christ will become your mind. You will learn how, through Jesus, to destroy the evil that attacks you and create the good you need (John 15:16). As we said in the beginning of this chapter, if you seek first the Kingdom of God, the Bible promises all your natural and supernatural needs will be met (Matthew 6:33).

If our stories have struck a cord with you and you’d like God to personally answer all your questions then hop on Jesus’ New Testament bus. It will never veer off the road of God’s abundant life of love, peace and prosperity. Let’s begin to see *What Jesus Gave Us* by exploring God’s Agape Love Plan for you.

Chapter 2

GOD'S AGAPE LOVE PLAN

If you are like most of us, you spend your time trying to enjoy your life, trying to make it better, trying to make it mean something. What if I told you that you don't have to struggle; you don't have to worry, debate, or wonder what to do because God has already worked out your life. He knows the answer to all your questions. Think about that. God was thinking about you and the ways He would bless you before you were even born! He already had a plan for you! (Jeremiah 1:5, 29:11). "What is this great plan?", you ask. In order to understand it, we must understand who God is.

God is Agape Love (1 John 4:8, 16). Agape Love is the Holy pure perfect Spirit of God which contains all the motivation, information and power of God. God is Good, meaning beneficial (Matthew 19:17). Agape Love motivates God to give His *GOOD* to others without requiring a return on His giving. It is the kind of unconditional love a parent provides a child. Agape Love compels God to feel, think, speak and act as *THE FATHER*, whose greatest desire is to make/create His children in His *GOOD* Agape Love image and likeness so they can enjoy His company and He can enjoy theirs. Those of us who have children comprehend how God will go to any length to protect, provide for and love on His children. It has been this way from the beginning.

Let's examine this concept starting with the story of creation and the first of God's children. It's a bit lengthy in explanation but will help you understand who you are and what God wants from you. It will also begin to explain how Satan and self get in the way of God's plan and how Jesus has been sent to destroy the works of the devil so God's children can get back to being one with God.

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CREATION

1 John 5:7

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

John 1:1-3

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Father gave His thoughts to His Word to speak them out. Once God's Word spoke Father's thoughts, His Holy Ghost Spirit brought them forth.

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The phrase "moved upon" in Genesis 1:2 means "to hover." God's Spirit hovered over the earth waiting for the Word of God to speak.

Genesis 1:3

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Father thought, His Word spoke forth what Father was thinking, "Let there be light," and His Holy Ghost Spirit created what His Word spoke, "and there was light." Invisible God said – and BANG! – the visible universe came forth. We see this happen over and over again in the next few verses. Father thought, Word spoke, and Spirit created. From the be-

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ginning, God established this basic principle that still holds true today. *When His Word is spoken, what is spoken comes forth.*

GOD'S FIRST EARTH SON AND DAUGHTER

Once the earth was created, God could begin to implement His divine plan, as seen in the following verses.

Genesis 1:26-28

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: ... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over ... every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

God states in Genesis 1:26-28 that His plan is to create and populate the earth with human beings who He can love and share His life with. This is God's first, last and only plan for men.

God's book, The Bible, is about one thing and one thing only: God's plan to make men one with Himself and raise them into His mature sons and daughters who choose to love Him and rule over the earth through the leading of His Spirit and Word within them.

God began His plan by forming the first male human being out of the dust of the ground and then making the first female human being out of the male human being's rib (Genesis 2:20-23). "Woman" means "plural of man." In God's eyes His man and woman were equal, both capable of willfully loving God by freely choosing to totally obey God.

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GOD'S PLAN IN GENESIS

So God created the earth and set His first son and daughter on it. Then what happened?

God's first humans, Adam and Eve, lived in the love and glory of God's Garden of Eden. All their natural needs were provided for and there was no corruption, destruction or death; there was only life in abundance. The two began their lives listening to and obeying the Spirit and Word of God. By obeying God, they enjoyed living in the GOOD of God's Plan of Creation.

God's plan was a covenant. A covenant is a promise or agreement between two parties. It states what each person will do so that the covenant can be fulfilled. In the case of man and God, God promised to make man in God's image and likeness. He made man both male and female and blessed them with five specific blessings (Genesis 1:26-28, 5:2).

- 1) God blessed them to bear forth fruit. By following God's Word, they would prosper/succeed at everything they did.
- 2) God blessed them to multiply. By living and Teaching God's Word, they could duplicate themselves through sexual procreation and train their children to think and act through the Spirit and Word of God.
- 3) God blessed them to replenish the earth. By operating through His Word, they would fill the earth with His perfect order of Spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, financial, and familial health and wealth.
- 4) God blessed them to subdue the earth. By obeying and acting through His love, Spirit, Word and faith, they were able to take power

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over all the natural and supernatural thoughts and things that came upon the earth.

- 5) God blessed them to take dominion (rule over) the earth for Him, through His presence and voice in them.

This was God's part of the covenant. Adam's and Eve's part of the covenant was to fellowship with God and not eat of The Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil. Each day, they walked in the cool of the day with God, fellowshiping with Him. God taught them His Word and ways. They knew no other words or ways of thinking and acting until God's arch-enemy, Satan, entered into God's garden.

SATAN

In Hebrew the word *satan* means *the arch-enemy to good*. Since God is the only one who is GOOD (Mark 10:18), Satan is the arch-enemy/adversary of God and all of God's creation, including us. Satan is also called the old serpent, the great dragon, the devil and the accuser who day and night accuses us of sin (Revelation 12:9-10; Job 1:6-11).

God wants us to freely choose to love and willfully join with Him in thought, word and deed so He can raise us into His wonderful way of life (John 17:20-23). Satan opposes this. He wants us to reject God's thoughts, words and deeds and live a lousy life. Both God and Satan talk to us. We must choose who we listen to. Do we want to live through the good of God or the evil of Satan? Of course we would say, "I choose God. I won't listen to Satan." But consider this:

Satan in the form of the old serpent, came to talk to Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden. Serpent means, "One who hisses, an enchanter, he who whispers a magic spell." The serpent hissed, enchanted, whispered and wove a magic spell that tested Eve's and Adam's faith in and obedience to God's command to not eat the fruit of The Tree Of The Knowledge

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Of Good And Evil (Genesis 2:17). Would they choose to love, obey and become fully one with God by faithfully doing what God had commanded; or would they choose to listen to the enchanter who whispered in their ears to disobey God's Word?

Genesis 3:4-5

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then shall your eyes be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

When Satan's serpent appealed to the woman's manly soul "*to be as god*," she bit on his deadly words and poisoned herself with the spirit of self-promotion. Instead of going to God for guidance, she turned her back on God and for the first time obeyed her own mind rather than God's Spirit and Word. How many times have we done that – thought we knew what was best for us?

The man knew God had said that they should not eat of the Tree of The Knowledge of Good and Evil. Yet, instead of turning to God and asking Him what he should do about his wife, he listened to her Satan-infected words. He too wanted "*to be as god*" and willfully ate of the forbidden fruit that his wife gave him. In that one moment of giving into the flesh of his manly desires rather than asking God for guidance everything changed.

God had intended for Adam and his wife to subdue, take dominion over and rule everything upon the earth including all those things that crept and slithered upon the earth. Instead of ruling over Satan's serpent when it slithered into their lives, Adam and Eve gave into its temptation and sinned. This forfeited their authority over the earth to Satan.

Historically, this has been referred to as *the fall of man*, but guess what? Man might have fallen but Jesus can raise us up. We can sit in heavenly places and have even more than what Adam and Eve had. That is Good News. Though we have been

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naturally born in a *fallen spiritual state*, as some religious scholars call it, we don't have to stay that way.

Though Adam and Eve disobeyed Him and sinned, God didn't give up on His covenant with them and their descendants. Instead, He implemented its fail safe feature. In Genesis 3:14-15, God announced He would send a savior to redeem mankind from Satan and sin. That savior is Jesus Christ. But what is SIN and how does it effect our relationship with God?

SIN

Sin is what happens when a person puts the soul of Self IN charge, rather than the Spirit and Word of God in charge, of his/her life (1 John 3:8, 5:17; Romans 14:23). When Adam and Eve listened to Satan and rejected God by putting soul-led Self IN charge of their actions, the glory of God's Spirit that had covered and provided them with all their spiritual, mental, emotional and natural needs fell off them. They realized they were Spiritually and naturally naked (Genesis 3:10). Satan now ruled their minds and, as a result, the earth. The beauty, peace and provision of heaven upon earth was replaced with the ugliness, fear and lack of hell on earth.

Instead of seeking God, Adam and Eve fled from God. Have you ever fled from God or tried to hide from Him? That's what we do when we operate through our natural born fallen spiritual state. But we really can't flee or hide. Proverbs 139 says wherever we go, wherever we flee, God is still there watching over and waiting for us to reach out to Him for help. Look at Adam and Eve. Even after they had disobeyed and sinned, God came looking for them (Genesis 3:8).

Do you think God didn't know what they had done? Yet, God still sought them out. He gave Adam and Eve an opportunity to tell Him what they had done and ask for forgiveness. What did Adam and Eve do instead? Adam blamed his wife. Eve blamed the serpent. Neither of them took personal responsibility for their disobedience nor did they ask God to forgive them for giving into temptation. What would have

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

happened if they had asked God for forgiveness instead of making excuses for their behavior? We will never know what wonderful words God would have said to them. Adam and Eve didn't love and trust God enough to turn to Him when they sinned.

There is always a consequence for sin, yet God remains faithful to love us and guide us through it. In Adam's case, the consequence of his sin was Satan cursing the ground.

Genesis 3:17

And unto Adam God said, Because thou has hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

Adam's disobedience forfeited his rule over God's earth to Satan who cursed God's earth. No longer was there mild weather or an abundance of free growing food to eat. However, always the good father, God created a way for Adam and Eve and their descendants to continue as members of God's family.

SIN COVERING ATONEMENTS

After Adam and Eve first sinned, God killed animals and provided Adam and Eve with the animals' skins to cover their natural nakedness.

Genesis 3:21

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

The animal's blood also covered their spiritual nakedness by becoming an atonement. An atonement is a natural sacrifice that God accepts to Spiritually cover a person's sin. The animals' blood Spiritually covered Adam's and Eve's sin so God no longer saw it. This is a foreshadowing of Jesus' final sacri-

God's Agape Love Plan

ficial, atoning blood that permanently covers New Testament Covenant Christians. From Adam's and Eve's fall to the final atoning blood sacrifice of Jesus, God encouraged people to enter into love covenant fellowship with Him and when they sinned, He accepted an atoning sacrifice . . . until Jesus.

JESUS THE LAST SACRIFICE

Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary destroys Satan's power over people who make Jesus their Lord. This is Good News for us today. We do not have to offer sacrifices or try to make a deal with God when we sin. The Bible says if we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive our sin. We can freely and unequivocally live in the protection and provision of God's abundant life of love.

Satan does not want us to be raised into God's image of love, peace, power and prosperity. Beginning with Adam and Eve, Satan has done all he can to get us to think and act against God by constantly whispering in our ears and telling us we know what is best for ourselves. He tells us that we need to take charge over our life in order to get what we want. Satan deceives us into thinking that if we let God control our life, we will lose the power to do things the way we want, when we want and how we want.

Until we get to the point we realize we don't really know what it takes to fulfill our self, we will continue to frustrate our self by fruitlessly pursuing our own ways of thinking and acting. Until we get Spirit-born, heart-reformed and mind-transformed to feel, think, speak and act like Jesus, we will suffer the failure and frustration of a life without God. This is what Adam and Eve cursed us with and this is what Jesus freed us from with His sacrificial death and atoning resurrection.

Hebrews 9:26-28

. . . but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself and as it is appointed unto men once to die, but

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;

GOD'S PLAN IS STILL ALIVE FOR US

God still has His plan of success for us. He wants us to engage in it by getting Spirit-born and fellowshiping with Him, so we will learn how to operate through the thinking of heaven rather than the thinking of hell.

Do you believe this Good News? Do you truly comprehend that through Jesus' crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection, He has joined you with God and given you power over Satan, self, sin, sickness and lack in all areas of life? Can you begin to think, to hope, that maybe, just maybe, God really loves you? Can you believe God has created the entire universe in order to give you a great place to live in and enjoy. Are you beginning, just a little, to see what God's love plan for us is all about? Read on and discover who Jesus is and how you can live His glorious life and fulfill God's love plan for you to become one with God on earth, and then forever in heaven (Romans 8:28-29; John 17:20-23; Philippians 1:6, 2:12-13).

Chapter 3

JESUS CHRIST

So, who is Jesus? We've talked about Him, about how we have to learn to appropriate what He gave us. But who exactly is He? Where did He come from? What has He given us that is so vital to fulfilling God's plan for our life? If you are like most people, you have probably at least heard of Jesus. Perhaps, you are like my wife Gayle. She always knew the "basics": God loved us and sent His Son Jesus to die for us so that we can go to Heaven. Then there was this phrase which was popular a few years ago: WWJD – "*What would Jesus do?*" implying that there were lessons to learn and a way of living that would be beneficial and helpful. These are good, simple explanations of Jesus, but in reality, they barely scratch the surface.

Why did He come? What did He do? What was His role in God's grand plan for man? It is impossible in a chapter, an entire book, or even several books, to fully explain the wonders and mysteries of Jesus. We encourage you to continually read His biblical Word and talk to Him so you can get to know exactly who Jesus is and what He has done for you. For right now, let's explore some basic truths about Him.

In the last chapter we read how Adam and Eve forfeited the rule of their lives and the earth to Satan. As a result, we are all born on an earth that Satan rules. God knew that would happen. As soon as Adam and Eve allowed Satan to infect them with **Self IN** charge thinking God put forth a plan. In Genesis 3, God promised He would send a savior to restore to us the relationship with God which Adam and Eve forfeited to Satan. A savior who would take on all the sin of mankind so that people could finally join with God in the fullness of His Agape Love.

Jesus is that promised savior. He is the human container (Son) of God. Jesus became flesh so he could model the perfect Adam/human. Jesus came to replace our sin life with His God

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

life so we can be conformed into daughters and sons of God who will fulfill God's plan for man.

Jesus' life on the physical earth showed us how to be a people who honor, worship and totally obey the Father. In the simplest terms, He was led by the Holy Ghost Spirit of God rather than the Satan-infected soul of self-centered man. Jesus' death was the final atonement for mankind's sin. It brought us back into a right relationship with our heavenly Father. And finally, Jesus' burial and resurrection took back everything the devil stole from Adam and Eve and their descendants.

Now, let's break this down further, beginning with God sending His Holy Ghost Spirit to impregnate Mary.

Luke 1:30, 31, 35

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS...the Son of God.

God impregnated Mary with Jesus, who is the Word/Son of God made flesh. The same Word/Son of God who back in Genesis spoke the universe, the earth and mankind into existence

John 1:1-4, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men...and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Jesus Christ

God put Jesus into the womb of a woman and birthed Him in the flesh of a man to show us how important we are to God. Just think about it. The God of the universe came to live in a man to show man how to live with God.

Hebrews 1:3 called Jesus the express image of Father God, who upheld ***“all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”***

Jesus is righteous man. He abides in the goodness and glory of Father God and Holy Ghost. Jesus returned to man the Agape Love life of God that Adam and Eve forfeited to Satan.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he (Father God) hath made him (His Son, Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Romans 3:22

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.

Romans 1:17

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

THE LAST ADAM

Jesus is called the last Adam. He is the second and last type of man God would create. He is the perfect man. Unlike the first Adam, who turned his back upon God to serve his flesh, Jesus presented His flesh as a living sacrifice to the Spirit and Word of God. Jesus never sinned but rather brought all His thoughts to Father and did only that which God commanded Him to do (1 Corinthians 15:45-50; Romans 12:1-2; John 5:19). Jesus knew who Satan was and knew how Satan temp-

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

ted natural man. All of Satan's attempts to sway and influence Jesus were immediately recognized and destroyed by Jesus. The Bible says that though Jesus was tempted as we are tempted, in all ways Jesus overcame the wicked one. Jesus was able to do what Adam and Eve failed to do. Jesus through total obedience to the will of His Father was able to destroy the hold Satan had on the life of men.

1 John 3:8

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Jesus fully manifested God in the flesh by studying, believing and receiving the Word of God as His own and then stepping out in faith to speak and do what the Spirit and Word of God told Him. This reactivated the five provisions contained in God's parental blessing upon man as spoken in Genesis 1:28. What had been proclaimed over Adam and Eve was once again proclaimed over mankind through Jesus. Jesus lived by God's Word and was *fruitful* in all His endeavors. He *multiplied* His ministry through His disciples. He *replenished* Himself with the Spirit and Word of God. He *subdued* the temptations of His manly soul by bringing all His thoughts to God. He *took dominion* over His life through speaking God's Word in faith.

TOOK OUR PLACE

God's Word declares that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Remember, once Adam and Eve sinned, God decreed they would eventually die (Gen 3:19) But one does not have to physically expire to be dead. Sin spiritually kills the life and the light of God within us and makes us dead to God (Ephesians 2:1). Though Jesus never gave in to sin, He suffered all the consequences of sin for us. That is one of the

Jesus Christ

things Jesus came to do. And because he took all our sins upon himself, He had to die. We just said that the outcome of sin is death, remember?

Mark 15:34

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

On His cross, Jesus took on all the sins of mankind. At first, Jesus' crucifixion appears to be a defeat for God and a victory for Satan. The devil thought he won as Jesus, covered with our sins, went to hell in our place. But three days later, God satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice, sent the Holy Ghost down from heaven to enter into Jesus and raise Him up into the glorious victory of eternal life for us. On the cross, Jesus crucified our old man of sin and through His resurrection provided us with God Life.

Romans 6:6

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Hear what Paul just said. We do not have to pay the price for our sin. Jesus did that for us. This is called the act of substitution. Jesus' authority replaces Satan's authority over all men and women who get Spirit-born and receive the Spirit of God's Son, Jesus Christ, into them (Galatians 4:6). Do you realize how wonderful this is? Through Jesus, we are freed from the pain and shame of our past and provided with a present that is almost beyond belief. God does not accept you based on what you have or have not done. He accepts you based on what Jesus has done. He does not keep score and hold your sins against you. Since Jesus took your sin and gave you His righteousness, God looks on you as His righteous (in right standing with God no matter what) daughter or son (2 Corin-

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

thians 5:21). Do not let the devil lie to you and make you feel condemned, guilty or overwhelmed by your perceived sins.

Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Jesus' sacrificial atoning blood fulfilled and eliminated the Old Testament religious law that required men to continually offer physical sacrifices to God for their on-going, never ending sins.

THE FINAL SACRIFICE

Remember in the last chapter, we talked about blood covenants and how God used them to cover and atone for sin? Jesus' blood upon the cross was the final sacrifice of God's blood covering covenants for the sins of men.

Hebrews 10:9-10

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first (Old Testament Covenant), that he may establish the second (New Testament Covenant), by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hebrews 9:22 states that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. In other words, when blood is shed, sins are forgiven. It is Jesus' blood, not ours, that was shed for our sins.

Hebrews 9:24 & 26

For Christ is not entered in to the holy places made

Jesus Christ

with hands (the temple)...but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us...now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

These scriptures say that Jesus did not bring the sacrifice into the man-made temple, but before God Himself. Jesus came to plead our case. He willingly sacrificed himself to put away sin – once and for all in the end of the world. That end of the world was the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. The switch from the law of sin and death to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Jesus' last words before He gave up the ghost on the cross were, ***"It is finished"*** (John 19:30). What was finished? The Old Covenant with sin filled people requiring continual sacrifices for their sins. Sin offerings are no longer required. The price for your salvation and restoration has been paid in full. ***"So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many"*** (Hebrews 9:28) Once was all that was necessary. There is no double jeopardy. We cannot be judged twice for the same sin. Jesus took it all: past, present and future.

We have been redeemed from the control of Satan and sin. The dictionary defines ***redeemed*** as freed from captivity by payment of ransom. Jesus is your ransom. You are bought back from Satan and purchased by God with the blood of Jesus Christ. God is now your rightful owner. You are God's beloved blood-bought daughter/son. 1 Corinthians 6:20 says that we were...***"bought with a price – therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which is God's."***

God no longer sees us as women and men of sin but as His Spiritually perfect, sinless children. As far as God is concerned, only Christ in us is alive (Romans 6:1-23). To God, we are His righteous (right related), justified (just as if we'd never sinned), eternal (forever) sons and daughters with whom He can fellowship 24/7. In God's court in Heaven, you have been judged and forever forgiven.

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Isn't this great news?! Don't really understand how this can be? Don't be concerned. God's ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts higher than our thoughts. All we have to do is believe God's Word and receive its truth into our life.

FULL CIRCLE

Jesus' sacrificial blood and our Spirit-birth bring us full circle back to Adam's and Eve's original righteous relationship with God in the Garden of Eden. However, unlike Adam and Eve in the garden, we have an intimate knowledge of the evil generated by our soul-led, self-centered, Satan-infected manly ways. We now know that evil is evil. No matter how our self-absorbed soul (*me*), flesh-centered body (*myself*) and self-will run riot mind (*I*) may dress themselves up in robes of light, they are still evil. Satan has programmed them to steal the Word of God out of our mind, kill the hope of God in our heart, and destroy the life of God in us (John 10:10a). When we live through the thinking, emotions and appetites of our manly spirit, mind, soul and body we live without God in the chaos, confusion and weakness of hell on earth. But that is not what God wants, that is not what Jesus came to give us. He came to give us life in abundance (John 10:10b).

Just believe that Jesus took our place and shed His blood for our sin. Look at it like a *GET OUT OF JAIL* card. When the devil tries to capture you, and tell you what you really deserve, and what punishment will come upon you, just whip out that card and plead the blood. Satan won't be able to touch you – you have been exonerated! When Satan tries to remind you of your past, remind him of Jesus and his atoning blood.

Now that we know who Jesus is and what He did for us, all we have to do is accept it, believe it and then day by day get transformed in our thinking and conformed into Jesus's image.

LET JESUS IN

God introduced Himself to Moses as *I AM*: the great self-existent one without beginning or ending of days. When we

Jesus Christ

make Jesus Christ our Lord and get Spirit-born the great *I AM* becomes *OUR FATHER*. It begins the moment we ask Jesus to come into our heart, save us from Satan, sin and hell and become our Lord and Savior.

If you've never asked Jesus to come into your heart and be your Lord and Savior or you would like to reaffirm this reality in your life, please pray this aloud, "Jesus, I believe that God raised you from the dead. Right now, become my Lord. Forgive me my sin. Spirit-birth me and make Almighty God my loving Father. Thank you, Jesus, for saving me. Thank you, Jesus, that You, Your Father God and Holy Spirit now live in me, talk with me and guide my growth in God. I love you Jesus."

It's that simple. As soon as you prayed this, Holy Ghost wiped away all your sin, made you a man-bodied, God-Spirited New Creation and married you to Jesus (Galatians 2:20, 4:6, 6:14; Romans 7:4).

Although God has forgotten all your sins, be aware that Satan remembers every one of them and will try to beat you over the head with them. He wants you to doubt you are saved. You see, the devil doesn't doubt God's Word. God's Word says that when you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord then you will be saved (Romans 10:8-13). Not "*Might be saved;*" not "*Let's see how bad a sinner you've been then God will decide if you are worth saving.*" No, God's Word says – "**You will be saved!**" Satan knows that's true. His only way to keep you from knowing and acting like you are saved is to keep you ignorant of God's Word and full of condemnation and guilt for your sins.

The main thing about being Spirit-born is to believe it. Don't doubt it. Don't think you don't deserve it. Above all, don't think that Spirit-birth fulfills your life in Christ and you are all set for life. No! No! No! Spirit-birth simply opens the door and enters you into the supernatural life of Christ. You must daily work out (meaning develop) your salvation.

After accepting Christ into your life and becoming born again, this is the second part of God's love plan. We now have

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Jesus living on the inside. We can walk with Him and talk with Him. The Bible says several times that we now have the mind of Christ. Think about that. Because our body is now God's temple with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost living in us, we can think and act like Jesus (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19). It is called renewing our minds. It is called acting like Jesus.

Just as Jesus did on earth, we must dedicate ourselves to capturing and bringing all our thoughts to God, so Jesus can tell us which ones to keep and which ones to cast out (John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 10:5).

We will be talking about this throughout the book, but know this: the more you talk to God and the more you obey Him, the harder it is for Satan to suck you back into the sin, anger, loneliness and pain of your past. You now understand what Jesus did for you. You now know the power of his blood. As you continue to get mind transformed you will understand and be able to use everything that Jesus is, what he did for you and what he gave you.

Chapter 4

OUR NEW CREATION LIFE

We know that *all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose* (Romans 8:28). God's purpose is to conform us into His New Creation daughters and sons who thought by thought live with Him in the "NOW" of Salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Jesus lived in the NOW of the heavenly Kingdom of God within Him. (John 5:19). He did not worry about what was to come. Instead, He thought by thought communicated with God and did what God showed Him to do in the moment. As New Creations being conformed into Jesus' image, we are to likewise not concern ourselves with what God will do in the future. Rather, we are to capture and bring all our thoughts to God so He can guide us as to what to do right NOW. By 24/7 fellowship with God we successfully live in the NOW of Salva-

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tion and enjoy operating through the righteousness, peace and joy of God's Spiritual Kingdom within us.

Matthew 6:33

. . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;

2 Corinthians 10:5

. . . bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

BLESSED WITH THE MIND OF CHRIST

Ephesians 1:3-5, 13

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: . . . in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

Through Jesus we are blessed beyond measure and forever sealed in His Holy Spirit of Agape Love. We stand holy and without blame before our Father in His Spiritual Kingdom of heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 4:30, 2:6).

The New Testament reveals God's plan for man is being fulfilled through Jesus in us. The challenge we are faced with is to believe and act upon this truth. God sees us as His righteous, sinless son or daughter. We must see ourselves the same way. As you may have already noticed while reading the above scriptures and words, there is a thinking that comes against the truth of God's Word. Scriptures plainly state through Spirit-birth you become God's New Creation, His eternal son or daughter, His minister and ambassador, Jesus' bride and joint-heir to all God's blessings, yet there is a voice that tells you

Our New Creation Life

it's not so. That voice is your Satan-infected manly self. You are not alone in hearing it. Paul the apostle had the same challenge.

Romans 7:21-25

I find then a law (a way of thinking), 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.

Your flesh will never stop telling you God is lying to you until you tell it to shut-up and then replace its thinking and acting with the thinking and acting of Jesus. For not only must we be Spirit-born, we must be mind-transformed. We must put on the Word of God and totally renew our mind to feel, think, speak, act and minister through Kingdom of God thinking. We must allow the mind of Christ to guide us (1 Corinthians 2:16, Philippians 2:5).

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that God which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The day of Jesus Christ is when we start to let Jesus' thinking be our thinking. His thinking is antithetical to our old way of thinking. Our old thinking doesn't comprehend that Jesus has reconciled (reestablished) our relationship with Father God so that all things of our old life have been destroyed by God and all things of our life are now new and of God. It doesn't realize we are completely redeemed (totally bought back from

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

Satan and sin in all ways). Our old manly thinking cannot relate to the reality that we are God's children, citizens of heaven, living in His Spiritual Kingdom upon earth.

We have to put on the heart and mind of Christ to fully see, totally believe and completely enter into our New Creation life. Jesus' death, burial and resurrection translated us out of Satan's cursed world of darkness, sin and death into the blessings, light and life of the Kingdom of God's dear Son. By letting Jesus reform our heart and transform our mind with the Spirit and Word of God, we replace the Satan-infected evil of our old creation with the God-directed good of our New Creation (Matthew 19:16-22; John 14:9-15; Philippians 1:6). We no longer have to think through the self-led mind of man and live in the hell of our old creation life. Instead, we can think through the Spirit-led mind of Christ and live in the heaven of our New Creation life (Ephesians 2:6).

We will be talking more about the mind of Christ throughout this book. For now, let's look at how we put on the mind of Christ.

JESUS IS THE WORD

John 1:1-4, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The key to putting on the mind of Christ is to first believe that becoming conformed into Jesus' image is what our new life in Christ is all about (Romans 8:29). Thought by thought we act on the truth that through Christ in us all things are

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possible. When we do this, we are no longer the helpless victim of Satan and our sick and sorrowful manly soul. Through Christ in us, we have total power over our self-led thinking that continually bombards our mind with all sorts of negative thoughts and feelings. We have the divine power to pray in Jesus' name and bind and cast those evil, destructive thoughts out of us and loose the good creative thoughts of God into our life (Matthew 16:19; 18:18-20).

Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost do not merely want to save us from going to hell. They want to raise us in the peace and power of God's Word, love and faith. Just as Jesus had to take all His thoughts to Father, we must take all our thoughts to Jesus in order for Him to guide us and help us distinguish thoughts of self from thoughts of God. (John 5:19).

Since Jesus lives in us, He already sees and hears all our thoughts. By us focusing our inner spiritual eyes and ears upon Jesus, He can show or tell us whether to keep or cast out a thought. This progressively renews our mind to feel, think, speak, act and minister through the Word of God rather than the words of man (Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6).

The word we hear or the thought we think might sound good, might even make sense, but is it really God's word for us right then in that situation? The more we think with the mind of Christ the more we can distinguish who is whispering things to us. God lives and moves and has His being through His Word. He obeys no other Word but His own. Satan cannot successfully tempt God to disobey God's Word nor does God ever tempt men to disobey God's Word. (James 1:13) It is Satan who tempts us with errant thoughts and feelings.

BE DILIGENT

When we open our mouth and make Jesus our Lord, God's Holy Ghost enters into us and births us with the Agape Love Spirit of God. God becomes our father in the same way He is Jesus' father. With our inner and outer mouth we constantly speak to Father and Jesus about everything. We hear Them

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respond to us from within. We also hear Them when we read or listen to Their biblical Word. All of this stirs the measure of faith we received at Spirit-birth (Romans 10:17, 12:3).

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Through faith, we diligently (without stopping) seek (talk with) Father and Jesus. We come to experience the reward of letting God love us and learn to love God, self and others. This fulfills God's New Testament commandments of Agape Love, as well as Jesus' prayer for us to be made fully one with Him and Father in all our thoughts and ways (Philippians 1:6; John 13:34; Mark 12:30-31).

John 17:20-23

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 God is raising us, His family, to do His business upon the earth. Father's business is to first reconcile us to Himself through Jesus and then raise us to be His ministers of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). Reconciliation restores us back into the favor and friendship with God that Adam and Eve had before they listened to Satan and sinned.

Our New Creation Life

Satan constantly tries to interfere with our fellowship with God by tempting us to take our eyes off of Jesus and put them back on our self, so that we again take charge of our life. Even though we are born-again and Spiritually perfect, the **Self IN** charge nature of our old man of sin continually tries to take power over our New Creation Spirit. Now, though, when we are attacked by Satan and manly self, we can overpower them by casting their temptations out of us. This keeps us thought by thought united in love fellowship with God so that every moment of our life we can enjoy God's good (Matthew 16:19, 18:18-20).

GOD IS GOOD

Always keep in mind that God is good to us in all ways. He is never evil or causes bad things to happen to us. He is our parent, savior husband and best friend who 24/7 loves, forgives and favors us, so we can grow in the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of what it means to be a New Creation in Christ. All natural-minded men, and too many Christians, have a wrong perception of God. They think that God is out to get them, or at the very least, they view God as a creator of rules and regulations which they must strictly follow or suffer dire consequences. Many Christians erroneously believe that God puts stress, strain and sickness on us, or causes other bad things to happen to us, to teach us a lesson.

The only ones who attack us with bad things are Satan and our soul-led self. Don't forget, Satan still rules over the earth and he hates us since we are the sons and daughters of God. Being a Christian doesn't mean we are free from evil attacks, but through Jesus in us, we can easily overcome evil when it does attack. Keep in mind that manly self and Satan – not Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost – are the bad guys. If you think God attacks you with evil, then how can you believe that you can ask God to remove the evil you think He has caused you?

Get this in your heart. Pray it. Meditate upon it. **GOD IS GOOD – ALL THE TIME! HE LOVES US AND ONLY WANTS THE BEST FOR US!** Jesus said that He will never

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leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He will never reject us. We need to get this into our heart. Put away all your stinking thinking about how God's out to get you. It's Satan who's out to wreck your peace by incessantly whispering lies into your manly mind.

Genesis 3:1 says that the serpent is the most "subtle" of creatures. Subtle means crafty, cunning, elusive. Satan doesn't deceive us by shouting in our ears or telling us things that are so preposterous we can easily see the lie within them. Instead, he tries to counterfeit God's still small voice by whispering to our flesh or pride or feelings. He quietly urges us to do what we want, when we want, how we want. He justifies what we think or do through him. Others are always wrong and we are always right and righteous (Proverbs 21:2). With that kind of thinking, who needs God to guide us?

Who hasn't had thoughts such as, "*Go on and speed, there aren't any cops around and you're late.*"...Or..."*Call in sick. You stayed up late last night watching that movie. You'll be miserable all day and make everyone else's life miserable.*"

Or how about: it's morning and your spouse gets up and walks into the kitchen about half-conscious with a dazed look on their face and instead of smiling at you and giving you a kiss, they cross in front of you and go to the refrigerator. An angry voice within you whispers, "*What's that wacko mad at me for now?*" You bite on Satan's bait and do the worst thing in the world at that time and angrily say, "So, now what's the matter?" Satan then stirs your spouse, who is merely trying to wake up, to angrily respond, "Me? What's the matter with you?" And the battle is on. Two hours later, after you've once again regurgitated all the things you don't like about one another, you simply stop talking to each other for ... how long? In my and Gayle's case, it's until we both see we failed to bring our thoughts to Jesus. Then we join together in a 1 John 1:9 prayer and, in Jesus' name, ask Father to forgive us, apologize to one another and get back to feeling, thinking, speaking and acting like the New Creations we are.

Our New Creation Life

Any time a Christian fails to bring their thoughts to Jesus there's a chance that Christian is already being misled by Satan. It cannot be emphasized enough how subtle Satan can be. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 11:3 that the serpent tricked Eve with his subtlety and Paul cautions us to keep our mind from being corrupted from the simplicity in Christ. It really is that simple. Let Jesus guide you in what you say, what you do and what you think. Be aware that the devil can plant a word or a thought in your mind in an instant. Something subtle, something that will turn you ever so slightly down a different path from what God wanted you to go down. Then as you get further down that road and things aren't working out, you cry out to God asking "How did this happen?" "Why am I here?" "Where did I miss it?" You missed it when you heard that whisper that wasn't from God and acted on it.

Gayle experienced this just the other day. I'll let her tell the story.

"Satan often lays the ground work before he tries to really mess with you. Mike and I had been having some issues with the new dishwasher – specifically when to tell if the dishes were clean or dirty. It was sort of an ongoing thing. The other night he opened the dishwasher then closed it back up. I said, 'If you see the light on, the dishes are clean and they need to be unloaded.' I was very tired and as I walked down the hall to the bedroom, I heard him say, 'Aren't you going to help unload.' I didn't respond. The next morning, I came back from running an errand and went to get my half-finished cup of coffee I had left on the counter. It was gone. The thought came: *'Mike moved it.'* I answered: *'Wish he'd leave my stuff alone.'* See, I was already entering into a conversation without checking to see who I was talking to. Another thought came: *'He did it to get back at you for not helping put the dishes away.'* So I said, *'Well, Lord, what do You want me to do? Should I confront him or ignore it?'* That was already the wrong question to ask. Of course I didn't hear an answer (because I really hadn't been talking to the Lord.) So, I'm thinking about it, remembering all the skirmishes I've had with

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Mike about his trying to help, and getting more and more annoyed. So I tell my daughter, ‘Ugh, Dad threw my coffee away.’ My daughter replied, ‘Oh no, that was me. I took it – I just wanted a little bit of coffee today.’ My daughter rarely drinks coffee. I hadn’t considered another explanation to my missing coffee because I had listened to that first whisper: *‘Mike moved it.’* As a result of listening to that thought I had just spent the last 30 minutes listening to whispers and trying to decide how to deal with my husband. Satan probably thought he had me fooled and was gleefully waiting for Mike to show up so I could scold him for throwing away my coffee. What would have happened if, when I saw my coffee was gone, I had just said, *‘Lord, what happened to my coffee?’* Instead, I let the whispers come, draw on past experience, and make a case against my husband based on lies. Satan is a liar. God is not.”

Remember what Gayle just wrote: God is good and wants the best for you; Satan wants to destroy you, kill your joy and steal your destiny. Who are you listening to? This is a subject we will be touching on again and again in the course of this book.

WE CAN DESTROY THE WORKS OF SATAN

Jesus came to the earth as a man to show us how to destroy the works of Satan (1 John 3:8). Before He left the earth, He promised He would ask Father to send the Holy Ghost to comfort and guide us, as well as teach us all things and bring all things to remembrance (John 14:16-18, 26.) Thinking and acting like Jesus through the anointing (empowerment) of the Holy Ghost, we are able to be fruitful, multiply, replenish, subdue and take dominion over our life. We are able to bind (destroy) the evil of Satan and man and loose (release) the good of God into our New Creation life (Matthew 16:19).

If we don’t enter into the fullness of God’s New Testament Covenant protection and provision, it’s not God’s fault. He’s offering us His good life of abundance. If we remain ignorant

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of God's Word and ways, Satan and soul-led self will continue to wreck our life.

What does it take for you to finally admit that on your own you have no defense against evil's hell on earth? How much pain do you have to experience as you serve yourself rather than God? How long are you going to let soul-led self keep you from fully flowing through your New Creation and overcoming Satan's sin, sickness and lack?

The simple answer is that once you have enough of evil's pain, you will seek God's gain. It often takes quite a bit of pain to fully admit the self-centered choices you freely make are imprisoning you in the hell of self. However, when you finally see that free will is nothing more than an excuse for your Satan-infected self-will to run riot, it is God's hope that you will reach out to Jesus and begin to do whatever is necessary to enter into your New Creation life.

The road to heaven first runs through the hell of Satan-infected natural life. Let's face that reality. Let's trade in Satan's garbage for God's glory. Let's die to our self-centered nature and wrong religious teachings that keep us from personally fellowshiping with God and living in our New Creation Life.

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Chapter 5

ONE WITH GOD

There is nothing God needs, but there is something God wants. He wants His children to love and be one with Him. Why? Because God is a person and what do people want most? To love and be loved by other people. This is why God began Creation. He wanted daughters and sons He could fellowship with and raise in His image.

Romans 8:14

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (and daughters) of God.

1 Peter 1:14-16

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy; for I am holy.

Holy means to live through the right thinking and acting of God rather than the wrong thinking and acting of man. By 24/7 fellowshiping with God, Jesus' first followers were led by God's Spirit and became wholly one with Him in all their feelings, thoughts, words and actions.

1 John 1:3

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Agape Love fellowship with God reforms our heart, transforms our thinking and acting and wholly conforms our char-

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acter into Jesus' holy image. This completes God's plan for us to enter into heavenly places in Christ Jesus upon earth and receive all the blessings of our life in Christ, right now. The Bible clearly warns us that without charity (Agape Love fellowship with God) we cannot get to know God in the intimate, blessed, life-transforming way we need to know God. Without knowing God, we cannot be led by His Spirit and become wholly one with Him in all our feelings, thoughts, words and actions (1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Matthew 7:21-23, Luke 13:23-30).

WHOLLY ONE THROUGH AGAPE LOVE

Jesus said to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength and love others as Jesus loves us (Mark 12:30; John 13:34). This is Agape Love – love without hesitation, conditions or restrictions. When we are redeemed and become God's child, God provides us with His Spirit of Agape Love. Agape Love joins us in the oneness of divine fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost so that we get to know Their heart and trust Their Word. The more intimate we grow with God, the easier it gets for us to hear and be led by God's Spirit.

God teaches us to exclusively operate through the faith of the Son of God in us so that we will only believe, speak, do and receive what God wants us to believe, speak, do and receive (Romans 12:3; Galatians 5:6). The faith of the Son of God within us is activated when we intently listen to and clearly hear what God's Spirit is saying to us through His written and spoken Word (Romans 10:17). This happens several ways. When reading the Bible, we hear God's Word in our mind. The preaching, teaching and sharing of our pastors, other ministers and fellow Christians puts God's Word in our ears. Finally, God personally speaking to us stirs His Word in our heart. All this releases Jesus' faith within us to believe, speak and do God's Word (Isaiah 55:11).

Jesus fellowshiped with Father God and faithfully did what God's Spirit led Jesus to do.

One With God

John 5:19

Then answered Jesus and said unto them verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

This is why we are urged to do as Jesus did and capture all our thoughts and bring them to Christ within us.

2 Corinthians 10:5

... bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Our thought by thought fellowship with God grows us up in God. Without it, we can easily be misled to pursue the thinking of Satan and soul-led self. Pursuing the faithless destructive thinking of Satan and self is the way of death. Pursuing the faith filled creative thinking of God is the way of life in abundance. Jesus knew this. That's why Jesus captured all His thoughts, brought them to Father God and let Father and Holy Ghost direct Him as to what to do with them: cast them out or act upon them (John 5:19).

Look at the apostle, Paul. Before he came to Jesus, he was so expertly trained in the religion and politics of the Jews that he was well on his way to becoming the ruler of their nation. Once Jesus got hold of him, however, Paul regarded all his religious and political training and thinking as dung (Philippians 3:8). Paul trashed it all in order to be conformed into the image of Jesus. Instead of depending upon the rules and regulations of religion and politics, Paul became totally dependent upon his fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost. As Paul came to intimately know Jesus, his trust and faith in God's Word and ways increased. He felt so personally connected to God, he could refer to God as "His God." We can likewise consider all our old stinking thinking to be dung. When it

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tempts us, we pray and cast it out. This keeps us personally connected to and wholly one with God in all our feelings, thoughts, words and actions.

GROWING INTO THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST

Christianity can easily degenerate into a ritualistic religious relationship with the general concept of God. Without daily fellowshiping with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost you will have trouble trusting Them. Satan will be able to easily mislead you to think that God couldn't possibly forgive you, love you, protect you and provide for you.

Many Spirit-born Christians needlessly suffer from worrying whether or not they are truly saved. All we have to do to know we are saved is to look at our heart. Does it love God and seek to grow in God? Does it love others and want to help them get to know and grow in God? Does it feel bad when we sin? Does it urge us to quickly ask God to forgive us of our sin and teach us how not to sin like that again?

We need to understand that it is human nature to sin. Our Satan-infected human nature wants to put itself above all others, thinks only of itself and does everything it can to please itself. But remember, when we get Spirit-born, we become a New Agape Love Creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our Satan-infected, soul-led old man of sin “. . . is *crucified* (put to death) *with him* (Jesus on His cross) *that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin*” (Romans 6:6). God and Jesus Spiritually raise us from the death of our trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1-10). When we think, act and operate through the Spirit of Jesus Christ in us, we do not sin.

1 John 3:5-6

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

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When we are Spirit-born the “want to” of sin is taken from us. Our heart is turned to God. God’s desires become our desires. Our heart will let us know when we give into Satan’s temptations. Do you hear what I am saying? We are not mentally and emotionally perfect. We still occasionally sin. When we do, Satan will then whisper into our ear that since we sinned we couldn’t really be Spirit-born. Don’t believe his lie. Instead, recognize you are sinning and stop sinning. Then ask God to forgive you your sin (1 John 1:9). Accept His forgiveness. Cast Satan’s condemning words out of your mind and step back into Jesus’ peace.

The more you get to know Jesus the more your heart is reformed and your mind transformed to feel, think, speak, act and minister like Jesus. We know who we are, what we have and what we can do through the Spirit of Jesus Christ within us. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to enter into intimate Agape Love fellowship with Jesus. Talk to Him about everything including about what He has written in the Bible, especially the New Testament. It details how His first disciples lived, and how we, who now follow in their footsteps, are to live through Christ in us.

When you begin to read and receive the words of the New Testament as the new words of your life in Jesus Christ, then you will more and more comprehend who Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost are, how They think, how They act and how They minister. You will then begin to understand what Father God requires of you.

By filtering all your thoughts through Jesus Christ in you, you put on the mind of Christ and eliminate the instability caused by double mindedness. Only a Christian can be double-minded. Think about that. Only a person who has made Jesus their Lord and become Spirit-born will have access to both the God-led mind of Christ and the Satan-led mind of man. Only a Christian can choose to operate through either the soul of man or the Spirit of God. Only a Christian can think and act through Satan’s evil will or God’s good will.

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God's good will is contained in God's biblical Word. Jesus is the living biblical Word of God within us. By filtering all our thoughts through Jesus we eliminate the confusion and instability of wondering if something is God's will for us. We become sure of God's good, creative will and way, as well as see the evil, destructive will and way of Satan and soul-led self. Our ability to discriminate good from evil is derived from our fellowship with Jesus. Jesus said it this way in John 10:14, "***I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.***" Jesus' sheep hear and know His voice and another they will not follow. Through 24/7 fellowship with the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ in you, you become able to hear and follow God's leading for your life.

I am moderately intelligent, have three college degrees, have taught school from the junior high through the college level and have lived a lot of life on both sides of the track. I spent the first 30 years of my life exclusively thinking and acting through the egomaniacal misled mind of man. This not only failed to fulfill me, but consistently led me down dark unfruitful paths. Then I met Jesus and began putting on the heart and mind of Christ. Today, I wouldn't dare consciously try to think or do anything without first checking it out with God.

Do I capture and bring 100% of my feelings and thoughts to God for evaluation and recommendation? No, I don't. Not because I don't make a diligent effort to do so, but like all of us, sometimes I take my eyes off of God and am distracted and carried away by a feeling or thought. Or I get suckered by Satan or self through hunger, anger, loneliness, tiredness, loony thinking or laziness. As soon as I notice I've let down my guard and stepped out of the peace of heavenly places in Christ Jesus, I quickly ask Father to forgive me. I accept His forgiveness. I give the ungodly thoughts to Jesus and, in Jesus' name, bind up and cast the evil out of the situation and then step back into the Agape Love peace of my Spiritual home on earth in Christ (1 John 1:9; Matthew 16:19; Ephesians 2:6).

One With God

Though Jesus destroyed the works of the devil against us, Satan and his stinking Self IN charge thinking will remain upon the earth until Jesus casts them into the eternal lake of fire on *Judgement Day* (1 John 3:8, Revelation 20:10). Until then, Jesus provides us His Spirit, Power and the authority of His name to destroy the ongoing works of Satan and self against us, who are Spirit-born. The land of our thoughts is where the battles between the light and life of God and the darkness and death of Satan take place. All we have to do to enforce Jesus' victory in our life is to bring every thought to God. Let Him tell us where a thought is coming from. If from Satan or our soul-led self, then we cast it out into the trash. If from God, we keep it and use it to prosper our life.

JESUS SPEAKS TO US IN MANY WAYS

In various ways, Jesus constantly encourages us, kindly corrects us and calmly instructs us as to what He wants us to feel, think, speak and do. Since Jesus is the Word of God, He always speaks to us through the scriptures. Jesus also speaks to us through Spirit-led women and men. This is one of the many reasons it's very important for us to have a Spirit-led pastor and reliable Spirit-led friends who help us grow in the ways of God, especially in those times when we are so caught up in *me, myself and I* that we are spiritually deaf, dumb and blind.

If you hear a pushy, annoyed, angry, aggravated, condemning, conniving or critical voice, it is not from God. God doesn't push; He doesn't get aggravated; He doesn't condemn. That is Satan. The Bible calls Satan the accuser of the brethren who accuses us before God day and night. In other words, day and night, not only can you hear the friendly voice of God encourage and correct you but you can hear the fear filled voice of Satan discourage and misdirect you (Revelation 12:12).

One of the things about getting to hear Jesus better is that you will also hear the voice of evil much better. You will more and more be able to distinguish between the two. This is good.

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It enables you to quickly kick the evil out and keep the good in.

Don't be ashamed to check two or three times with Jesus to make sure you're hearing what He's telling you. He's in no hurry and is always patient and kind and comforting. He's much more interested in you getting to know His voice than having you jump up and go and do something in a flash. He never tempts you or tries to confuse you (James 1:13-14). Evil tends to push and shove us to go do something right now. Listen to the heart of the voice you are speaking to. You will usually be able to tell the difference between the good voice of God and the gross voice of evil. If you can't tell the difference then test the spirit by asking it to tell you if Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (1 John 4:1-3). Only the Spirit of God will say, "Yes."

It's okay to talk to your thoughts. That way you'll know if they're from God or from your Satan-infected self. One day, as Gayle was rushing to get ready for church, the thought popped into her head, "Check your e-mail." As soon as the thought came to her, she responded, "I don't have time for that now. Are you crazy?" Instantly she heard an almost maniacal voice respond, "Yes!" So she thought, "OK – I know where that came from! No need to check my email right now." Granted, that first thought could have been from God – maybe there was an important email she needed to see. If that was the case, though, she would have heard the kind, patient, friendly voice of God repeat: "Check your email." When your thoughts become pushy or frantic, then the thoughts aren't from God.

Suppose you forget to bring a thought to Jesus for evaluation, or maybe you think it's Jesus but then it turns out not to be the case? Don't get all worried, or feel condemned. Just stop and repent by praying 1 John 1:9. Then ask Jesus to show you what misled you. When He reveals that to you, ask Him to educate you on what to do to keep you from being misled, so that you won't sin like that in the future. This keeps you in constant conscious contact with Jesus and is a big part of how you progressively renew and transform your mind.

One With God

OUR PART

We are like actors who have to continually read, speak and act out our script (the scriptures of God) under the guidance of the author (Father God), director (Jesus) and stage manager (Holy Ghost) of the divine play of life. They have cast us in the part of a son or daughter of God, and as we, under Their tutelage, increasingly learn the script, we are more and more conformed into our role.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

If we let Him, Jesus is going to perform the good work of conforming us into His image. We should be confident of that. Even if we don't get everything right the first or even fiftieth time, Jesus never gives up on us. Eventually, we will feel, think, speak, act and minister like Jesus.

Colossians 3:1-4

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Colossians 1:26-27

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 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.

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Hebrews 11:6

God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

These scriptures tell you that when you diligently, without stopping seek Father and Jesus, God rewards you with the ever increasing manifestation of Himself to you and through you. People begin to notice you are a New Creation in Christ who does the work of God on the earth. The signs, wonders and miracles of the Holy Ghost flow into your life and out through your life to others.

JOINED WITH GOD

Since we are joined one with God, and God isn't a chatter-box, there are often periods of time we quietly snuggle up with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost in the pleasure of our oneness with Them. We are aware They are there but we aren't constantly talking with Them. This lets us do the daily things of life without separating from God's presence.

In the natural, the people we intimately associate with are the people we become like. The same principle applies in the Spirit. By hanging out with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost we begin to feel, think, speak and act like Jesus. Fellowshiping with God creates the friendship that manifests the faith that moves the mountains of man out of our life (Mark 11:23-24).

In John 15:5 Jesus says, ***"I am the vine, you are the branches: he that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."***

If you are Spirit-born, but have yet to enter into a relaxed, friendly, personal fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost, start by talking to Jesus. Jesus is your Spiritual husband and best friend, who only wants to love, help, protect and provide for you. Ask Him questions about anything and everything. He will respond to you through the calm, friendly voice of the Spirit of God within you. Talk to Him about who He is and what He's done for you. Read God's Word with Him. Let Jesus tell you what it means and show you how to release its many blessings into your life through faith.

Chapter 6

LIVING FAITH

In order to drive your car you need to turn it on with the key. All the power under the hood will do you no good if you don't turn the car on. So it is with the Word of God. The Word of God needs to be "turned on." Faith is the key that *URNS ON* the Word of God and *EMPOWERS IT* to work in your life. Faith pleases God.

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Look what God equates faith with: believing and diligently seeking. Believe, diligently seek and you are rewarded. What are we rewarded with? All the promises and blessings of God. Notice that it doesn't say that He might reward us. It says God **IS** a rewarder of those who believe and diligently seek Him and we can only do that through faith.

In this chapter we will examine what faith is, why God expects it from us and how we know we have it. Remember believing and seeking. The more you believe the Word of God is true and the more you seek God through Agape Love Fellowship, the more you will activate your faith to ask/pray and receive from Jesus what is contained in God's Word.

John 15:7

If ye abide (Spiritually live) in me (Jesus), and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.

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1John 5:14-15

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will (Word), he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

John 14:12-14

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Jesus' name contains His character and authority. These scriptures tells us that when we pray in Jesus' name, it is just the same as if Jesus was physically present and praying. Remember Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and create the good of God. By walking in and working with that same authority, we can do that as well. What we pray in His name, Jesus will do. He will command Holy Ghost to send God's angels to confirm God's Word, destroy Satan's evil and create God's good for us or those we are interceding for. This is the fruit of faith John 15:16 is talking about. We glorify Father when we ask in Jesus' name.

John 15:16

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask in my name of the Father, he may give it you.

It's Satan's job to constantly attack us with evil. It's our choice whether we receive it or not. When we love and trust

Living Faith

God and immovably stand upon our faith in God and His Word, all things work out for the good in every area of our life (Romans 8:28).

Merely wishing God's Word will come forth won't work. In order for the light of God's faith within us to brightly shine and dispel Satan's darkness, we must boldly turn faith on through the works of believing, speaking, doing and standing upon God's Word in the full expectation that it will manifest.

James 2:17 & 22

*... faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
... by works was faith made perfect* (completed).

Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

No matter what doubt, debate or disbelief Satan tempts us with, we boldly declare and do God's Word in the belief that God will release His grace to perform His Word. Then we stand upon our faith and joyfully thank God until we receive what we are believing for in the time and way God chooses. Without the bold works of believing, speaking, doing, standing and receiving, faith is dead. Anything that is dead will not produce.

First lesson on faith: when in Jesus' name we ask/pray God's Word, we are asking/praying God's will, which glorifies our Father and provides us with what we are petitioning God for. Sometimes it is instantly in the exact way we envisioned it; sometimes it is over a course of much time in a way we never could have imagined it. No matter, believe God has honored His Word. Trust in the name of Jesus. Speak and do God's Word and enjoy the fruit it brings forth.

THE MEASURE OF FAITH

Romans 12:3 says, "*God hath dealt to every man the meas-*

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ure of faith.” Jesus, as the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), gives you “*the measure of faith*” necessary to get all the good He has designed for you. However, you must switch on the power of faith He’s given you. I’ll say it again: Jesus has already given you the faith you need for any situation. You just need to believe that and activate it through speaking and doing God’s Word.

Think of yourself as a lamp of God’s Spirit who is plugged into God’s current of Spirit-led Life. In order to empower yourself with God’s current, you have to turn on your switch of faith. The brightness of your bulb is determined by your wattage (what you believe about God’s Word). The more you believe, speak and do God’s Word, the brighter your lamp of faith shines to dispel Satan’s darkness and illuminate your life with Christ.

In the first part of Romans 12:3, Paul admonishes us not to think more highly than we ought. In other words, we determine how much we use the faith God gives us. If we don’t believe God will answer our prayers or don’t believe we can do mighty exploits for God, then we hold our unbelief higher than what God’s Word says we can do through Christ in us. If God says you CAN, who are you to say you CAN’T? That is thinking *more highly of yourself* – as if you know more than God. Believe you are plugged into God’s Spirit, and through faith in His Word, you can always turn on His current to empower His Word to destroy evil and create good.

When Gayle prays she will often conclude with something along the lines of, “I send Your Word forth, Father, and it shall prosper where it is sent. It will not return empty but will accomplish what it needs to accomplish.” She is in effect reminding God of Isaiah 55:11, “*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*” She prays according to the Word and believes it and declares it is so. That is faith.

The degree to which you believe and receive God’s Word as true is up to you. You can be like Jesus and totally operate

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through faith in God's Word. Or, you can turn your back on God's Word and operate through your faithless, manly thinking. Romans 14:23 says, "...*whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" Faithlessness is sin. It is important that you learn to recognize the difference between the thinking and acting of faith/belief and the thinking and acting of faithlessness/unbelief.

OBEDIENCE RELEASES GOD'S WORD

2 Corinthians 10:5

Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Faith obediently brings all our thoughts to Jesus, so we can reject the thinking of man, accept the thinking of God and be blessed. God is not looking for Christians who get Spirit-born but continue to operate through the cursed thinking and acting of disobedience and sin. God is looking for Christians who are willing to live the totally blessed life of Christ by faithfully obeying what they hear God speak or show them.

The Bible says that to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22). You can do all sorts of seemingly righteous religious works (sacrifices) but if you don't seek, submit to and in faith do God's bidding, everything you do is cursed and doomed to fail. It is only through obedience that you are blessed and bound for success (1 Corinthians 13:1-2; Hebrews 4:2).

Since 1978, I've operated a small 24 hour emergency service company. Before seeking God's counsel about how to advertise, I spent a lot of money on advertising with little return. Once I began seeking God's counsel and faithfully obeyed and followed God's advice, I saw a better return on my advertising dollar. In the past few years, God has had me cut my hours in half and not advertise at all. That was hard to do

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at first, but I had to totally believe and operate through the faith that God would provide me customers if I obeyed Him. Now I'm not saying don't advertise or cut your hours in half; I am saying that sometimes God has had me do things contrary to conventional manly wisdom, but God's wisdom always works. To date all my bills have been paid with money left over for His Kingdom.

There are hundreds of other daily examples I could share with you about obeying God by living through faith, but having God provide money to pay the bills and live a blessed life is probably something everyone can relate to. You may not own a business, but by living through faith, you can get promoted and get raises, even when no one else is. Remember, God rewards those who diligently seek Him through fellowship and faith in Him and His Word. Just believe it and act upon it. This doesn't only apply to the area of finances.

Through the faith of the Son of God in us, we have authority and power over Satan, self, sin, sickness and lack, but we must thought by thought enforce our authority and power through faith (Luke 10: 19-20). Evil will flee when the Word of God is spoken or prayed by us in faith. However, when evil thinks we're no longer paying attention, it tries to sneak back into our life. That's why we must capture each thought and through Jesus examine its source. Is it of self or Satan, or is it of God? Do we keep it and follow its leading or do we cast it out? This is what Jesus faithfully did when He walked the face of the earth and what He expects us to faithfully do today.

FAITH IS

Faith is not positive thinking nor soul-led envisioning. Those things might ease the mind a bit, but seldom do they produce more than marginal improvement in a life situation. They have a form of godliness, but they operate through the mind of man rather than the power of God. Earlier in this chapter we looked at John 15:16. Jesus wants us to bring forth fruit. When we speak in faith, we bring forth fruit. When we

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Speak in Jesus' name God empowers the *Living Word Of God* to come forth (John 1:14). We don't wish for results, we speak and expect results to manifest in the time and way God knows is best.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Let's break down this scripture so we can gain further insight into what faith is and how it works.

Now faith is . . .

Faith is now. It lives in the present moment. Faith sees your situation and Jesus provides you with the appropriate biblical Word to believe and speak to release the Holy Ghost to deal with the situation.

the substance of things hoped for . . .

Substance means "sub," that which is under you upon which you take your "stance." Faith is that which you Spiritually stand upon in the unrelenting expectation/hope that the Word of God you are believing, speaking and doing will come forth.

the evidence of things not seen.

Evidence is that which is obvious to the ear or the eye. Faith activates the power of God's Word to create and make obvious in the natural that which is obvious in your Spirit.

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

Faith flows out of your love fellowship with God. Through your 24/7 conversation with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost you

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increasingly believe that God's biblical Word is true and is to be trusted to do what it says in your life.

HEARING GOD'S WORD GENERATES FAITH

Romans 10:17

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Jesus performed signs, wonders and miracles in various ways. Sometimes Jesus would pray for a person. Other times Jesus would lay hands upon a person. Often times, especially when there were many people in attendance, Jesus would simply preach God's Word. Through faith, the people would believe, speak or do what God's Word was telling them to do and then receive whatever it was they were believing for.

Today, we can likewise attentively read or listen to God's Word, let the Holy Ghost reveal what it's saying to us, and through the Spirit-born faith of God within us, believe and, in Jesus' name, speak, do and receive its benefit into our life (Mark 16:15-20).

DON'T COMPLICATE FAITH

We have been discussing what faith is and how it works. As just noted above, faith is simply you first believing and then speaking and doing God's Word. Satan will try to convince you that it's more complicated than that, that some of God's Word might not apply to you, or isn't for this time. He will come up with anything he can to convince you that it is impossible for you to release and activate God's Word in certain areas or certain situations. Remember Satan's whole purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. He is the father of lies. Everything he says is a lie. Don't let him confuse you or have you doubt how simple faith is. Paul warns us of how subtle Satan can be.

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2 Corinthians 11:3

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

GREAT FAITH

The Bible provides a good illustration of how simple Great Faith is. A centurion sent messengers to ask Jesus to come and heal a servant. When Jesus arrived, the centurion told Jesus to just say a word and the servant would be healed. The centurion explained:

Luke 7:8-9

For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel

That centurion understood authority. He knew how authority worked. When he commanded, he expected results to follow. Recognizing the authority of God in Jesus, he likewise expected Jesus to speak and have what was spoken come to pass. This is what Jesus called “Great Faith.”

Great Faith is understanding the authority of Jesus’ name. When we believe and understand that by praying in Jesus’ name we are speaking through Jesus’ Spiritual power and authority over Satan, then we know our prayers will release God’s good to overcome Satan’s evil.

Luke 9:1-2

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and

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to cure diseases. And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

Titus 2:15

These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.

It isn't hard; it's simple. What Jesus commands to "go," He expects to go. What Jesus commands to "come," He expects to come. When we speak through Jesus' authority, we expect what we've spoken to "go" or "come" will go or come. No doubt or debate, we just boldly believe, speak, do, stand and receive.

Remember, Satan does not want you to grow into God's mature son or daughter, who knows how to overcome Satan's evil and release God's good into your life. He will do anything to stop that from happening. You must never give up. Press forward no matter what. Forcibly push out thinking and acting which is not in line with the Word of God and replace it with the thinking and acting of God's Word. Boldly believe, speak, do and stand on God's Word – NO MATTER WHAT – until your works of faith bear forth the fruit of faith you seek.

The more you meditate in your mind, believe in your heart, declare with your mouth and do what the Word of God says you are and can do through Jesus, the more you will think, act and become a God-conscious, Spirit-led, Word-speaking, faith-activating, glory-manifesting, miracle-working, totally blessed son or daughter of God. You will operate in faith and boldly and successfully enter into Spiritual Warfare destroying all the attacks of evil against you, as noted in our next chapter.

Chapter 7

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Our thoughts determine us. Thoughts come from either the Satan-infected carnal mind of man or the God-directed Spirit mind of Christ. This is why God's Word warns us to bring all our thoughts to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5). But since Christ is in us, doesn't God already hear and see all our thoughts? That He does. But we don't. Not in the sense of paying attention to them enough to recognize whether they are coming from Satan-infected self or the Spirit of God. Our carnal minded, **Self IN** charge thinking cannot obey the law/Word of God. If we let it, our carnal minded *me, myself and I* thinking will reject and replace the good Word of God's Spirit with the evil words of our flesh.

Romans 8:7

Because the carnal mind is enmity against (aims to destroy) God: for it is not subject to (will not obey) the law (Word) of God, neither indeed can be.

Galatians 5:17

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

The Satan-infected fleshly spirit of man is at war with the Spirit of God within Jesus' born-again saints.

THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) casting down imaginations,

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and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

Ephesians 6:11-13

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The armor of God is composed of the biblical words and truths of God. It includes the helmet of our salvation, that we securely fix atop our head. No matter what comes at us, we believe and receive who we are in Christ. We use the sword of God's Spirit/His Word to destroy the words of Satan and our flesh. The shield of faith is held up to block Satan's mental, emotional and physical attacks. We solidly stand in the shoes of Jesus' gospel of peace with our belly wrapped in God's truth and our chest protected by God's righteousness. We are God's soldiers, His saints who thought by thought thwart the attacks of the evil one with Spirit-led words, prayers and actions (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Jesus defeated Satan and manly self through His death, burial and resurrection. Though Jesus has won the war against evil for us, we must enforce Jesus' victory by engaging in spiritual warfare against the evil that daily attacks us. This is why we purposefully fellowship with Jesus, capture our thoughts, process them through Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost, reject Satan's evil thinking and put on God's good thinking. The more we do this, the more we renew our mind to think and act like Word-speaking, faith-flowing, miracle-manifesting sons and daughters of God. No matter what evil thoughts or

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situations attack us we count it all joy (James 1:2-4). Not joy that evil is attacking us, but joy that through Jesus we will overcome the evil attack.

The mind of Christ only operates through faith (trust) in God and His Word. Faith knows that once a believer sees what God's Word is saying and then speaks and acts on that Word, then that Word will sooner or later come forth.

James 1:3-4

Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Patience joins with faith to stand steadfast against the negative evil words of Satan that tempt us to forsake the Word of God. Patience joins hands with faith and smiles in the joy of the Lord knowing full well that no matter how long it takes, steadfast faith will prevail, since God's Word can never fail once spoken through faith (Hebrews 11:1; Isaiah 55:11).

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Tribulation is the pressure, affliction, anguish, burden, persecution or trouble that Satan's evil thoughts and situations attack us with. God's Word says we are to "glory in tribulation" knowing that our faith in God's Word will win the battle by releasing the power of God's parental favor/grace to overcome the evil thoughts or situation. When we, in Jesus'

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name, speak against the tribulation, then the grace of God blesses us with God's victory and joy (Romans 5:3). When we don't speak against the tribulation then the evil of Satan curses us with fear and failure.

At times Gayle and I have had an evil situation arise that caught us totally by surprise. Such was the case when after a routine physical exam the doctor told me I had cancer in my intestines. Instead of trembling in fear and freaking-out, we turned the situation over to God by speaking against the cancer. We prayed that God would remove the cancer. The doctors were able to get it all; I recovered quickly, and remain cancer free. This has stirred our hope (expectation) that next time we receive a bad report we won't succumb to Satan's evil, but absolutely trust in God and believe and speak against the evil thoughts or situation that attack us.

The next time evil attacks you, remember Jesus has given you the victory. In Jesus' name, speak against the evil and stand in the expectation that God will turn it into good (1 Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:28).

Spiritual warfare transforms you into Jesus' image by renewing your mind to operate through God's Word rather than your words. Since only God's Word can conform you into Jesus' image, Satan fights God's efforts by relentlessly tempting you to think and act through the words of man rather than the Word of God. When you give into Satan and put your **Self IN** charge of your words and actions, not only will you get the evil you proclaim but Satan will then pile on guilt and shame.

One of Satan's major battle tactics is to get you to focus upon your ability to sin instead of focusing upon your righteousness in Christ. When you sin, Satan tries to make you feel so lousy about your new sin that you hide from God. Remember Adam and Eve in the garden? However, also remember Jesus' cross not only saves you from your old sin but provides you the way to instantly cleanse yourself from new sin and enter back into the peace of Agape Love fellowship.

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1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he (Father God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Satan is called the accuser of the brethren. Day and night he accuses us of all sorts of stinking thinking and bad behavior. In the book of Revelation it says we overcome him by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony (Rev 12:10-11). Born-again, Spirit-filled people know about the blood of the Lamb, which crucifies/kills their old man of sin and births their New Creation man of God, but they often forget about the *word of their testimony*. This is why you need to renew your mind with God's Word and constantly speak (testify) its divine truth and power to bind the evil that attacks you and loose the good you need (Romans 6:6; Matthew 16:19, 18:18).

God is so serious about us entering into spiritual warfare and destroying the words of the enemy against us, that He had the Apostle Paul write about it. Paul called it a living sacrifice, which is holy unto God.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are urged to present (the thoughts of) our bodies to God as a holy sacrifice, and transform our minds to think through His mind of Christ rather than our mind of self. Being transformed by the renewing of our mind from thinking and acting like sin-filled men to thinking and acting like sinless Jesus takes time. By engaging in casual, ongoing, friendly conversation and fellowship with God we learn how to discipline our mind to capture thoughts, identify their source and, in Jesus'

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name, cast them out or keep them. One thought at a time we walk and talk with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost and get to know God's voice. We also get to know and distinguish God's voice from the voices that try to override what God is saying to us.

One of Satan's favorite ways to attack our thought life is to throw distracting thoughts at us. Have you ever tried to read your Bible or pray and have random thoughts pop up like, "I have to remember to defrost dinner", or "my gas tank is almost on empty, I'll have to fill it soon." That is Satan trying to distract you when you are communicating with God. Although in themselves such thoughts aren't evil, it is the evil intent of Satan to pop them into your head to steal, kill and destroy God's Word to you in that moment.

The more you talk to Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost, the more quickly you will come to recognize distractions of any sort, whether mental, emotional or physical. As soon as you see some thought, situation, person or thing trying to distract you, tell it to be gone and do whatever else you need to do to disconnect from it.

It's a good practice to daily ask God to forgive you for anything you did that might have taken you away from God. Sometimes He will show you something that happened in the day that hindered you from hearing Him. You hadn't even realized it, but once He shows you, repent, ask His forgiveness and ask Him to show you what you missed. Since you are no longer dedicated to sinning, this practice helps you more easily identify the habitual manly thinking that tries to get you to sin.

REVENGE ALL DISOBEDIENCE

Through Adam and Eve all natural born women and men have been infected with Satan's lying tongue and murderous (don't interfere with my life or I'll kill you) thinking and acting. When we are Spirit-birthed, the thinking and acting does not instantly depart from us. God forgives us for it, but we still see and remember it. We have to consciously identify the thinking and acting of our old – *me, myself and I* – man of

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sin. Once we recognize it, then, we can enter into spiritual warfare and take revenge on it and destroy it.

2 Corinthians 10:6

... and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

This is the only place in God's Word that God tells *us* to take revenge rather than having Him take revenge for us. The enemies being talked about here are not living people, places or things, but the habitual evil thinking of our old man of sin. We ask God to reveal to us what we need to revenge. Once He reveals it, we ask God to forgive us for the habitual thinking that leads us to sin. Father instantly forgives us, and covers the iniquity with Jesus' blood. From then on, when we are tempted to commit such sin, in Jesus' name, we instantly cast it's stinking thinking out of us. Such thinking comes in many shapes and forms. One of mine was alcohol.

I'm an Irish American. Drinking alcohol is deeply ingrained in the Irish culture and my family. As a child, at family gatherings, I began drinking alcohol. By the time I was 12 I began seeking alcohol on my own. By 15 I was drinking alcoholically, meaning I thought about drinking alcohol during my school day and once out of school I sought whatever alcohol I could get to drink. Such ungodly thinking and behavior continued until I was 30, joined Alcoholics Anonymous and met Jesus.

AA is where I began to capture and turn over to Jesus my habitual daily thoughts and desires to take a drink of alcohol. Over the course of time, my mind was renewed to less and less think about drinking alcohol until now I am almost never tempted to drink. Through Jesus, I am no longer cursed by my Irish lineage and personal history with alcohol. Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost have taken alcohol's place in my life. The peace of mind and fulfillment of life I sought through alcohol – but never got – I get through Them.

I have done the same thing with every other habitual ungodly way of thinking I have had. Once Jesus points out to me

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that the thinking is not from God, then every time I am distracted by or tempted by it, in Jesus' name, I cast it out

If Satan can get us to think and sin like we used to, then he can begin to accuse and abuse us with it. Satan knows this. The question is do we know how to stop him? Do we understand why we have to revenge (destroy) our addictions to specific ongoing sin. God will not interfere with our choice but if we choose to confess, defeat and destroy the sin Father will put it under Jesus' atoning blood and empower us to – temptation by temptation – cast it out. The more we bind and cast into hell any old or new way of ungodly thinking, the less Satan will tempt us with it (John 14:13, 15:7; Matthew 16:19; 1 John 1:9).

YOUR PAST IS DEAD AND GONE

Remember, Spirit-birth crucifies/kills your old man of sin and makes you a New Creation in Christ (Romans 6:6; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Who you are in Jesus is not who you were in Satan. They are two different people. You still live in the same physical body as your old man of sin, but in God's eyes you are no longer that person. You are God's child, His New Creation in Jesus Christ for whom all things of your old life have passed away and are buried in hell and no longer visible to God.

Satan knows he is defeated, but he also knows he can continue to successfully war against and rule over Christians if he can keep them ignorant of the power they have as a New Creation in Christ. Think about that. Satan isn't nearly as concerned with the non-believer. He knows he has that person exactly where he wants. Instead, he's totally dedicated to making our Christianity of non-effect. He will employ wrong religious thinking to twist scriptures and water down who Jesus is, what Jesus did for you and who you become through Jesus.

Satan wants to kill your new life in Christ with his lie that nothing has changed – that you are still the same mess you've always been. If you buy into his lie that God couldn't possibly change who you are, it will paralyze you with fear, shame,

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worry, anger and condemnation. You will hide from God and turn your back on fellow Christians, believing you are unworthy, lacking in faith, and so weird or repulsive that no one, including God could actually love you. However, with God all things are possible. You can replace the lies of Satan with the truth of God. By fellowshiping with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost you can renew and transform your mind with such truth as this scripture:

Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Robert S. McGee's book, *The Search For Significance: Seeing Your True Worth Through God's Eyes* clearly reveals how Satan distorts and corrupts and how Jesus reveals and heals our thinking. We highly recommend that every Christian read the book. Inexpensive copies of it with an included workbook can be found by Googling *The Search For Significance*.

All of us have a past that can attack us. All of us have a present that can mislead us. All of us are subject to double mindedness in which one moment we act like a saint and the next moment we act like a sinner. This is why God provided us with His written Word. We need to learn how to employ it to fight our battles, to build us up, to cleanse and restore us to the right thinking of God. Jesus is the Word of God. So let's turn the page to our next chapter and learn yet more about Jesus and how to employ the glory and power of His Good News to live the victorious, abundant life of Christ

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Chapter 8

GOOD NEWS – NOT RELIGION

As we've seen, through His death, burial and resurrection Jesus took away the sin that separates us from God and gave us His righteousness (His right standing with God). By making Jesus our Lord, our old man of sin is crucified and we are Spirit-born and then mind-transformed and character conformed into Jesus' righteous God-in-man image.

1 Corinthians 15:49

And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Once a self-led, sin-filled people, we are now a God-led, sin-rejecting people. No longer do we live under the Old Testament religious works system law of sin and death. We are now New Creations in Christ who live by the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The guilt and shame of our old sin-filled manly nature, which spread its doom and gloom through every miserable moment of our unsure, insecure, anger and worry filled existence, is now replaced by the joy of Jesus living in us. This is the Good News of Jesus. We need to walk into it.

CONFORMED INTO HIS IMAGE

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' good work is to conform us into His image. Through the Holy Ghost we are anointed (empowered) to perceive and receive the Word and ways of God.

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1 John 2:27

But the anointing (of the Holy Ghost) 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.

We need to intimately fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost and allow Them to open the scriptures, so we can come to know about all the great and wonderful blessings and the life in abundance that Jesus has provided us. Without that knowledge, we won't be able to step out in faith and speak, do and receive what God's Word plainly tells us we have and can do.

Mark 16:15, 20

And Jesus said unto them (and us), Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

The book of Acts shows Jesus' first followers operating with signs, wonders and miracles as they preach and teach the Good News of Jesus. God is not a respecter of persons. What Jesus did through His first followers He can do through us, if we'll let Him. Jesus can't force us to live and minister like His First Century saints did. Once we are born again we must choose.

Do we live the mind changing, miracle powered life of Christ that Jesus gave us or do we live the institutionalized, impotent life of religious Christianity? The Bible calls the latter a form of godliness, but one that denies the power of true Godliness. *TRUE GODLINESS* is the goodness and glory of God that flows into us and out to others through our intimate 24/7 Agape Love Fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy

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Ghost. God advises us to turn away from manly religion, since the practitioners of such are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God (2 Timothy: 3-4).

GOD’S GOOD PLEASURE, NOT OURS

Always remember, we have been created by God to please Him. Here is how we do that:

- 1) PRAY – talk with God about everything.
- 2) PRAISE – adore God by lifting Him up in our heart above all the worry and woe of the world.
- 3) WORSHIP – rest in God and affectionately express our love for God.
- 4) MINISTER – engage in God-led acts of love towards God, self and others.

God has predestinated us to become His mature daughters and sons in Christ, who please Him by 24/7 engaging in these four areas. It is why He created us and what He expects from us.

Ephesians 1:5

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will

Philippians 2:12-13

. . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

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Satan seduced Adam and Eve to serve the pleasure of *their* wills rather than the pleasure of God's will. Their lives became a mess. Jesus put things back in proper order through His death, burial and resurrection. When we apply what Jesus gave us to our lives, we live the supernaturally powered, miraculous life of Christ. However, it takes a lot of working with God to renew our mind before we get to the point we are willing to *no matter what* press towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

FOCUS ON GOD'S WORD

Even though we are smart enough to know we are better off with Jesus than without Him, we have to dedicate our self to living through the Word of God rather than the words of man. Without such dedication we bounce back and forth between living through our flesh and living through God's Spirit within us. James 1:8 calls this double minded thinking. The problem with double minded thinking is that it makes us spiritually weak, as well as mentally and emotionally unstable. The hallmark of what we commonly call religious Christianity is this double minded thinking which encases itself in dogma, doctrine, customs, ceremonies, standardized prayer, music, etc. that we think please God, but there is little to no God in them

For the most part, the denominational leaders and independent church leaders of Christianity are honest, sincere, well meaning men and women. If they've invited Jesus into their heart, they are also Spirit-born. However, despite being nice people who truly want to help others do well in life, too often their Christian beliefs have been shaped by other men. Rather than fellowship with God and have God reveal the Good News of His Word to them, they fellowship with others who they rely upon to reveal to them the Word and ways of God. In other words, they have a middle man between themselves and God. That at best dilutes and at worst distorts the Word of God for them.

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JESUS EMPOWERS YOU TO BEAR FRUIT

Christian “religious” thinking will often appear to be God like thinking, but it bears no fruit. It only has a form of godliness. It looks or sounds like God but there is no power behind it. It’s not derived from God directly revealing His Word to you so it lacks the power to creatively affect you or the situation being dealt with (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:5).

The Kingdom of God is not in the words of men. It is not in meat and drink (natural things). It is in the Spiritual things of righteousness, peace and joy (Romans 14:17). You live in right standing (righteousness) with God because you are His New Creation who, through love and faith, listens to and obeys all God tells you to think and do (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). You live in the peace that passes all natural minded understanding because you live in God, unpolluted and unrestricted by religion. You live in joy unspeakable – full of glory – because Jesus speaks God’s Word to you and through you with Holy Ghost signs, wonders and miracles following (Luke 4:32-36; Mark 16:15-20, Hebrews 2:4).

If you don’t seek God in all your thoughts and actions then you can easily be misled to feel, think, speak and act through misinformation and fear. Don’t replace studying God’s Word with lazily buying into everything your favorite minister, teacher, TV preacher or Christian book writer has to say. Investigate what you see or hear. Bring it to Jesus. Let Him show you if what people are saying is in line with God’s Agape Love.

God’s ministry glorifies God by doing what manly religion can’t do. Manly religion cannot mentally, emotionally or physically heal. It cannot Spiritually reveal and pierce people with the truth of God. It cannot release God’s love, faith and hope into people’s hearts. It cannot invigorate people to live and minister the life of Christ. It cannot bless people with the abundant life of Christ that they can then bless others with.

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

I'm not knocking church. There are excellent churches that put the Good News of Jesus first, have tangible fruit and stand with authority against the devil.

Hebrews 10:25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another:

Just make sure you continually fellowship with and hear from God personally. Be like the Bereans, who listened to Paul preach and then went and studied out the scriptures he was preaching to see if what he was preaching and what God was saying in the scriptures were the same thing. And remember, God's Word bears fruit; if there is no fruit, it really isn't God's Word (Acts 17:10-12).

JESUS IS ALIVE TODAY

The Good News of Jesus' New Testament Word is as alive for us today as it was when Jesus provided it to His first followers. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Jesus never changes nor takes back what He gave us. Jesus is the Spirit-filled Word of God made flesh and He shows us how to be just like Him (John 1:14).

Jesus is one with Father God and Holy Ghost (1 John 5:7). Through Jesus in us, so are we (John 17:20-23).

Jesus brought all His thoughts to Father and did nothing unless Father first showed Jesus what to speak and do (John 5:19). We capture and bring all our thoughts to Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost (Christ in us) and only speak and do what They lead us to speak and do (2 Corinthians 10:2-6).

Jesus spoke God's Word through God's Spirit and destroyed Satan's evil and released God's good (1 John 3:8). Through Jesus in us, so do we (Matthew 16:19, 18:18-20).

Jesus performed miracles, signs and wonders (throughout the gospels). Through Jesus in us, so do we (1 Corinthians 12:8-11; Mark 16:15-18; Hebrews 2:4).

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The greatest challenge we Christians face is to truly believe and receive the divine truth of who the Word of God says we are in Jesus. God is our loving Father. He lives in us. He wants us to talk to Him about everything. We are called to come boldly into the throne of grace and find help in time of need. Think about that. God wants us to boldly interact with Him. Does that sound like we are to be quiet and shy when we are around Father? No, God's Word says to come into His presence singing and dancing and worshipping Him. He wants to rejoice with us. He wants to give us everything that we ask Him for and then some. (Hebrews 4:16, Philippians 4:4-6, Psalms 100:1-2, Ephesians 3:16; Psalm 37:4).

GOD'S FREE GIFT OF GRACE FOR YOU

God already knows what you need and all your needs are already met by Him through Jesus (Philippians 4:19). You don't have to pray long and hard. You don't have to doubt and debate that you are praying correctly or sufficiently. God has freely given you the gift of grace and grace covers everything.

The religious mind can't comprehend that something can be totally free. It thinks that if we want something from God we have to earn it. We have to do something so that God can pay us or reward us. No! No! No! His unmerited, unearned favor is grace. It is free to all who believe.

John 1:17

... grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee.

Jesus paid the price for everything.

Romans 4:25

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again.

You don't have to do anything to get everything. Jesus has already done it. His grace is sufficient, it is enough. God doesn't require you to do anything else than believe and receive what God has given/graced you with.

Romans 3:24

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

You have been justified by Jesus. God sees you just as if you had never sinned. You can stand in the forgiveness and favor of God's grace and rejoice in the Good News of your New Creation life freed from Satan, self, sin, sickness and lack.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Ephesians 1:6-7

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Ephesians 2:5

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

You are not saved by religious works; you are saved by God's grace, which emanates from His Agape Love for you. You can't do anything to earn your salvation. All you can do is accept it. Father continually calls you to Jesus (John 6:44).

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When you finally answer His call and make Jesus your Lord, Father births you with His Holy Spirit and you are made a New Creation in Christ, who is 24/7 graced by God to receive His love, protection and provision. The goodness of God's grace leads you to see, believe and step into who you are in Christ. Through grace and faith in God's Word you are progressively conformed into the fullness of Jesus' Spiritual, mental and emotional image (Romans 8:29).

The Bible says we can frustrate the grace of God by trying to interfere with it (Galatians 2:21). Think about that. You can block God's grace by *religiously* begging or beating on God's door for a blessing that, through your faith in His Word, has already been provided to you. Your actions of faith release God's grace to manifest the truth and power in His Word for you and those you pray for and minister to.

In Romans 5:15 Paul clearly states that grace is God's free gift for you. Have you ever wanted to give somebody something *just because* with no reason, no expectation of anything in return? Have you ever received a gift you weren't expecting and maybe didn't even deserve? How much more did we sinners NOT DESERVE God's free gift of grace? But the Good News is that Jesus freely gave it to us. The love and favor of God's grace not only forgives us our sins and births us into God's family, but it goes on to bless us each day in all our ways in every moment of our new life in Christ.

DO WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS TO DO

Instead of listening to what religious men say we need to do in order to know God, let's do what the Bible says to do. Let's 24/7 love on, listen to and obey the Good News of what Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost tell us and lead us to do.

Romans 6:16

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?

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

Revelation 3:21

To him that (obeys and) overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also (obeyed and) overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

We who are Spirit-born and overcome Satan through obeying Jesus, now live in the Spiritual Kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:6). As Jesus' overcomer bride, we sit with Jesus upon God's Throne of Grace to the right of our Father in the presence of the Holy Ghost (Revelation 3:21). At any time, day or night, we can praise, sing love songs to, hug on, kiss, talk to, play and have fun with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost and enjoy all the riches and glory that Jesus gave us.

IT REALLY IS SIMPLE

Adam and Eve began their life blessed by Father God in all their ways living in heaven on earth. This is good.

Adam and Eve turned their life over to Satan and forfeited God's blessed (empowered to succeed) life for Satan's cursed (empowered to fail) life. This is bad.

Because Adam and Eve are our natural parents, through natural birth we inherit Satan's cursed life of hell on earth. This is very bad.

Jesus' death, burial and resurrection delivers us from Satan's cursed life (Galatians 3:13). Everything Adam and Eve forfeited to Satan plus all God's mental, emotional, physical, financial, familial, social, Spiritual, natural and supernatural riches in glory are what Jesus provides to us. This is very good.

Our life in Jesus is all Good News! What better news could there be than to know that God has provided us with exceedingly abundantly more than we will ever need? As we faithfully believe, speak and do God's Word, we become mentally sound, emotionally stable, physically healthy, Spiritually solid, financially solvent and socially secure. We live the divinely empowered, supernatural, Good News life of a

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daughter or son of God in heavenly places in Christ Jesus upon earth. That is the Good News of Jesus which we will continue to talk about in our next chapter, *Heaven Upon Earth*.

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

Chapter 9

HEAVEN UPON EARTH

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Ephesians 2:4-6

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love through which he loves us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved;) and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

What do these scriptures say? They tell us that even though we are on this earth, we live in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, with all of heaven's power and glory. This upsets manly minded women and men imprisoned in self-centered thinking. They might believe we'll eventually wind up in heaven when we physically expire, but can't believe that we can live in heaven right now on earth.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:

The concept that God can freely reward us now with the good things of heaven is foolishness to the natural mind. Men are taught from childhood they can't get something for nothing. The incredible, simple truth is: JESUS HAS ALREADY PAID FOR ALL OUR SIN AND ALL OUR SALVATION. The natural mind cannot comprehend that. It doesn't understand that we have everything Jesus promised us.

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

We don't have to earn it. We don't have to strive to obtain it. We don't have to ferociously pray for it. It is a gift, without strings or conditions attached. It is almost incomprehensible, isn't it? And yet, it is the truth. **RIGHT NOW** we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. **RIGHT NOW** we live in the righteousness, peace and joy of The Kingdom of Heaven within us, while walking upon the earth (Romans 14:17).

RAISED TO SIT IN PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Everything about God's plan to provide us heaven on earth has to do with our personal relationship with Him. Some people think I'm crazy to always want to walk and talk with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost. My answer is that it's better than the crazy I used to be walking and talking with Satan and my sin-filled self. My new kind of crazy brings me peace and prosperity, whereas my old kind of crazy brought me upset and poverty.

Jesus, Himself, said He came to bring us peace and life in abundance (John 10:10, 14:27). In fact God has always provided for His children. Provision is one of the first promises of God we see in the Bible. God provided a garden for Adam and Eve to live in. When they sinned and had to leave it, God provided them with a sin covering covenant through which He could meet their natural needs. God also provided them with the promise of a redeemer (His Son, Jesus) to take back what they had forfeited to Satan. Later, God provided an arc to keep Noah and his family safe through the flood. In Genesis 17:1-2 Abram sees Almighty God as the God who provides us with more than enough.

Genesis 17:1-2

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him: I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

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The Bible says that God covenanted with Abram and made Abram very rich in cattle, silver, gold and, over the course of many generations, in offspring, as well (Genesis 13:2, 22:17). What God provided in Genesis He will still provide to those of us who covenant with Him, ***“For I am the LORD, I change not,”*** (Malachi 3:6).

God is not stingy. He’s the Creator of The Universe. He owns everything and withholds nothing from His children who love and trust Him. His love and prosperity destroy Satan’s hate and poverty.

We are citizens of two worlds. We live on this earth where Satan has the rule, but we also live in heaven where God rules. In the natural, when a person has dual citizenship, it means that the person is entitled to everything a citizen of each country is entitled to. Because we are citizens of heaven, even though we live on this earth, we are entitled to everything that is in heaven. When we speak, we speak with the authority that is in heaven. When we operate, we operate under heaven’s rules, **RIGHT NOW** on this earth. We do not have to physically die to live in heaven. Scripture says that Jesus has already gone ahead and prepared a place for us.

John 14:3

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

When did Jesus come and receive you unto himself? When you became born again and accepted His kingship over you. And where does Jesus abide? In the Kingdom of Heaven, at the right hand of His Father. So once you are Spirit-born, where do you spiritually abide? **IN HEAVEN WITH FATHER, JESUS AND HOLY GHOST!**

Revelation 3:21

To him (or her) who (gets Spirit-born and thereby) overcomes (Satan) will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set

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down with my Father on his throne.

1 Corinthians 6:19

. . . know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Now we just need to learn how to think and act like a citizen of Heaven. We need to learn to use all of its power and authority.

PUTTING ON THE HEART AND MIND OF CHRIST

Just because we are Spirit-born doesn't mean that we instantly love, think and act like Jesus. If that were true, then there would have been no need for Paul to write, "... **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**" (Romans 12:1-3). We must grow into *feeling, thinking, speaking and acting* like Jesus. This is why Paul exhorts us to put on the heart and mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5).

It is not enough to just read and study God's Word. As Jesus became the Word made flesh, we are called to become the flesh made Word. We must through love fellowship and faith in God believe, speak and do what the Word of God says. This activates the heart and mind of Christ within us to minister the love, knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and miraculous power of God.

Remember, Jesus did not merely study God's Word and think about who He was and what He could do. He **became** the walking, talking, living Word of God. He **demonstrated** the truth of God's love and Word by activating its heavenly power through faithfully believing, speaking and doing what God's scriptures and spoken Word directed Him to do (John 1:14, 5:19).

Jesus lived in the world but was not part of the world. We are called to that same order (John 15:19; 17:14-16). As we renew our mind and let Jesus raise us up to operate through the

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thinking of heaven, we can do what Jesus did when He lived on this physical earth (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24)

FREED FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

Jesus freed us from Moses' Law of Sin and Death which operated through the natural mind and the keeping of carnal commandments. Jesus replaced it with the Law of The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus which operates through the mind of Christ and our Agape Love fellowship and friendship with God.

Mark 12:30-31

... love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength... love thy neighbor as thyself.

John 13:34

... love one another; as I (Jesus) have loved you.

We must never forget that Agape Love is who God is and who we are through Spirit-birth. This is why God's love is the first and foremost building block of our life in Christ. It brings heaven down to earth. By living through God's love, we learn how to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength, and learn how to love our self and our neighbor. We learn to love as God loves.

Most Christians know John 3:16, which says how much God loved us. 1 John 3:16 is the corollary scripture, which explains how much we should love our brethren.

John 3:16-17

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.

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

1 John 3:16

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren.

God first loved the world of unsaved men through Jesus and He now loves the world of unsaved men through *Jesus in us*. Our love relationship, fellowship and friendship with God gets us to trust God and His Word. We grow in Jesus and begin to serve others through Christ in us rather than demanding that we be served by others. We become sure of who we are in Jesus and become steady, stable and successful in all our ways. The more we think and act through the heart and mind of Christ, the easier it becomes to overcome Satan and self and live the abundant life of Christ.

LIVING IN THE REST OF GOD

Genesis 2:2 says, ***“God rested on the seventh day from all the work He had made.”*** In this scripture, the English word *rest* is translated from the Hebrew word *shabath* from which we get our English word Sabbath. Shabath literally means to cease from ones own works, to celebrate. ***Jesus said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man*** (Mark 2:27). In other words, God wants us to rest in Him by ceasing from our works and celebrating His life within us.

Hebrews 4:3, 10

For we which have believed do enter into rest...For he that is entered into God’s rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

Living in heavenly places in Christ Jesus is living in the rest of God. Once we are Spirit-born, we must train ourselves to cease from our own works and enter into God’s rest by continually celebrating the fact that Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost live in us and will meet all our needs. This is the key to living in the abundance of heaven on earth. Don’t let the devil convince you that you can’t do or have something Jesus has promised

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you. Don't believe Satan's lie that you aren't able to do something God's Word says you can do. You are well able to do all things because it isn't you who is doing it. It is Jesus.

He has given us the authority to walk into any place, any situation, and declare: "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." That unleashes all the power, provision and protection of heaven into that arena. Scripture says that Jesus has given us the keys to the kingdom (Matthew 16:19). These keys are called "binding" and "loosing". What we bind on earth is bound in heaven. What we loose on earth is loosed in heaven. Jesus sat in heavenly places far above all principality, power, might and dominion on this earth; high above everything that is named in this world (Ephesians 1: 19-21). This is where we sit also – high above anything the devil can throw at us. Do not give place to the devil. Don't surrender what is legally, as a citizen of heaven, yours. Just walk boldly – because you know you belong there – into the throne room of grace and know that God will provide everything you need at the time you need it.

Proverbs 3:5-6 advises us not to lean on our own understanding but in all our ways acknowledge God and He will direct our paths. Just knowing that you are a citizen of heaven on earth doesn't automatically bring the peace and prosperity of God into your life. You must cease from your own works and live one with God. This is the only way to generate the faith of God needed to believe and speak the Word of God into your life. If you don't operate through faith, then you operate through unbelief. It's that simple. If you don't believe God's Word is true, you won't act on what His Word says.

The Bible says through unbelief Israel turned their backs upon God's love, provision and rest. They grieved God and wandered in the wilderness for forty years until all those who refused to believe God died (Hebrews 3:7-19). We don't want to die in our wilderness without the glory, goodness and provision of God for our life. We must kill the unbelieving words and ways of our manhood. This does not mean we use our human will to religiously force ourselves to be good or holy. Instead, we simply release our faith by resting in our love

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relationship with God. We take our seat with Jesus upon His throne, at the right hand of God. From there, we talk with Jesus, He loves on us, we love on Him and, together, we love on others.

There are people that in the natural I would never talk to or hang out with, but I have found over the years, as I come more and more to rest in God's love for me, He has changed my heart. I no longer feel inferior or superior to anyone. I try to love all people, including myself, as God loves them. This enables Jesus to minister to me and through me to whomever God puts in my path. Because I rest in the faith of God's love for me, then the love of God can be shed abroad in my heart to whomsoever God puts in my path.

FISHERS OF MEN

We are fishers of men. Our heavenly place in Christ Jesus is our safe harbor out from which we sail into the sea of humanity to fish for the souls of lost men. We catch them with God's love, Spirit and Word and help raise them to become fishers of men themselves.

All Spirit-born believers can fish. No fish is too big nor too small to catch. Sometimes we fish by offering a kind word or a helping hand or a healing hand. Sometimes we say nothing with our mouth, but rather let Jesus speak through our life to others. We also fish by carrying church cards and giving them to people we meet. If we attend or lead a home group, we invite lost people or people without a home church to it. We pray any time, any place, for anyone who asks for prayer. Occasionally God leads us to ask a person if we can pray with them.

Leading a person to Jesus is one of the greatest joys in life. There is nothing we can accomplish for our self, as a human, that is more significant or more fun than leading people to get Spirit-born and helping Christians get mind-transformed and fully conformed into Jesus' image.

In Mark 16:15-20, Jesus commissioned us to continue to do His work upon the earth.

Heaven Upon Earth

Mark 16:15, 17, 20

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature . . . And signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they. . . And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.

2 Corinthians 3:6 declares that God has “*made us able ministers of the new testament.*” With Jesus Christ living in us, we can minister the Word of God just like Jesus’ first followers did. It is Jesus, not us, who is doing the ministering. All we have to do is first believe this is so. Then, in faith, we obediently take the first step or say the first word and the anointing of the Holy Ghost comes upon us to speak and minister *The Living Word of God* with physical miracles and other signs of God’s love, grace and glory following.

My wife, Gayle, who is introverted and reserved in the natural, would mumble a few words when she first began to pray for others. As she grew in Christ and her mind connected more and more with Jesus’ mind, she began to pray long and hard, or short and soft – however the Lord directed her in a particular situation. Often she doesn’t even remember what she just prayed. How can that be, you ask? Because she has learned to just open her mouth, close her mind to any outside influence, and let Jesus speak through her.

LEARN GOD’S LANGUAGE AND WAYS

So how do we bring heaven down to earth and live in God’s rest? How do we become God’s fishers of men who operate through God’s ministerial anointing? The answer brings us back to the Word. We must learn and live the language of God’s Bible, most especially its New Testament. It teaches us how to think and act through the heart and mind of Christ and become progressively conformed into the image of God’s Son, Jesus. The more we learn, live and minister God’s Word

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

through faith, the more we know who we are, what we can do and how we can do it through Jesus in us.

Learn God's language and ways. *Live* God's language and ways. *Become* God's language and ways. When you do, all your thoughts and ways will be of God (Romans 8:29; John 1:14). It is said that if you do something often or repeatedly, it becomes a habit. Habits are second nature to us. The more you read and speak the Word of God, the easier and quicker that Word will enter into your mind and come out of your mouth. It's just there, a *heavenly* habit that you use, almost without thinking.

Purposefully living in heavenly places in Christ Jesus keeps us from being corrupted by the idols, lusts, affections and infections of the world. Our feet stand upon the earth but our true substance, that which we Spiritually stand upon, is faith through God's love, Spirit and Word living in us. Through Jesus, we destroy all the thoughts and actions of Satan and man that come against us. We don't give into temptations to doubt or debate God. We reject those thoughts and do what the Bible reveals and Jesus leads us to do. By 24/7 fellowship with God, we are conformed into Jesus' image and enjoy God's exceeding great rewards as we live in heaven on this earth (Romans 8:29).

Now onto Part 2: *Our New Testament Tools*, in which we will continue to learn how to successfully build and maintain our life in Christ.

Part 2

Our New Testament Tools:

**Word, Faith,
Prayer, Praise,
Worship, The Holy
Ghost and More.**

WHAT JESUS GAVE US

Chapter 10

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION

Now that we know a bit about God's Grand Plan for Man, it's time we get to know the New Testament tools God provides us with to build a strong foundation upon which we can fully live and minister in Christ. God's tools are found in God's Word: love, faith, grace, prayer, praise, worship, Holy Ghost ministry, etc. We need to employ them all so that God can construct us in the way He has planned. If we don't, our foundation will be weak, shaky and susceptible to forces that keep us from fully thinking and acting like Jesus. Instead of enjoying the goodness and glory of God's Kingdom of Heaven within us, we will continue to wallow in the worries and woes of hell on earth.

A GODLY FOUNDATION

Matthew 7:24-27

Therefore, whosoever hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that hears these sayings of mine, and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

We cannot build our life upon the shifting sand of manly thinking and acting. If we do, we will be wrecked with each

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storm of life that comes our way. We are to build our foundation of life upon the rock of divine revelation, strength and wisdom contained within the living Word of God. By building ourselves on the Word of God, we will be able to withstand any storm Satan will send our way. Jesus calls that being a wise man.

Our First Century forefathers built the foundation of their miraculous, successful lives in Christ on the basic biblical principles found in God's Word. This foundation has withstood the test of time and is just as important and relevant to us today. Here are the building blocks for the strong foundation upon which we build our unshakable life in Christ.

- 1) We believe that Jesus took all our sin upon His cross, died, went to hell in our place and rose from hell with total power over Satan, self, sin, sickness and lack (John 3:16; Ephesians 4:8; 1 Peter 2:24).
- 2) We ask Jesus to be our Lord, accept that He redeems us from Satan, forgives us our sin and Spirit-births us as God's beloved child, who then takes power over Satan, soul-led self, sin, sickness and lack by believing, speaking and doing God's Word through faith (Romans 10: 8-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21).
- 3) We repent and turn our back upon our self-centered sin-filled thinking and acting, and turn our face towards the Word and ways of God.
- 4) We renew and transform our mind to think and act like Jesus through thought by thought fellowship with God. We bring every desire, imagination, emotion and reasoning to Jesus for evaluation and recommendation as to whe-

Building A Strong Foundation

ther we kick it out, or keep it and act upon it. We continually listen to, read, study, discuss with Jesus, believe, speak, and do God's Word (2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Romans 12:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:15).

- 5) We seek God for the revelation of His specific vision for our life. We then enter into God's specific vision and activate our ministries of reconciliation as ambassadors for Christ to those around us (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; see Chapter 17).
- 6) We ask God to release the full anointing of the Holy Ghost into our life, by baptizing us with ministry fire and the tongues of God (Luke 11:13; Acts 2:1-3, 10:44-46; 1 Corinthians 14:2,4; see Chapter 14).
- 7) We minister through the Word of God and the nine gifts and six empowerments of the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Mark 16: 15-20; Hebrews 2:4; see Chapter 14).

BUILD DEEP, BUILD HIGH

The deeper and stronger a foundation is, the higher and more stable the building will be that is built upon it. This is true both in the natural and supernatural.

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and others build thereon. But let every man take heed how he builds thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay,

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stubble; 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. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Ephesians 2:19-22

Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom you also are built to be an habitation of God through the Spirit.

In these scriptures, we plainly see that God is cautioning us to make sure our foundation is built upon Jesus and the writings of His apostles. If we build the foundation of our Christianity upon the dogma and doctrine of man-made religion rather than the pure truth of God's biblical Word, our foundation will be weak. It will crack and perhaps collapse when faced with adversity. In order to support the supernatural structure of God's plan for man to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ, our foundation must be built upon the revelation and teachings of The New Testament.

God's Word is the blueprint for building the life of Christ in us. It tells us what our foundation in Christ is to be built with so that it will support the building of our life. The deeper and stronger our foundation, the higher and more stable our life and ministry will be. I don't mean higher in the sense of having the most noticeable ministry in the world, but higher in the sense that our life and ministry live up on Mount Faith with God rather than down in the Valley of Doubt with man.

Building A Strong Foundation

On earth Jesus believed with His whole heart, soul, mind and strength that God's Word contained the living presence and power of God. Jesus conformed Himself into the image of God's Son made flesh, by only doing what Father showed Jesus to think, speak and do (John 5:19). In the wilderness, Jesus clearly showed the importance of God's Word when He responded to Satan's temptation.

Luke 4:4

... Jesus answered Satan, saying, It is written, that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Jesus was called the "Word of God made flesh" (John 1:14). Jesus expressed the Word of God to others through preaching, teaching and performing signs, wonders and miracles. We, who are being conformed into the image of Jesus Christ, can likewise do as Jesus and, through faith, possess the divine life of God contained within God's written Word. The Word of God spoken in faith is what strengthens the walls of our supernatural foundation.

We have discussed in previous chapters that Jesus' name carries all His presence, power, character and authority. When we ask, pray or declare things in Jesus' name, it is just as if Jesus said or did it. We don't even have to religiously say "in Jesus' name" every time because the Bible says Jesus has given us all authority (Luke 10:19; Matthew 16:19, 18:18-20; Romans 8:29).

What does this have to do with building a Godly foundation? Proverbs 18:10 says, "***The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.***" There is your foundation – the name of Jesus. Run to it, operate through it. It will keep you safe. You will be able to stand in God's tower and defend yourself against the enemy with the authority and power of the King of Heaven.

When we doubt or refuse to do God's Word, when we don't understand what we have in Jesus, then our foundation in Christ is weakened. Sadly we see that throughout Christianity.

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Some doubt God's Word because they are either not Spirit-born or they haven't studied and applied the Word of God to their lives enough to have faith in it. Others simply refuse to apply God's Word to their lives because it would interfere with the fleshly or religious way they want to think and act.

Whatever the reason, if we do not proceed in accord with God's Word, if we don't operate in the authority and power that Jesus' name has provided us with, we cannot activate the provisions, positions or promises of God's Word. If we doubt or refuse to abide by God's Word, we can't build a Spiritual foundation to stand upon. God's Word is the cement of our New Testament foundation in Christ. No Word, no foundation. Once we set our foundation and stand strong upon God's Word, then we can build our life in Christ.

PROVISIONS, POSITIONS AND PROMISES

There are many provisions, positions and promises God blesses us with. Provisions are what Jesus freely gives us when we make Him our Lord and get Spirit-born. We are redeemed from our sins; they are taken away. We stand in the righteousness of God, as His Spiritually perfect, anointed, beloved daughter or son. We become the Temple of the Holy Ghost in Whom Father and Jesus live.

Positions are levels of Spiritual maturity that we progressively grow up into through daily working out our salvation. We begin as a child of God. Though we are Spirit-born and our sins are forgiven, we still think and act through the corrupt mind of man. As we fellowship with Jesus, we put away the thinking of the carnal child and put on the mind of Christ. Eventually, Jesus grows us into a father or mother in the Lord through whom Jesus raises others into His image (John 1:12-13; 1 John 2:12-14).

Promises are the many practical yet wonderful things we inherit from God that help us live the abundant life of Christ on earth. Promises include divine healing and health, financial solvency, fruits of the Spirit, wisdom, the ability to bind and destroy evil and loose the creative good of God. God has also

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promised us baptism in the Holy Ghost and the nine gifts and six empowerments of the Holy Ghost with which Jesus ministers the Word of God through us with signs, wonders and miracles following. When we see a promise in God's Word, in Jesus' name, we declare and through faith, receive the promise into our Spirit and continually praise and thank Father for His promise until it comes forth in our natural life.

Provisions are freely given to all Christians at Spirit-birth, but God's positions and promises are only fully obtained and completely activated as we mature in Christ. In fact, our mind-matured Spiritual position usually determines whether or not we can recognize and receive a promise of God.

For instance, the flesh centered soul of an immature child of God is in a Spiritually weak position. A child of God will defeat faith with doubt and debate. God wants us to mature beyond being children tossed to and fro with every fleshly or religious thought that comes to our mind (Ephesians 4:14). When we begin to bring our thoughts to Jesus, we begin to take power over evil by operating through faith (1 John 2:13). It is faith that activates the promises of God. No faith, no promises. In order to activate the promises of God into our life we must mature beyond the Spiritually weak position of a child of God into a Spiritually strong son or daughter of God.

3 John 1:1-6 points out the direct correlation between Spiritual position and promise activation. It is the story of Gaius, an everyday member of the Body of Christ. The apostle John has watched Gaius grow up in Jesus. Gaius has matured from a child of God into a son of God who takes power over the temptations of his self-willed soul, body and Satan. He serves his pastor, local church and visiting Christians. As a result, John prays this prophetic prayer of prosperity to Gaius.

3 John 1:2

Beloved, I wish (pray to God) above all things that thou may prosper (succeed at everything) and be in (physical, mental and emotional) health, even as thy soul prospers.

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John knew Gaius' would reject Satan's words that he wasn't worthy to receive what God wanted to give him. John knew Gaius would not turn away from this prayer of prosperity because Gaius' soul, body and self-will were under the supervision of Gaius' New Creation Spirit of Jesus Christ.

When you and I operate in the Spiritual maturity and authority of a son or daughter of God, then our soul can also prosper and receive whatever promise God's Word provides for us. There is neither time nor distance in the Spirit. God's Word spoken two thousand years ago is as alive today as it was then. All the provisions, positions and promises that God empowered His first disciples to operate through are likewise ours today (Galatians 4:6, 2:20; John 17:20-23; Hebrews 13:8; 1 John 2:14).

Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). We please God when we, in faith, declare and stand upon His Word no matter what. When we do this, then God can give us all we are believing Him for and calling upon Him to supply. As the rest of Hebrews 11:6 says, God rewards us when we diligently, without stop, 24/7 seek Him and His Word through our Agape Love fellowship with Him.

God's business is our business. We are to be about the business of our Father. His business is to win souls and make disciples, who then win souls and make disciples. (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; 1 John 3:16). When we dedicate ourselves to doing the work of our Father, then we bless others and Father God blesses us with all our needs (Matthew 6:33).

Once you solidly set your foundation upon Jesus Christ and God's Word, you will begin to do the good works that God has ordained for you to do (Ephesians 2:10). You will joyfully live in the provisions, mature into the positions and minister through the promises of God. In our next chapter we will provide you with more tools to build your life in Christ by employing *The Perfect Law Of Liberty* to destroy Satan's evil with God's good.

Chapter 11

THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY

If you have been a Christian for even a short time, you will probably have heard, “*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*”. Since God’s Word is true (Psalms 119: 160) what the scripture is actually saying is that God’s Word will make (or create) freedom in your life.

John 8:31-32

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, 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.

Free from what? Free from Satan, self, sin, sickness, lack – you name the evil. If we continue in His Word we destroy Satan’s evil and create God’s good for us through *The Perfect Law of Liberty* that God has set in motion for His believers.

James 1:25

Whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer (of God’s Word), but a doer of the work (of the Word), this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Being a doer of God’s Word frees us from the cursed thinking and acting of Satan and empowers us with the blessed thinking and acting of Jesus. The more we renew our mind with God’s Word, the more the Spirit of the Son of God within us rules and runs our life (Galatians 4:6; Romans 7:23).

God can only manifest His life through us if we freely obey and do God’s Word/will. As James 1:25 tells us, if we, looking

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into *The Perfect Law of Liberty*, become a doer of God's Word, we will be blessed and empowered to prosper in all areas of life. The more we are conformed into the image of Jesus, the more we will prosper in all our ways upon this earth.

God's liberty is the freedom for us to become all we can through Jesus. But to have this, we must join in intimate, 24/7, Agape Love fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost and never forget that the avowed enemy of God's *Perfect Law of Liberty* is our self-will (Matthew 6:10).

SELF-WILL IS THE AUTHOR OF SIN

Self-will comes from the Satan-infected carnal mind of natural born women and men. It cannot (is incapable of) obeying God's written or spoken Word (Romans 8:5-8). Instead, it can only think, speak and obey the words of self. It authors all our sin, which keeps us Spiritually dead and separated from God in hell on earth. Until we get Spirit-born and trade in self-will for God's will, we aren't able to partake of and enjoy the love, peace, power and prosperity of living in God's heavenly life on earth.

Without being Spirit-born and having the life of Christ living within us, it is very hard for us to hear God's voice. Instead, we hear Satan, self and the voice of natural men who urge us to pursue our own words and ways. To the natural minded, godless man or woman, free will is the excuse for self-will to run riot.

Ever since Satan seduced Adam and Eve to choose self-will over God's will, the free will of man has been Satan's playground. A man is always right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25; Proverbs 21:2). Therefore, in his mind whatever he chooses to do is "good." However, only God is good (Luke 18:19), so only thoughts and things of God ultimately prove to be good.

If you do not first counsel with God about a supposed "good" thought or thing, then how can you know it's really from God? Thoughts such as those of anger or rebellion or retaliation are easy to recognize as being from Satan or self.

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Other thoughts, though, are not so obvious. Thoughts to say or do something that sounds or feels good aren't necessarily from God and could eventually harm you or others.

I had a friend who was in a financial bind. The money he needed wasn't that much and I felt blessed to be able to help him out. Things continued to get worse for my friend. As I was praying and asking God about it, the Lord told me my friend had been at the point of finally listening to what Jesus wanted to tell him when I bailed him out. My "good" interfered with God's "good" for my friend. As a result of me acting on my own without seeking God's input into the situation, my friend needlessly had to again go through the experiences necessary to get him to seek the Lord's counsel and help in the situation.

Now, I can't turn that lesson into a doctrine and say I'll never help anyone financially because God is dealing with them. In fact recently another friend needed some money and the Lord told me it was okay to help him. The point is to 24/7, every time, every thought bring to God. Let Jesus show you which thought to discard and which thought to act on to bring about God's good.

Remember, God's good serves God and others without demanding payment in return. Man's good serves self and seldom gives to others without explicitly or implicitly demanding a return payment of some sort. When we act on what God tells us we have to make sure we do not try to take credit for what God is doing through us. Suppose God leads us to do a good act, but instead of giving God the credit, we seek praise and recognition for our "good" act. By getting self involved we diminish or even delete the goodness of the act. Ask yourself what happens if you do something good for someone and you are not recognized or thanked for it. If you are acting in the flesh then your flesh is going to get pricked because it wanted that "payment of thanks" for your "good" act.

In the world of man nothing is free. In the world of God all things are freely given. It doesn't matter if man does not recognize your good actions. God does and it is for God that you act

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good, not your fellow man. Do not let flesh, or your manly thinking, get in the way of what God wants.

Galatians 5:17

For the flesh lusteth against (seeks to destroy) the Spirit, and the Spirit (lusteth) against the flesh: and these are contrary (adversaries) the one to the other.

God's Spirit and man's flesh lust against one another. The Hebrew word "satan" literally means the arch-enemy and adversary to good. The Satan-infected "satisfy my flesh" thinking of soul-led man is totally dedicated to destroying the good "love and serve God" thinking of Spirit-led man. Likewise, the good thinking of God's Spirit in a man is totally dedicated to destroying the evil thinking of Satan's flesh in a man.

Romans 8:5-9

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 (fleshly: me, myself and I) minded is (Spiritual) death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity (adversary) against God: for it is not subject (obedient) to the law (Word) 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.

Without the Spirit of Christ within the person, a person cannot live through God. In order to please God and benefit from all God has to give, the person must get Spirit-born and change from being "none of His" to becoming "one with God." How does someone do this? From the inside out.

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IT BEGINS ON THE INSIDE

God's plan of creation begins on the inside with Spirit-birth, which establishes our righteous relationship with God. We become His child who now lives in heavenly places in the Spiritual Kingdom of God and heaven upon earth. Jesus teaches us how to filter our thoughts through Him so that the abundant life of Christ manifests in our life (John 1:12-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 6:1-23; Matthew 6:33).

Jesus trains us to believe, speak and walk in God's creative Word and ways rather than continue to operate through the destructive lies and emotions of our soul and body. From the inside out we gradually change as we permit Jesus to monitor and guide all our reasoning, feelings, imaginations, attitudes and physical appetites. As we change on the inside, we begin to manifest that change on the outside.

God's liberty frees us from worldly concerns. By living through the Kingdom of God within us and bringing all our thoughts to Jesus, we allow Jesus to take care of all our natural needs. That doesn't mean we quit going to work and wait for Jesus to make money mysteriously appear. It does mean we quit going to work for the sole purpose of making money. In all areas of our lives, we stand up in our callings as ministers of reconciliation and ambassadors for Christ. No matter where we are, including at work, we are not ashamed of who we are in Christ. We manifest Jesus Christ by willingly and excellently doing everything we do. We do not engage in the gossip and trash talk of soul-led life, but lovingly listen to people and offer them the solutions to life we've found in Jesus.

There is no liberty in the pursuit of soul-led self. Manly self cannot fulfill us. It cannot make us what we've been designed to become. There is no greater liberty than to be perfectly (completely) joined as one in heart, soul, mind and body with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost.

Don't let the thieves of Satan and self steal the Agape Love, Spirit, Word, faith and power of God away from you. Don't let

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Satan and your man-centered self kill your hope of enjoying the abundant life that God has prepared for you. Don't let Satan and self destroy the glory and goodness of daily growing in the peace and prosperity of the life of Christ (John 10:10).

THE LIFE OF CHRIST IS LIBERTY

The life of Christ is the New Creation Spirit of the Son of God living in a Spirit-born believer (Galatians 4:6).

The life of Christ empowers us to speak the Word of God and create God's good with which to enjoy the abundant life of God upon earth (Matthew 16:19, 18:18-20; Ephesians 2:6, 10).

The life of Christ is at war with sin. It empowers us to speak God's Word and destroy the evil that our Satan-infected, souled (*me, myself and I*) thinking daily tempts us to engage in.

Soul-led self believes that neither God nor others can be trusted to serve our selfish needs. Instead, we must control every moment of our life manipulating others to serve us.

Self-promotion mandates we get others to think and act as we want them to. Self-survival compels us to provide the appearance of cooperation to those who are more powerful than we are. We create systems of behavior, whether they are called ranks, castes, pecking orders, protocols, contracts or codes of conduct. We first recognize who has the most power in a situation. We then negotiate the best deal we can. However, once the greater power departs and the appearance of cooperation is no longer necessary, we return to manipulating the people, places and things of the world to conform to our ways of thinking and acting. This is the world and this is how human beings conformed to this world think and act.

This is why, without Spirit-birth and purposefully living through Jesus in us, our lives are a wreck on the inside. Even if we believe in God and think we are following Him, we can still be in bondage to manly thinking. We can entertain all sorts of destructive thoughts and emotions such as doubt, debate, depression, worry, weariness, anger, resentment, revenge, low

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self-esteem and other negative ways of thinking and acting. All these things steal, kill and destroy the love, peace, joy and goodness of God's life in us.

We must daily fellowship with God and discover who we are in Jesus, deploy the Word of God to destroy the evil that attacks us and create the good of God we need for our life. If we do, we have the perfect freedom of God, if we don't then we give Satan control of our lives.

The Bible admonishes us not to conform ourselves to the world, but to transform our life and circumstances by the renewing of our mind (Romans 12:1-3). Our moment by moment fellowship with Jesus strengthens our love and trust in Jesus and God's Word and transforms us to more and more feel, think, speak and act like Jesus.

Just because God has forgiven and forgotten all our sin doesn't mean we've forgotten how to sin. We must purposefully work with Jesus to reform our heart and transform our mind with the Word of God or we will continue to flip back and forth between feeling, thinking, speaking and acting through God and feeling, thinking, speaking and acting through man (Romans 12:1-2). This robs us of God's blessings and makes us unstable in all our ways (James 1:8). The hallmark of a mature son or daughter of God is that he or she is dedicated to feeling, thinking, speaking, and acting through the Word of God rather than the words of man. *Only God's Word* can destroy evil and create good. *Only God's Word* can conform us into the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ. *Only God's Word* can fulfill us and make our life on earth worthwhile and complete.

The more we press towards the high calling of God for us to become conformed into the image of Jesus – the more we live in the liberty of God's perfect love and will for our life.

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Chapter 12

BEWARE OF ANGER, PRIDE AND LUSTS

Earlier we showed how Satan misled Adam and Eve to disobey God's Word. Since Satan will also try to mislead us to disobey God's Word, let's look more fully at how he was able to trick Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:6

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Satan stirred the lusts and pride in Eve's manly soul. Her flesh lusted after the food of forbidden knowledge. Her eyes lusted to see what God didn't want her to see. Her pride longed for the wisdom with which she could rule as god over her life. Adam followed her leading. The glory of God that had covered their lives and provided for all their needs lifted off them. They found themselves physically naked and in the fallen state of Satan-infected, soul-led, Spiritually-dead men. They were full of fear, anger and blame. Remember how they ran and hid from God and were ashamed? Remember how Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent and neither took responsibility for their actions nor asked God for forgiveness? Adam and Eve freely chose to operate through the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh.

Their actions set the precedent. We sin and then either deny we have sinned or we blame God, Satan, others, the situation or the circumstances. When we are still of the world and not yet Spirit-born all we can do is sin. Even after we are Spirit-

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born, both Satan and our soul-led manly self want to continue to enslave us with anger, pride and the lusts of life.

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

In order to renew our manly mind with the mind of Christ, we must overcome the temptations to give into anger, pride and the lusts of life.

SELF-IMAGE OR JESUS' IMAGE, OUR CHOICE

We are physically born with a soul and body that drive us to fulfill our natural cravings through food, shelter, comfort, sex, etc. Yet we are also born with the Spiritual desire to be conformed into the image of God, our creator (Genesis 1:26). Because of Adam and Eve we are naturally born *without* the Spirit of God living in us to guide us. This means that Satan can easily seduce us to try and fulfill our needs through our natural appetites and the thinking and acting of the world that promises, yet never quite delivers, total fulfillment. Total fulfillment can only come through Jesus.

Even as natural men, it is possible for us to hear God, but God's still small voice often can't be heard over the roar of the other voices in our head. Most of us don't truly begin to hear God's voice until we face our personal hell on earth. In our fear, we turn our ears away from the roar inside our head and desperately call out to Jesus.

Through Spirit-birth, Jesus instantly puts His Spirit into our heart and sends His help into our life. What we do from then on determines how we live. We can continue to do things our way and live in the evil of hell on earth. Or we can continue our conversation with God and live in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. If we choose to purposefully seek God's high calling then we must also choose to recognize and reject

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Satan's attempts to get us to act through the pride of life and the lust of our eyes and flesh.

SELF-CENTERED EVIL OR GOD-CENTERED GOOD

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure in his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

We have two filters through which we see, touch, taste, smell, hear, reason, feel and imagine, our Satan-infected soul or our God-led Spirit. Whichever one we operate through will bring forth what it is designed to bring forth. Natural man realizes the power and effect of thoughts. People devote their lives studying why we react certain ways to certain things. Advertisers use the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life to entice us to buy their products. Politicians know what words and what images to use to get us to side with them.

We must become aware of what is put in front of our eyes and into our ears. This is why Paul wrote that we must capture every thought and obediently bring it to Jesus for evaluation and recommendation as to whether to keep it or cast it out (2 Corinthians 10:5). If we purposefully dedicate ourselves to 24/7 fellowshiping with God, we will increasingly be able to discriminate between Satan's temptations and Jesus' leadings. The less we will foolishly buy things because an advertiser taps into a manly desire. The less we will vote for a politician who seeks to rule over us rather than provide us with what we need. The less we will make a mess of things because we failed to capture and cast out an evil thought.

Here is an everyday example of not capturing a thought and it's escalating consequence.

I get up in the morning and the toothpaste is missing. Satan instantly stirs me to get angry. I hear Gayle move in the bed.

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Satan whispers, “She knows.” Jesus tells me, “Don’t yell at her.” Satan says, “She hid it from you.” Jesus says, “Be sweet to her.” I ignore Jesus, don’t capture Satan’s temptation and yell, “Where’s the toothpaste?”

Gayle groggily replies, “What?”

With increasing anger I reply, “Where is it? I need to brush my teeth!”

She sweetly responds, “Why you yelling at me, honey?”

I step into the bedroom and yell, “The toothpaste! You used it all up!”

Her volume increases with, “No, remember, yesterday, I told you we were running out and you said you would go to the store and get some. Didn’t you do that?”

I suddenly remember. That’s right. I said I’d buy some.

Now sitting up on the bed, with eyes squinted and a finger pointing at me, Gayle rightfully accuses me with, “I said, didn’t you do that?”

If I continue to listen to Satan, I will in some way defend myself about why I didn’t buy the toothpaste. If, on the other hand, I am ready to admit that I am wrong, Jesus will tell me to confess and ask her forgiveness. Once again, I have an opportunity to capture a thought. But I am too caught up in my anger for Jesus to get through to me, so the “conversation” quickly progresses to where Gayle stomps off, muttering, “Why do I even bother to ask you for help? I can never count on you!”

A perfectly good morning is ruined because I gave into Satan’s temptation to get angry. Once I gave into my flesh (anger and blame), then Jesus’ voice was hard to hear. I started acting through negative feelings rather than positive thoughts. I could have rejected Satan’s lies. I could have asked Jesus about the toothpaste. He would have reminded me that I had promised to buy some. I could have apologized to Gayle for forgetting to do so. She would have been more likely to forgive me. Instead, we started the day fighting.

We all have numerous opportunities, as we go about our day, to act through God and get good results, or act through

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Satan and make a mess of things. Remember, Satan will do and say anything to put us at odds with our spouse, our children and just about everyone else.

As we explained at the beginning of this chapter, Satan wrecks our life through self-centered anger, the pride of life and the lust of our eyes and flesh. Let's examine each one.

ANGER

Anger can erupt when we think someone is messing with us. Anger can also erupt when people don't do things our way. Our soul-led emotions get defensive or aggressive when we perceive people think or feel or want to act differently than we do. Often we will either verbally begin to build a case to defend our position or aggressively begin to yell and attack the other's position. Occasionally, we suppress our anger. We don't get rid of it, we simply wind it up like a clock spring until one day it snaps and we severely lash out at someone, often times someone we have no reason to be angry with.

Satan is the angriest being in existence. God won't do anything Satan's way, so Satan does all he can to keep us from doing anything God's way. All of us have preconceived ideas about how we should feel about certain situations, how to best handle a situation, or just generally what we like and what we don't like. If someone else doesn't think, say or do what we think should be done or said, Satan will press our anger button. If we don't instantly capture the thought, we will soon become angry or frustrated with the person.

Gayle, when talking to couples about marriage, often tells what she has labeled "our Mississippi story." We were driving back from her sister's wedding, traveling on Interstate 55 through Mississippi. It was about 2:00 in the morning and I had been, as I describe it, giving her tips on her driving. She finally asked me if I would like to drive. I said something to the effect that I could probably do better than what she was doing. Can you husbands relate to this? Can you also see that I really wasn't operating through Agape Love at that moment?

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She pulled over. I got out and began to walk around the back of the car. Next thing I know she hits the accelerator, the tires screech and she takes off. My jaw dropped in shock. She left me. Then it suddenly dawned on me that I was standing in a t-shirt and swim trunks 550 miles from home, with no cell phone, no wallet, no nothing.

I'll let Gayle continue the story.

“Despite the fact that I had been driving for more than 30 years and had an excellent driving record, Michael always had *helpful suggestions* about my driving. I had finally had enough and something snapped as he got out of the car, so I gunned the engine and took off amongst cries of ‘Mom!’ from the back seat. I went a few hundred yards when the Lord quietly asked: ‘Is this what you want to do?’ I said, ‘No, Lord, but he . . .’ I couldn’t even finish the thought. What could I have said when I knew the Lord was dealing with me. I wasn’t going to do like Adam and say, ‘Oh, Lord, the spouse you gave me . . .’

You see at that point it didn’t matter what Michael had done, I knew the Lord was dealing with my response. I stopped the car and in the time it took Michael to arrive out of breath at the side of the car, I had had a revelation. (*If you let the Lord deal with you in a situation, He will always reveal something to you on how you can change. It’s never about the other person, it’s always about how you can learn and grow from a situation*).

Satan had been whispering: ‘Had enough, tired of this, leave him.’ But I knew I really didn’t want to do that. Then the Lord showed me that Michael wasn’t trying to be critical of me, rather he was trying to help me. It didn’t matter that I didn’t need help at the time, or that I don’t drive the way he thinks I should drive. He was trying to help me because he loves me.

If I concentrate on that fact – his love for me – then I see that everything he does is an extension of that love. Now I no longer take it as a personal affront or attack when he does something that annoys me or frustrates me. Instead of responding to Satan’s pokes at my peace of mind, I say ‘my husband loves me; he doesn’t mean to upset me; he’s not doing it on

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purpose' and then I react to the situation through Agape Love. When Michael operates the same way with me, we can now work through any situation that before would have resulted in yelling and crying and blaming. Working through love instead of anger always works.”

THE PRIDE OF LIFE

Satan takes our primal drive to be conformed into the image and likeness of the Son of God and perverts it to pursue the godhood of *me, myself and I* (Genesis 1:26; Romans 8:29).

If we don't actively pursue Jesus' Spirit, Word and vision for our life, we will wind up being manipulated by Satan to conjure up what we think will fulfill us through the pride of our natural thoughts, emotions and imaginations.

Pride turns us away from God. We arrogantly step out on our own. We replace Jesus' leading for our life with our total control of our life. Yet, no matter how good we might look on the outside, our inside is always a mess.

Let's return to the Mississippi night noted above. By nature, I'm a perpetual student and teacher. I constantly look for ways to do things in what I think is a simpler, safer or more efficient way. I will often try to help people by suggesting another way of doing something. What I hadn't considered until Gayle left me alone in the dark on I-55, was that my suggestions might not merely be unappreciated but they might actually be offensive and thereby wrong for me to make. After Gayle let me back in the car, for the next nine hours Jesus and I quietly sat in the car and examined what had happened not only that night but throughout my marriage to Gayle.

I had to eat a lot of pride that night before Jesus could reveal to me a simple truth that has helped our marriage grow. Though Gayle may not think or act like I think or act, if her thinking or acting is not illegal, unethical or immoral I will best serve both of us by not trying to help her think or act in the way I would think or act. In other words, there are ways she proceeds that are not better or worse, nor are they wrong – they

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are just different than how I would proceed in the same situation. I had to stop trying to force her to operate through my way of thinking. She likewise had to stop trying to force me to operate through her way of thinking. Since we've both dedicated ourselves to serving rather than helping/controlling one another, we've been able to increase the depth of our love and communication with one another.

The pride of life is designed by Satan to keep us ignorant and isolated. It is driven by our fear of forfeiting our freedom to think or do things our way. The pride of life defends itself with self-righteous arrogance and anger that devour God's Agape Love, Spirit, Word, faith, peace, power and prosperity in our life.

THE LUST OF OUR EYES AND FLESH

The eyes of our souls and the flesh of our bodies assist the pride of life to steal, kill and destroy our life through their incessant lusting to have every little thing they see, feel, touch, smell, hear and imagine would make us happy. Happiness is a fleeting commodity. Once we have what makes us happy, we feel fulfilled only until another thought or another desire crosses our mind. Suddenly what we have doesn't make us happy any more. We feel empty again and so we lust after the next thing we think will make us happy. Whether it is jobs, relationships, or personal possessions, we will never be fully filled until we are filled with the joy of the Lord.

THE JOY OF THE LORD

Nehemiah 8:10 says, "... *the joy of the Lord is your strength.*" It's one of the fruits we receive through Spirit-birth (Galatians 5:22). It flows out of our fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost. Joy knows that through Jesus we have victory over all things. We know our life is sure and secure in God. No matter Satan's trial, temptation or persecution against us, we know that we can rejoice in the fact that we can ask

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Father to protect us and then, in Jesus' name, pray for Satan's evil to be bound and God's good released (Matthew 16:19, 18:18-20).

Joy rejoices that all things are possible through Jesus, Who strengthens us so that there never has to be any confusion, delusion or disaster in our life (Philippians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 10:5).

Joy smiles even though the natural world around us is full of the chaos and confusion of hell, for joy knows we live in the peace and provision of the Spirit of God in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6).

Sensual pleasures and the material things of man cannot compare to the joy of being thought by thought one with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost. The joy of the Lord will overcome our constant seeking for momentary manly delight. The Bible promises that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, then He will bring us the desires of our heart (Psalms 37:4). Let that strengthen your faith and free you from the stress and strain of seeking your fulfillment through man rather than God. Let joy overcome and overwhelm what our eyes and flesh lust after.

Joy knows that as righteous saints of God we are never abandoned and always taken care of by God (Psalms 37:25; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38). God's Word says that He is willing and able to provide for us exceedingly, abundantly beyond all we can ask or think. By always seeking first the righteousness, peace and joy of the Kingdom of God, we receive all the things of natural and supernatural life we need (Ephesians 3:20; Romans 4:21; Matthew 6:33; Romans 14:17; Philippians 4:19).

The joy of the Lord is sure and secure and forever. Once entered into, it will progressively destroy all fear and the power of the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh that make a mess of our life. It keeps us focused on following Jesus' vision for our life and overcomes the pride of life's attempts to fulfill ourselves through pursuing man made dreams.

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WE GET THE BEST TO GIVE THE BEST

Jesus wants to give you His best so that you can give His best to others. Do not let anger or the pride of life or the lusts of the flesh keep you separated from God. When you thought by thought live one with God, your mind is transformed and the temptations of the flesh get easier and easier to cast out. The things of man grow dim. The light of God grows bright in your head and your heart and your life. God continually blesses you with such things as peace of mind, better health, natural provisions and Spirit-led family and friends. When others see how blessed you are, chances are they will inquire about why you are so blessed. That's the perfect time to show and tell people about how good God is and how He only wants the best for them.

There are hundreds of different life scenarios we can be involved in. The bottom line is that God needs us to live among and minister to the people of the world. If that means He needs to make us the head of a fortune 500 company to reach others, then He does so. If we need to be a military man or woman on a base or in a war zone, then that's where we wind up. A farmer, a factory worker, a politician, an artist, a sales person, a secretary, a teacher, a mother, a father, you plug in whatever a natural man or woman can be. As ministers of God's reconciliation, we can wind up working or doing most anything. Even if we are in jail or prison when we accept Jesus as our Lord, we can still be used by God to live in and minister out the Good News of Jesus Christ to our fellow inmates.

By capturing our thoughts and overcoming anger, the pride of life, the lust of our eyes and the lust of our flesh, our life becomes a living example of Jesus Christ to those around us. In our next chapter we will learn how to enter into the power and joy of prayer, praise and worship and fully put on the heart and mind of Christ.

Chapter 13

PRAYER, PRAISE AND WORSHIP

God tells us in Psalms 22:3 that He inhabits the praises of His people. As we praise and worship Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost, God pours His presence into and upon us. He wants to join with us in celebrating the goodness and glory of Godhood. The Bible constantly urges us in all things and in all ways to praise and thank God (1 Chronicles 16:8). In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, God tells us to pray without ceasing, so in all things, in all ways, without ceasing we are to pray, praise and worship God. With this in mind, let's explore what prayer, praise and worship are and how we employ them to grow our life in Christ. We'll start with prayer.

WHY PRAY?

Through prayer we continually talk to God, hear from God and speak God's Word. When His disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He gave them Matthew 6:9-13. These scriptures tell us to hold God up as Holy, ask Him to do His will on earth as in heaven, provide us with our needs, forgive us as we forgive others, and deliver us from all the evil that tempts us to turn our back on God. This is *how* we are to pray.

Prayers do not need to be formalized or repetitive. Ask for God's will. Pray in Jesus' name and know that He will answer. We are also to pray and bind Satan and release good into a situation/circumstances (2 Timothy 1:7; Matthew 16:19). This is *why* we are to pray

DON'T BEG – JUST BELIEVE

You don't have to beg or cry out to God to answer your prayer. By simply declaring the Word, you will see Father and Jesus send the Holy Ghost to bring forth that which God has

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provided for you in His Word. Philippians 4:19 says that God shall supply all your need. Not might supply, not some of your need. It says He WILL supply ALL your need. Believe that when you pray the Word of God that Word will be activated by the Holy Ghost to destroy Satan's evil and/or create God's good.

It's that simple. If I want some evil destroyed and some good created to take its place, in Jesus' name I tell Satan's evil (thing, place, situation, circumstance, pain, disease, etc.) to go and God's good (thing, place, situation, circumstance, peace, health, etc.) to come. We don't have to beg. We don't have to cry. We don't have to promise God all sorts of things if only He would just . . . You get the picture?

Satan will try to convince you that your prayer won't be answered. It is the only way he can attempt to stop the Word of God. If he can make you doubt that what you pray won't happen then he might be able to keep you from praying it. Reject his lie. Pray and then thank Jesus for answering your prayer. Even if you don't see/hear/feel the answer, believe that it's on the way because God's Word never returns void. It is never left unanswered but is always accomplished in the time and way God chooses (Isaiah 55:11).

If you need mental, emotional or physical healing, use 1 Peter 2:24 and Mark 16:18. Lay your hands upon yourself. Ask Father to heal you. Then in Jesus' name command the pain or sickness to go and God's healing to come and thank Father for healing you.

If you need help in any other area of life but can't think of a specific scripture that applies to it, you can always call upon Philippians 4:19, since it declares that all your need is provided to you through God's riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Simply ask Jesus to provide you with what you need and then thank Him for providing it to you.

Bottom line: if you know God's Word and pray God's Word, you will receive God's Word. It's a simple application of God's universal law of sowing and reaping. It takes sowing (praying God's Word in faith) to release God's grace and reap

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God's reward (Hebrews 11:6). If we believe God's Word is true for everyone all the time, then we can always faithfully pray it and receive what it says. If we don't know or if we doubt God's Word, then we can't pray it and have the good results of that Word.

Hear what I am saying! Christians who are ignorant of the biblical Word or who don't believe that all the New Testament promises and provisions are for today, limit Father's ability to answer their prayers. Both the ignorant and the *It's not for us today* believers are never sure if Father will answer their prayers. These Christians weakly beg God or try to make a deal with God to get what they, in fact, already have for the asking.

In John 14:14, Jesus says, "***If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.***" As I said earlier, when you operate through the name/authority of Jesus inside you it is Jesus' Holy Spirit speaking through you. God's Word spoken by you through Jesus' Holy Spirit will accomplish that which it is sent to accomplish.

Imagine someone saying to you "Here's the key to that car. It's yours. Take it and drive the car." But you keep replying, "I need a car. I wish I could get a car." The key is there – just take it! Your inheritance in Jesus is there – just take it! Believe God's Word is true and for you. In Jesus' name, boldly ask Father for what His Word already declares you are and have in Christ. Ask Him. Thank Him for meeting your current need. Thank Him that He will meet your every need through His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Matthew 16:19, 18:18-20; Romans 8:17; Philippians 4:19).

TALK TO GOD

Remember, the simplest explanation of prayer is talking to God. The more you talk to God about anything and everything, the more He will respond. Prayers do not have to be long emotional outpourings of what is on your heart, though they can be. Prayers don't have to be requests for miracles or for the

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seemingly impossible, though they can be. Just talk to God. Let your loving Father know the desires of your heart.

Anyone who knows my wife, knows that she is a diehard Saints football fan. One day, years ago when the only game you could watch was the game the network carried, she was watching a game where the score was something like 45-3 in the third quarter. I will let her continue:

“I’m watching this really bad game and every few minutes the score for the Saints-Falcon game would flash on showing the lead constantly flipping. I said, ‘Lord, why do they have this boring game on? I want to watch the Saints game!’ A few minutes later, the announcer says: ‘We don’t normally do this in the middle of a game but we are switching to the New Orleans-Atlanta game now.’ I started thanking the Lord! The next day, as I was carpooling with my boss to work, I told him what had happened. His response was: ‘Gayle, God does not care about a football game. He has way more important things to worry about.’ God does not worry about anything, but I told my boss, ‘God loves me; He cares for what I care about.’ My boss couldn’t grasp that God would be interested in even the smallest things of my life.

Later that week, I was getting ready to eat lunch. Michael had helped pack my lunch that morning because I was running late. He had forgotten the salad dressing. I had a big salad but no dressing. My first thought was to get mad and angry at my husband, but I told the devil no and instead thanked God for my husband, then added, ‘But now, Lord, I need salad dressing.’ I must have said that last part out loud because I heard my boss exclaim, ‘Now she’s praying for salad dressing!’ A few minutes later a coworker came in and said, ‘I’m cleaning the fridge downstairs. Anyone want this salad dressing I found?’ My boss stood in the doorway of his office with a surprised look on his face staring at me.

Here’s the point. God didn’t give me what I asked for just because He loved me. He answered my request to show others His goodness and love. A few days later my boss asked me to pray with him for his brother who was having health issues. He

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had never done that before. Then a few weeks later, he came in and told me excitedly how he and his wife had been walking a trail the day before, talking about things they needed/wanted, and he had stopped her and said, 'Let's pray to God about that.' He would have never even thought of doing that when he was so sure God was too busy with the problems of the world to be interested in little *inconsequential* things.

But God is a big God. He can handle the big things as well as the little things. If you have trouble praying/believing for big things, then start with little things. Just talk to God. Tell Him what you feel, what you think, what you desire. Will He give you everything you ask for every time? Those of us who are parents know that the answer to that is no. But He wants to help you and take care of you and give you things that will bless you and be a testimony to others. Just talk to Him. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.”

SPECIFIC RESULTS OR PERFECT WILL

Sometimes God reveals to us what exactly needs to be done and has us pray for those specific results. Other times we don't know the specific results that would best meet our need. In such cases, we ask Father to bring forth His perfect will and provide us with what God knows we need.

For instance, say you are led to specifically pray to get a new job. Soon you are provided with three job opportunities. But when you look at them, you have no specific leading as to which job to take. At that point you ask Father to bind Satan and self out of the decision and loose (send) the Holy Ghost to provide you God's perfect will for you in the situation. Once prayed, you then thank Father and wait upon Holy Ghost to provide you with God's Word and other signs and manifestations that confirm the job He wants you to take.

Gayle and I had friends who were in this exact situation. The husband was no longer satisfied with his job, plus there were rumors of impending layoffs at his place of employment. The husband and wife prayed for another job to come along.

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Within a few weeks, the husband was offered two different jobs. After he prayed about them, he told his wife that Jesus had told him to take Job B. His wife was sure he hadn't heard correctly from the Lord because Job A offered almost double the money, was closer to their home and more in line with what her husband enjoyed doing. The husband listened to the Lord and took Job B despite his wife's arguments. I suspect that if our friends had once again come together in prayer that the wife would also have heard from the Lord for her husband to take Job B. About three months later, not only did the company where our friend had formerly worked announce massive layoffs, but the other company (Job A) proclaimed bankruptcy and closed unexpectedly. If our friend had taken Job A, he would have been out of work. Within a year, the company he had been led to work for (Job B) offered him a better position and a huge increase in salary. He ended up making more money than Job A had offered him. You see, Father knew which job was the job for our friend. All our friend had to do was pray, hear, believe and act on what he heard – despite any natural circumstances. Sadly, we have also had friends who took jobs they thought were the best, without truly listening to what God had to say, and ended up being miserable.

FEAR FAILS, FAITH SUCCEEDS

We should not pray out of fear. Fear is from Satan. Faith is from God. It takes faith to destroy evil or create good. Faith prays with the overcoming power, perfect love and sound mind of Christ contained within us. That is why, in Jesus' name, we can boldly come before the throne of our beloved Father and fearlessly pray our prayers of faith to Him and through Him (2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:18; Hebrews 4:16).

Spiritual boldness doesn't mean we yell and shout at Satan or beat our hands in the air in an attempt to punch the devil in the nose. Spiritual boldness means we have total confidence in who we are in Christ. We know without a shadow of a doubt that we are the righteous, anointed sons and daughters of God. We know that we are one with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost

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with total power to destroy evil or create good by simply opening our mouths and faithfully praying. Prayer requires the act of faith. Faith believes that the Word of God we speak and do will come forth as God's Word declares it will (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Matthew 16:19, 18:18-20; Isaiah 55:11). The only thing that can block bold, faith-filled, scripturally-based prayer is disobedience.

Obedience puts God in charge of our life. We give God all our thoughts and only act upon those thoughts God authorizes us to act upon. Disobedience puts us in charge of our life. We act upon the thoughts we decide to act upon. God will neither compete with us nor will He get involved with what we want to do on our own. In short, disobedience releases Satan-infected, Self **IN** charge thinking and acting into our life, which keeps us from engaging in God powered faith-filled prayer.

James 5:16

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Effectual means with power, or with a good result. Since we are the righteousness of Christ, we know without a doubt, that as soon as we speak or pray God's Word, Holy Ghost releases it to do what it is supposed to do. We *fervently* (stubbornly without giving up in disbelief) thank and praise God for our answered prayer until we see it fully manifest. We don't worry or fear. We believe and obey.

PRAISE

Thus far we've been examining prayer, but what about praise? Our prayer is the business side of God through which God does the work of destroying evil and creating good. Our praise and worship are the beautiful, wondrous, walking in love side of God. It is where we, Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost join together to smile, cry in joy and gratitude, laugh, hold

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hands, hug, kiss, sing, dance and generally enjoy one another's company.

Praise adores God by raising God up above all the worries and woes of life. It is our sweet sacrifice of ongoing thanks to God for all He is to us and for all He provides us with (Hebrews 13:5).

Hebrews 13:15

. . . let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Praise enthusiastically proclaims thanks to God from the joy filled depths of our heart for the wonderfulness of God and His blessings in our life, especially during times of temptation.

James 1:2

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

Along with prayer, praise is what we often use to punch Satan in the nose, knock him to the floor and put him under our feet. When he tries to tempt and knock us down with worry, fear, guilt, depression and all the other stinking thinking he daily attacks us with, we befuddle and confuse him by praising God. Now I am not saying we praise God for what the devil is doing; we praise God because the devil is defeated and has no power over us. The more we praise God, the less we buy into Satan's lies and waste our time feeling lousy about life.

Often prayer and praise work in tandem. One day Gayle was in the store with our then seven year old daughter, Rachel. Gayle's chest started hurting. She had been moving heavy boxes and furniture all week, but the devil tried to tell her it was her heart. "*Your mom had heart problems; your father had heart problems. You have heart problems. It's your heart...*" whisper, whisper, whisper. Rachel, said, "Mommy, let's pray." So they did but Gayle's chest kept hurting. She started

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rubbing it and worrying about it – until Rachel exclaimed: “Why are you still complaining? We have prayed!” Rachel literally startled Gayle who responded: “You’re right, we have prayed!” and began to praise God for healing her. Both Gayle and Rachel began singing to God in the store and by the time they got through shopping the pain had left. Gayle had prayed; she believed what she had prayed, but she needed the praise part to totally break through Satan’s attempts to block the prayer.

WORSHIP

Then, there is worship. Worship holds, hugs and kisses on Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost when we are not being attacked by Satan or soul-led self. Worship lifts us and places us in the peace and the power of Agape Love fellowship with God

God inhabits our praises and worship (Psalm 22:3). That means as we praise and worship Him, God’s glory comes upon us in addition to His presence living in us. His glory carries His power, which miraculously makes things better without us even praying.

Praise and worship require nothing but a heart full of love for God. Psalmists and song writers in the Body of Christ who love God create anointed songs for us to praise and worship with. If sung from our heart to God, these songs help stir the unity of our Spirit and faith. With our hearts and voices joined as one reaching out to God, the glory of God will often manifest itself within our midst and miraculously work in our behalves to heal and deliver, to reveal and anoint, to prophesy and inspire, to do whatever God desires to do or gift us with.

Gayle listens to Christian songs on the radio when she is in her car. She has often remarked that her spirit gets renewed and she feels strengthened. Worry or any negative thoughts usually sail out the window as she sings along with her favorite Christian artist.

As we can see, praise and worship are not restricted to church services. At home and elsewhere, with or without music and song, God will likewise inhabit our heartfelt praise

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and worship. The perceivable presence and glory of God will often manifest when we praise and worship God in English or in the tongues of the Spirit regardless of where we are.

God's plan for man is to teach man to love God as God loves man with His whole heart, soul, mind and strength. Through Spirit-birth and intimate thought by thought fellowship with one another, God and man no longer remain separated but are Spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically joined as one in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). A big part of our fellowship with God is making love to Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost through praise and worship. The more we do so, the easier it becomes for us to believe and receive the fact that we are truly one with Them.

WHIP EVIL

Praise and worship chase the negative thinking of Satan and self away. This is why, as noted above, it's a great idea to enter into praise and worship any time you are attacked by stinking thinking. Jesus is the life and light of men. When you ask Him, He will shine His holy light at the evil darkness that comes upon you and destroy it. Darkness cannot exist where there is light. Shine God's light right at that darkness (John 1:4-5). He will give you the garment of praise when the evil spirit of heaviness comes upon you (Isaiah 61:3). Praise will lift that heaviness right off you. In Jesus' name, bind and cast out the stinking thinking and call upon Father to fill you with the Spirit of praise. Give Holy Ghost your heart and tongue. Open your mouth and let Holy Ghost praise, worship and thank Father for taking care of the stinking situation the thinking comes from. The evil that was whipping you will be whipped.

Prayer keeps our head in conscious contact with God, so we can clearly hear God's voice and conduct God's business of creation. Praise and worship join our heart with God's heart, so we can support our prayer with God's Agape Love. Without the heart of praise and worship energizing our prayers with the

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love, Spirit, Word and faith of God within us, our prayers will be dead, dry and dogmatic.

Prayer, praise and worship stir the presence of God in us. They release the joy and faith of God through us. They provide us with the mental and emotional assurance of our secure place in God's head, heart and Spiritual family, as His beloved, eternal daughter or son.

A steady diet of prayer, praise and worship enables us to minister the Word of God with authority and with the demonstration of signs, wonders and miracles. If you want to read more about living and ministering through prayer, praise and worship, we recommend the book *Breakthrough To Your Miracle* by Pastor Jason Noble. Now onto learning about some of the wonder filled ways the Holy Ghost helps us live the abundant life of Christ.

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Chapter 14

HOLY GHOST MINISTRY

What do we mean by Holy Ghost ministry? Simply letting the Holy Ghost do to us what He did to Jesus. The Holy Ghost put Jesus into the womb of the virgin Mary, birthed Him onto the earth, connected Him to Father God and empowered His life and ministry (Luke 1:35; 3:22; John 14:9, 10). When we ask Jesus to save us, this same thing happens. God's Holy Ghost first Spirit-births us and connects us to Father God and Jesus. Then He helps, comforts, and teaches us how to think, act and minister God's Word through nine gifted manifestations and six commissioned empowerments (John 14:16-18, 26; John 17:20-23; Acts 1:8, 2:1-4; 1 John 2:27). We'll first note the manifestations and then the empowerments.

GOD'S GIFTED MANIFESTATIONS

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

But the manifestation (gift) of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues all these work by the same (Holy) Spirit, who divides to every man severally as he will.

You need do nothing but follow the Holy Ghost's leading. He will provide you with the appropriate scriptures, their explanations and applications to the people's lives. He will point you to people and show you how He wants to specifically gift them. Don't be afraid to follow His leading. He will never

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embarrass you. You will be able to easily minister any of His nine manifestations to those He sends you to.

All you do is obey the prompting of the Holy Ghost. Don't try to figure anything out. Just let Him use you. Using your manly mind to try and figure out or analyze what God wants to do will stop the flow of the Holy Ghost. Maintain conscious contact with Holy Ghost through the eyes and ears of your Spirit man so that He can direct Jesus' ministry through you.

Let's look at each of the nine gifted manifestations of the Holy Ghost in the above scriptures.

A word of wisdom provides divine guidance to help a person deal with a situation. The wisdom of God is not always in line with the common sense of man. For example, say a person asks you to pray for a specific thing, but instead God gives you a word of wisdom and instructs you to tell the person they need to forgive and bless someone that person hates. This makes no sense to the manly mind but if the person will apply that word of wisdom, then whatever the situation was will improve.

A word of knowledge is information about a person's past or present life that you could not have known and signifies to the person that God is speaking through you. This is not information which you might have overheard or could in any way have received before God reveals it to you. But once you've spoken it, the person will realize that it is God speaking to them through you about the situation, thing, malady, circumstance, etc.

Faith in this instance means to fully believe for a miracle. This is extraordinary divine faith that comes upon you and can't be shaken.

The working of miracles is God's divine intervention into the ordinary course of nature to change whatever has to be changed in order to meet the need of a person.

Gifts of healing heal the mind, emotions or body of a person often in an immediate, obvious way.

Holy Ghost Ministry

Prophecy is a God directed word of encouragement and comfort that builds up a person's or congregation's Spirit as well as occasionally reveals things about the future.

Discerning of spirits reveals to you the spirits that are moving a person to speak and act.

Divers kinds of tongues is Holy Ghost directed public speaking in tongues by a person, who has asked the service leader for permission to do so and been granted such permission to minister a prophetic word to the congregation. This is always immediately followed by the interpretation of the tongues and should not be confused with personal praying and singing in tongues by attendees during a service, which do not require interpretation.

Interpretation of tongues is the interpretation of the tongues spoken in a service for the divine purpose of ministering a prophetic word to the congregation. The interpretation is provided by the person who spoke in tongues or by someone else who God gifts to do so.

GOD'S COMMISSIONED EMPOWERMENTS

Mark 16:15-18

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

In these scriptures, Jesus commissions (empowers) us to use His name to do various things. First, we are commissioned to preach and teach the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ to anyone, any place, any time the Holy Ghost leads us to. It is not our responsibility to make non-believers believe, receive the gospel and get Spirit-born. Neither can we force Christians

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to Spiritually grow beyond where they are. It is simply our commission to carry God's Good News.

The second part of this great commission begins with us casting out devils. Satan's devil appeared when Jesus went into the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13). Jesus wouldn't give into temptations to His flesh that the devil offered Him. Jesus knew and spoke the true Word of God and overcame the devil's twisting of the scriptures. He drove the devil away. We can likewise drive away the devil if we speak God's Word.

Today, devils continue to twist scriptures to confuse and mislead Christians into believing things about God that are not true. A classic example is the thinking that God gets people's attention by using pain, sickness or the storms of life. John 10:10 declares that it's the thief, Satan, who constantly tries to steal our joy, kill our hope and destroy our life. The scripture says Jesus brings us life and life in abundance. Jesus can't both bless us and curse us. Curses only come from Satan.

Occasionally, Jesus uses us to cast a devil out of a person. We don't shout or jump up and down in order to force the satanic thinking to leave. Instead, we look the devil in the eye and, in Jesus' name, calmly command it to get out of the person and go back to hell where it belongs. Most of the time, however, simply sharing the Word of God will drive devils out of people. Once the person sees the truth in God's Word, then the person can apply the truth to their life and be freed from the demonic thinking. It almost never works to simply tell a person they are wrong. Let the person realize the error by showing them scripture. The person has to reject Satan by recognizing and rejecting Satan's unscriptural word.

Jesus also commissions us to speak in new tongues. We will discuss this later in the chapter in the section entitled *God's Tongues And Witness Fire*.

The next thing Jesus commissions us to do is to take up serpents. No, this does not mean that we are to handle snakes. Serpents are brothers to devils. Serpents bite our flesh rather than twist God's scriptures. In Genesis 3 we saw the serpent bite Eve with the pride of life and poison her with the evil of

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self-centered, fleshly thinking and acting. This cost her, and then Adam, their right standing with God. Since then, all natural born people have been manipulated by Satan's serpent to serve their flesh rather than serve God. The serpent constantly whispers into our ear and tells us how wrong everyone else is and how right we are to think what we think and do what we want. Once Spirit-born, though, we have the divine ability to handle, to pick up, to take power over and cast these whisperings out of our life. As ministers of reconciliation, we also have the ability not only to cast out the devils in others but also to handle the serpents in others through preaching, teaching and prayer.

Jesus additionally said if we drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt us. There is a literal meaning to this, which is to quickly call upon Jesus to heal us if we accidentally drink something poisonous. There is a significant Spiritual interpretation, as well. Our mind and Spirit are constantly drinking in thoughts from Satan, self, others and God. Since God is the only reliable creator of good for man, if a thought is not filtered through Christ in us, it might not be good for us to think or act upon it. Instead of being healthful and helpful, it might prove to be a deadly thing. The only way to insure against drinking in and acting upon deadly thoughts is to 24/7 walk and talk with God. Filter all thoughts, including emotions, attitudes of the will, physical feelings and bodily appetites through God's Word and Christ in us. No matter what thought, emotion or attitude we drink, if we will filter it through God and His Word before acting upon it, then it will not harm us (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Finally Jesus commissions us to lay hands on the sick and they shall recover, which means just what it says. Every time we are attacked by Satan with pain or sickness we should instantly lay hands upon ourselves and, in Jesus' name, cast it out. We are also called to lay healing hands on our spouse and children and teach them to do the same for themselves. As Holy Ghost leads us, we are also to lay our hands of healing

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upon people in front of us or, through the Spirit, those who are not in our physical presence.

When I minister in hospitals, I often hold hands with the patient when praying. However, sometimes a patient is so frail I don't touch him or her. Instead, through my prayer, Holy Ghost lays His Spiritual hands directly upon the patient. In public meetings Holy Ghost has me administer healing by the laying on of my hands or by me getting attending Christians to lay hands upon the sick and pray for them. In the street, I usually hold the person's hand and pray. When I pray a healing for someone not in my presence, I simply raise my hands and, in Jesus' name, I pray to Father to heal the person. Because I was obedient to pray for the person, then the Holy Ghost can lay His Spiritual hands upon the person and heal the person.

GOD'S TONGUES AND WITNESS FIRE

As mentioned earlier, one of the miraculous signs of God's ministry through believers is their speaking in the new tongues of God. In Acts, just before He ascended into Heaven, Jesus commanded His believers to wait in Jerusalem for the Father to baptize them with the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:4-8). That happened on Pentecost morning when tongues of fire came to rest on the believers in that upper room and they all began to speak in other tongues. They then went onto the streets of Jerusalem and witnessed about the *Wonderful Works Of God* to all the Jews in each Jew's native language (Acts 2:1-8). Three thousands of those Jews accepted Jesus as their lord and savior.

A few years later, Jesus led Peter to preach the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the first Gentiles (non-Jews). Those Gentiles got both Spirit-born and baptized by God's Holy Ghost and began speaking in tongues (Acts 10:34-48). All the first Christians were both Spirit-born and baptized by the Holy Ghost with the miraculous sign of speaking in tongues through God's Holy Ghost Spirit within them. In John 17:20-23 Jesus declared that we will receive all the first Christians received. As Spirit-born believers, we are likewise able to receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of

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speaking in the tongues of God. It isn't just for a select few. It is for whoever wants it.

The tongues of God are what the Old Testament calls stammering lips (Isaiah 28:11). In the New Testament they are called the "unknown" tongues of God (1 Corinthians 14:2, 4). They are known to God. Sometimes they are known to the person hearing it, like on Pentecost morning. The speaker doesn't know what they are speaking, they just let the tongues flow through them. This permits God to speak and pray His perfect will through our mouths. When it comes to praying for people, often I don't know exactly what to pray. But God knows.

Like the Apostle Paul, I simply give my mouth to God's Holy Ghost and let Him do the praying (1 Corinthians 14:14-15). That way God can use me to more effectively intercede for others instead of me guessing what I should pray. I also like the intimacy with God that the Holy Ghost praying through my mouth provides me, intimacy that also permits me to simultaneously talk with God through my mind while I pray with God through my mouth.

There are many good things that happen when we speak, pray or sing through God's Holy Ghost. It heightens our awareness of God's presence, stirs our Spirit, renews our energy, and rewards us with the witness of God in us and through us to others. It enables us to clearly hear God's voice. It empowers us to effectively pray and destroy Satan's evil and create God's good. It spiritually builds up our faith to believe, speak, do and receive all that God wants to give us and minister through us including the Holy Ghost gifts and empowerments mentioned above. Bill Hamon has a great book entitled *Seventy Reasons For Speaking In Tongues*. It thoroughly explores this topic. Inexpensive used copies and a free PDF of it can be found on the Internet.

God won't force you to get Holy Ghost baptized. He is a loving Father, who wants us to freely and willingly come to Him through our faith in His heart and His Word. What Gayle and I have found is that speaking, singing, praising, worship-

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ping and praying in tongues through God's Holy Spirit within us intimately joins us with God. It helps us clearly hear God's voice and feel God's presence, so that we can love on God and be and do what He wants. Before we were baptized by the Holy Ghost, Gayle and I were quiet, keep God to ourselves Christians. Once we got baptized by the Holy Ghost with the evidence of His Tongues and Witness Fire, we began to share Jesus with others and grow more intimate with God. All we have to do to receive Holy Ghost Baptism is to ask Father to provide us with His Holy Ghost Tongues and Witness Fire. It's so simple to receive anyone can get it, even me, whose whole life before coming to Christ was devoted to fully figuring everything out and taking control over it.

Everyone's Holy Ghost baptism story is similar but different. Here's my story. I'd been Spirit-born for a few years and reading and studying the Word and trying to figure out everything about God and Christianity. My church at that time was not strong in teaching the Word of God, so I sought out Bible teachers on the radio and TV. One night I heard a TV Bible teacher talking about getting baptized in the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. I'd heard such teaching before, but hadn't paid it much heed. This night was different. God got my attention and stirred me. I turned the TV off, walked into the back yard and looked up at the star studded sky. I raised my hands and said, "Okay, Father, in Jesus' name, I'm asking for the Holy Ghost to baptize me and fill me with Your Tongues and Fire."

I stood there for about three minutes with nothing happening. Satan and my soul were by then laughing at me and telling me what foolishness this was. I told them to shut up and turned my ear back to Jesus, who told me to focus on Him, open my mouth, loosen my tongue and let whatever sound came out come out. I followed orders. When I loosened my tongue I felt a small push up from my belly and out of my mouth came the sound "lochmon." That was it. I smiled at Jesus and said, "How appropriate: an Irish Celtic word." I'm Irish-American. Lochmon sounded Celtic to me. Of course,

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since I don't speak Celtic, how was I to really know what language it was? I like figuring things out, remember?

Jesus told me to practice my new tongue and by the next day I was speaking many words. Today, I speak in many different Holy Ghost languages. I just open my mouth, loose my tongue, move my lips and let Holy Ghost speak, pray or sing through me as He will.

If you haven't received the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of Tongues and Witness Fire and you want to, then do the following. In Jesus' name, pray to Father to baptize you with His Holy Ghost. Then believe you have received God's Tongues and Witness Fire within you. Raise your hands, close your eyes and shut your mind to anything but loving Jesus. Open your mouth and out loud pray, "I love you, Jesus," over and over again. Stay focused upon Jesus and cast everything else out of your mind. After a while keep your tongue and lips moving and making sounds but stop thinking and praying in English. Keep making sounds, relax and give your tongue and lips over to God's Holy Ghost. Let Him control them and continue the sounds in the language of prayer, praise and worship He elects to speak through you. Like me, you may get one word to begin with. Like many others you may get numerous words to begin with. No matter how the tongues might first come, daily pray, praise, worship, speak and sing in your tongues of the Spirit. Not only will your language increase and flow, but your whole life will begin to grow and glow in the glory and gifts of God

Now onto our next chapter where we will talk about some of the other gifts of God, including financial freedom.

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Chapter 15

FINANCIAL FREEDOM GOD'S WAY

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

God rewards those who, through intimate Agape Love fellowship, thought by thought diligently (without stopping) seek to communicate with Him. It is God we seek, not His blessings. Many Christians get this wrong – they seek God's blessings instead of seeking Him. But it is only by knowing God and fellowshiping with Him that God can transform our thinking and then reward us with His blessings.

Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness (right thinking); and all these things (of natural life) shall be added unto you.

Everything God does is motivated by His everlasting Agape Love for us. When we obey His Word regarding our finances, we will have enough money to pay our bills and financially support the work of establishing Jesus' New Testament covenant. Do I mean that God shows us how to succeed/prosper in all our ways, including finances? Yes, that is what I mean.

Deuteronomy 8:18

But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant.

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God can't make us love Him or help Him establish His New Testament Covenant. We have to decide to seek His thinking and acting rather than our thinking and acting in all areas of our life. When we do, then God can move in all areas of our life, including finances. Remember, it is faith that pleases God and causes Him to reward us. By us operating through the heart, mind and faith of Christ in us, God can release financial blessings to flow to us and through us to others.

FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE

Jesus intimately fellowshiped with Father and Holy Ghost and lived through the power, love and sound mind of Christ. God blessed Jesus in every area of Jesus' life including finances. Jesus did not exploit God's loving nature in order to gain worldly wealth and waste it upon the lusts of life. We are not to exploit God's loving nature in order to gain worldly wealth and waste it upon the lusts of life.

That is not to say that God does not want us to have good things. He does. He wants us to prosper in all our ways and to be a testament for others. He wants to bless us so that we can be a blessing to others. As we've said before, the ways of God often confound the minds of men. By putting God first over our needs and desires, we allow God to meet those needs and desires (Matthew 6:33). We trust God to provide us with all we need through Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

If we will love, serve and give God our all, including all our finances, then all our life, including our money, becomes God's. We no longer have to worry about money. This is what our First Century forefathers did and God rewarded them with on-going increase in all areas of their life. They always had an abundance to meet their personal need and the need of others Jesus led them to.

Luke 6:38

Give and it shall be given (back) unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom (life).

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For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

The above two scriptures say that the way we give God our time and money shall be multiplied back to us by God. In other words, God will cause men to give unto us in the same fashion that we follow God's leading to give to the people and works of His Kingdom.

God wants us to be cheerful givers. We should freely and cheerfully give what God leads us to give His people. In due season God will cause others to freely and cheerfully give to us. This can manifest in all sorts of ways such as jobs others do for us at great discounts, or promotions, raises and bonuses at work, or succeeding in our own business, or people forgiving us debts, paying off our bills, and giving us gifts. Bottom line: we can't out give God. He will always return it to us multiplied!

IT TAKES MONEY TO LIVE AND MINISTER

Because it takes money to live and minister, Jesus often talked about money. Under the Old Testament Law of Moses God financially blessed those well-to-do believers who every three years were obligated to pay a tithe (10% of their income) to their home synagogue. The tithe was a religious tax that was used to support the priests and provide for the needs of the congregation's orphans, widows, financially poor and guests. God blessed the tithing Israelites by removing the curse of Satan off their money, prospering their businesses and insuring

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that their families maintained good Spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health (Deuteronomy 14:22-29).

Malachi 3:10-12

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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground (businesses); neither shall your vine (any member of your immediate family) cast her fruit before the time in the field (and get sick and die before their time), saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

This demonstrated to the Old Testament Israelites God's love, power and faithfulness in the area of finances. All they had to do was obey the Law of Moses and God would financially bless them and insure the good health of their families. If, on the other hand, a well-to-do Israelite did not tithe then their finances could not be protected and blessed by God. Instead the finances would be cursed under the Law of Moses and devoured by Satan.

Jesus' New Testament Covenant removed the Old Testament law of the church tithe tax and its curse off our finances. God no longer requires us to legally obey and mechanically give our time and money to Him or His work upon the earth. We won't be cursed or suffer if we choose not to give. Rather, God encourages us to love Him with our whole heart, soul, mind and physical and financial strength. Instead of begrudgingly giving an obligatory legal tithe, God wants us to seek Him in every area of our life and then follow the leading of His Holy Spirit to freely and cheerfully give of our time, talent and resources to the people He directs us to.

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God is able to reward our support of His work. He wants to bless us when we cheerfully bless Him in our giving. (For more on this topic, search the Internet for: "Rethinking The Tithe" by Douglas Weaver and "Should The Church Teach Tithing" by Russell Earl Kelly.)

FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY

Many of us come to Jesus in poor financial shape. Once Spirit-born it is necessary for God to transform our mind from worrying about where we're going to get the money to pay our bills to believing that through Him all things are possible. Our 24/7 fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost transforms our mind and releases Jesus' faith within us to believe, speak and do what God's Word says to think, speak and do regarding our finances. When we do, here a little, there a little, things start to change for the better. Our monthly bills begin to get paid on time. Our debt begins to dwindle. Our worry over making money and having enough to get by changes to thanking God that He is supplying all our need through His riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19). The weekly dollar we cheerfully give to our home church becomes \$2, then \$10, then \$20, then more and more. The more God gives us, the more we have available to freely and cheerfully give to support Jesus' work.

No matter how financially poor a person might be when they first come to Jesus, whatever they give, if given in Agape Love, fulfills Luke 6:38. Remember the story Jesus told of the widow woman who gave two mites at the temple? Jesus praised her giving, saying it was far above others who gave much more. Why? Because God looks at the heart of the person. He knows when we follow His leading to freely and cheerfully give our time, ministry and money. Over time God provides the faithful believer with more and more ministry, time and money to give to God's work (Mark 12:43-44).

God loves and honors those who wholly love and honor God in their life. He honors them by daily providing them with

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increase in all areas of their life (Philippians 4:19; Ephesians 3:20). God can't honor those Christians who choose to love, honor and fellowship with the world system and man-made religion rather than loving, honoring and fellowshiping with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost. When we put our self rather than God in charge of our life and finances, He can't influence, honor and bless our finances.

CHEERFULLY GIVE

Spreading the Good News of Jesus takes money. For the New Testament Church to have money, its members must have money and a cheerful spirit of giving to God in all ways. Cheerful giving is motivated by our love for God and His work upon the earth. Gayle and I belong to a love filled giving church that strongly encourages us to support the establishment of God's New Testament Covenant at home and throughout the earth. Our church supports ministries worldwide, sending money to help build churches, orphanages, feeding programs, and whatever else is needed to promote the gospel. Locally, we minister to whomever God sends us to or brings to us no matter what shape they are in spiritually, mentally, emotionally, socially or financially.

Our pastor cultivates the spirit of cheerfully giving to God and cheerfully receiving from God in all areas of our life, including finances. This results in frequent testimonies of financial increase. Jobless people in our church have been provided with employment. Employed people have had debts cancelled, secured Godly promotions, and obtained raises where the company had said there would be no raises. God has helped others start successful new businesses, as well as increased the earnings of old businesses. Our God is a good God. When we cheerfully support the work of spreading His gospel through our local church and our personal ministries, God cheerfully supports us.

A few years ago, when Gayle was caught up in massive layoffs at her place of employment, her first thought was not

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“Lord, what are we going to do? How are we going to pay our bills?” No, the first thing out of her mouth was, “Well, Lord, you’ll have to provide.” Almost instantly her cell phone rang. It was the principal of our daughter’s school wanting to know if she’d consider subbing for one of the teachers. That year, she picked up odd jobs, free-lance and temporary work and actually made more than what she would have made from her old job. We could have fretted and worried and stewed and debated like a lot of her co-workers were doing, but we didn’t. We knew God was in control and He would provide. Did God cause her to lose her job? No, but we understood that her job wasn’t the source of our supply, God was. So it was God Who we sought to meet our supply. Never once did we lose faith that God would take care of our finances and never once did we stop cheerfully giving. What a testimony! That’s freedom from the fear of not having enough finances.

As one kernel of corn sown into good ground will produce numerous kernels of corn, the time, money and ministry God leads you to give will open God’s door to Spiritual and financial abundance in your own life (Galatians 6:7-8). When we freely and cheerfully give Jesus our money in the knowledge that Jesus will provide all our needs we increase the intimacy and intensity of our personal love for and fellowship with Jesus, Father and Holy Ghost. As your joy and thanksgiving for God’s financial abundance in your life increases, your concern about money will decrease until it one day disappears altogether. For, “***The blessing of the Lord, it makes us rich*** (in all ways, including finances), ***and he adds no sorrow with it,***” (Proverbs 10:22). This means it will not be a hardship to give. You won’t have to strive to receive God’s blessing.

SATAN CAN’T TOUCH OUR MONEY

An added benefit of giving God charge over our finances, is that Satan can’t touch our money. Have you ever felt that no matter what you do you never get ahead? Does it seem that every time you get some extra money something goes wrong

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with the car or an appliance or you have to waste your money straightening out a mess that all of a sudden popped-up out of nowhere? Satan loves to run riot with our finances. If you make your money God's money and freely and cheerfully give it to God's work, God will rebuke the devourer, so that Satan's hands are kept off your money (Malachi 3:10-11).

Believe it – it is true. Once Gayle was substitute teaching a second grade class. It was time for the class to go to the gym for PE. Two girls stayed behind to tie their gym shoes; Gayle passed them in the hall as she walked back to the classroom. Instantly she heard a voice within her Spirit say, "Check your wallet." She didn't hesitate; she did as the Holy Ghost prompted her. All her money was gone. She immediately went to the office and reported it. The principal said Gayle was "lucky" that she had checked her wallet instead of waiting until the end of the school day.

"Luck" had nothing to do with it. Gayle and I freely give and believe what God says about Him rebuking the devourer off our money. The Holy Ghost alerted Gayle to Satan's attack and Gayle listened to and did what the Holy Ghost told her to do. She knew that she was in a spiritual battle and that God would honor His Word.

While the principal went to find the two girls, Gayle prayed, reminding God of His Word and asking for a chance to minister to the young girls. Both those prayers were answered. The girls returned the money with a tearful apology and Gayle hugged them and reminded them what she had told the class earlier about thinking good thoughts and refusing to listen to bad thoughts. The principal, who was both embarrassed and angry that this had happened in her school, didn't understand how Gayle could be so calm and understanding. What the principal didn't know was that Gayle wasn't operating through the flesh and blood of her manly mind but rather through the Spirit of Christ in her. The spiritual forces of evil that had misled the children were overcome by the love, Spirit, Word and faith of Jesus Christ in Gayle.

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So we see how important freely and cheerfully giving through Agape Love is to our financial well-being. We must step out in faith, hear God's leading and then freely and cheerfully honor God with our money so that God can freely and cheerfully honor our giving with His increase (Proverbs 3:5, 6, 9, 10; Luke 6:38; Leviticus 27:30, 32; Philippians 4:19).

LOVE GOD NOT MONEY

One way we can hinder God in our lives, is to love, serve or give heed to something over God. In other words, to make a thing more important than God. Money can be, and often is, one of those things. We need money to pay our bills and to buy things we need. That is true, and nowhere in the Bible does it say that we are to go without. Nowhere does it say we are to deny or forsake the good that God desires for us to have. It is how we look at money and the level of importance we assign to it that matters. Soul-led men know the power of money. It can purchase things and services, as well as the favor of people to whom the money is given. It can give the illusion of security – if we could only get enough of it. Ask yourself, “How much attention do I give money? How much of a role does money have in my happiness and contentment?”

The Bible says that the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). Please note that it does not say that money is evil, only the *love* of it. Do we continually worry that we do not have enough money? Are we constantly fretting and scheming on how we can get more money? Do we give money power over our life, or do we look on it as merely a tool to help us live the life God created us for? Do we trust in what the almighty dollar can do . . . or do we trust in what our almighty God can do? Do we do everything we can to get money and then keep as much money as we can, or do we acknowledge that God is in control and will always provide (make a way) for us? The answers to these questions can help us see whether we worship money or God. The Bible says we cannot worship both (Matthew 6:24).

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GOD'S WAY IS EASY

I am not saying if you don't give God your finances, you won't make money. You might. In fact you might make a lot of money. But it will be harder to make without God guiding your way. Making money through your soul-led self rather than the leading of Christ in you will often bring regret rather than joy to your life. Remember Proverbs 10:22, "***The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.***" Instead of toiling and striving to increase your finances, let God direct you in the area of finances. Instead of you struggling just to make ends meet let God provide for you. The Bible calls striving, toiling and struggling with money a curse. God knows we all have needs. Physical provision, such as food, clothing, shelter, etc., is so central to man that God first mentions it in Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:17-19

And unto Adam God said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy (sin's) sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Adam's sin cursed the good ground of God's earth which had easily produced bountiful crops and provided Adam and Eve with natural riches. Because of Adam's disobedience, no longer are the earth's riches easily accessed. Instead, we have to work long and hard, incessantly seek and discover, laboriously dig and uncover, and do whatever else it takes to produce what we need in order to make our livings.

Financial Freedom God's Way

Under the New Covenant, though, God is in charge of our provision – if we let Him. Matthew 6:31-33 clearly tells us not to worry about food or clothes or shelter, that if we seek God first – they will be provided.

Financial increase, like all other God generated increase, comes from us putting Jesus in charge, following His lead and regardless of what comes against us, not giving up what He has us doing. It all starts with you trusting God to take care of you, and with you willing to do what God instructs you to do with the finances He provides you with.

Through the blessings of Luke 6:38 and 2 Corinthians 9:7, God provides us with work we are good at, that we like to do and can do well. God blesses us with ways to make more with less work, which frees-up time to give to God through other types of ministry. God opens our eyes to ways to work more efficiently, so that we increase our productivity and pay. God can even show us a whole new way to do something or a whole new something to do which will generate yet more income. Just trust Him to show you the way.

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

By cheerfully giving God whatever He wants from us in any area of our life and freely receiving from God what we need from Him in every area of our life, we are not only blessed by God but can be a blessing to others. We no longer have to worry about money or anything else that Satan tries to beat us with. Our God is *The Good God* Who blesses us with all Spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). In all areas of our life He exceedingly, abundantly blesses and rewards us with more than we can ask or think, when we Agape Love fellowship with and honor Him with all we think and have (Ephesians 2:6, 3:20; Mark 12:30). Now onto our next chapter in which we'll look at some of the other blessings God rewards us with when we walk in oneness with Him.

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Chapter 16

MORE REWARDS OF GOD

In our last chapter we looked at finances. Now we'll look at some of the many other ways God blesses us when we faithfully obey His Word.

SPIRITUAL SECURITY

Spiritual security is knowing we are in right standing with God. Spiritual security progressively grows in our heart the more we Agape Love fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost and put on the mind of Christ (Romans 12:1-2, 8:29).

It takes time to learn how to walk and talk with God and effectively apply the Word of God to our life. As we begin to believe who we truly are in Jesus, we become more Spiritually secure. Instead of wondering if God will answer our prayers, we know, no matter what, God sees us as His righteous, anointed daughter or son, whose prayers He always hears and answers in the way they need to be answered.

This is what Paul talks about in the book of Philippians when he says he is confident that God has begun a good work in us and will bring it to perfection (Philippians 1:6). Spiritual security understands this and accepts it. We have confidence that God is constantly conforming us into Jesus' image and blessing us in every area of life. We know that all our petitions are heard and handled by God (Hebrews 10:35; 1 John 3:21-22). We no longer *intellectually say* we are God's righteous, anointed daughter or son, instead we *experientially know* we are God's righteous, anointed son or daughter.

MENTAL STABILITY AND EMOTIONAL PEACE

2 Timothy 1:7

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but

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of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Matthew 15:18

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart.

Luke 6:45

A good (God Spirited) man out of the good treasure in his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil (Satan, soul, body, self-will driven) man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Our intellectual thoughts and emotional feelings are closely connected. Both come out of the heart (our spiritual core). Our degree of mental stability and emotional peace is determined by how much we let the Spirit of God guide our thoughts and actions. Peace can be defined as the absence of fear. Think about it. How much better would your life be, how much better would you feel, if you weren't afraid of ?

In John 14:27, Jesus tells the disciples that He is giving them peace and then adds, "**Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**" The peace He is talking about is the Holy Ghost, the comforter, the one Jesus just told them He would send in His name. The Holy Ghost, once He comes and lives inside a person, will bring God's love, faith and peace.

Romans 5:5 says the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. Think about the words "shed abroad." It's like the Holy Ghost takes God's love and sprinkles or scatters it all over us so that it falls on every part of us. The Bible says that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:18). One of the greatest treasures of living the life of Christ is being freed from the mental oppression and emotional upset that is caused by fear.

Once we know, believe, and accept God's perfect love for us, we will live in and through the power, love and sound mind

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of Christ (2 Timothy 1:7). We will triumph over all fear by releasing the overcoming power of our faith through speaking God's Word against all evil that attacks us and living in the mentally stable and emotionally peaceful fear-free sound mind of Christ.

2 Corinthians 2:14

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.

1 John 5:4

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

PHYSICAL HEALING

Before we were Spirit-born and able to see that Satan is the real author of evil, we blamed God for the lousiness of life. But remember God loves us. He wants what is best for us and will never harm us. It is the devil who comes to steal, kill and destroy. Jesus came so we could have life and life in abundance (John 10:10).

God shows us ways to combat the theft, death and destruction that the devil daily attacks us with. For example, God shows us how to recognize and treat the symptoms of sickness with herbs, chemicals, machines, devices, prosthetics, surgery and other treatments. Medical doctors, however, do not heal the body. It is God who heals our bodies.

We have victory in everything when we are led by Jesus to pray through the Spirit and Word of God in faith. Until we get Spirit-born and allow Jesus to become the Lord of our life, we don't realize it's Satan rather than God wrecking our spirit, mind, emotions, physical body and the world. Man's faith in medicine can be used by God to help a person step up into faith in God.

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I do a lot of hospital ministry where the sick are occasionally not Christians or often immature Christians. At best, their faith is in doctors and medicine. At worse, they don't believe in anything. They feel desperate and doomed to suffer, maybe even die. God has me meet them where they are and then lead them beyond their ignorance and doubt into faith in God's spoken Word.

I do this by first introducing myself in a friendly, often mildly humorous, personal way. I ask the patient how they are feeling and how they are being treated by the doctors and nurses. Once we speak a bit, I ask the patient if it's okay to pray for them. Most patients not only say it's okay but they are grateful someone has come to pray.

I pray in accord with Matthew 16:19 and, in Jesus' name, I employ the Keys to The Kingdom of Heaven and declare the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand to bind (tie-up and cast-out) disease and debilitation and loose (release) the healing of God. To insure the patient clearly comprehends what I am praying, instead of employing the somewhat archaic words *bind* and *loose*, I pray the words "go" and "come."

I then minister healing in accord with Mark 16:18 and 1 Peter 2:24.

Mark 16:17-18

. . . . In my (Jesus') name They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

1 Peter 2:24

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live onto righteousness: by whose stripes you are healed.

I join hands with the patient and, in Jesus' name, I tell the sickness or debilitation to go, call God's healing to come and release the Holy Ghost gifts of healing, faith and the working of miracles. I pray the Holy Ghost guides the doctors and nurses to see what they have to see and do what they have to

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do to get the patient healed, as well as insure that all medications and procedures work as they should. I leave the patient with a tract about God, Spirit-birth and healing and encourage the patient to believe and receive Jesus' healing. All this stirs the patient's faith and releases (expectation) that God is healing them.

God does not require you to turn your back on doctors and medicine in order to be healed. He simply provides you with scriptures such as 1 Peter 2:24, Mark 16:18 and the gifts of the Holy Ghost with which to activate your healing. Doctors and medicine tend to your symptoms until God's faith-spoken Word heals your body, mind or emotions.

Just as you keep your inner Spiritual ears and eyes open for negative, destructive, evil thoughts or feelings that try to enter into your mind or emotions, also keep your body sensitive to pain or sickness that tries to attack you. As soon as you perceive pain in your body lay your hands on where it hurts and pray, "According to God's Word, by Jesus' stripes I am healed. In Jesus' name, pain go and healing come. Thank you, Jesus, for loving, saving and delivering me from all that Satan attacks me with."

When you feel a cold or fever or other such thing attack you, immediately go after it the same way. Don't wait and unnecessarily suffer. Lay your hands upon yourself and, in Jesus' name, tell the attack to go and call the fullness of God's healing to come into your body. Then praise and thank Jesus.

Once you believe, pray and receive God's healing, then ask Jesus what you should do. See a doctor? Take medications? Alter a habit? Go to bed and get some rest? Do what Jesus tells you to do and continually praise and thank Jesus for your healing until it comes forth.

Gayle and I saw a big difference in the health of our family once we got hold of this. We hadn't yet learned about divine healing when our two eldest sons were young. They had a lot of ear infections and colds as children. Then we learned and began to practice divine healing. Our youngest daughter and son rarely had to visit a pediatrician.

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If you are interested in learning more about healing, I suggest you read the book *How To Heal The Sick* by Charles and Frances Hunter.

PERSONAL SAFETY

God shows us how to construct things to withstand destructive natural phenomena. We build levies to withstand rising river water and prevent flooding, or bridges and buildings to bend in the wind and sustain tremors in the earth. However, civil engineers can't keep a hurricane from coming onto land or an earthquake from happening. Only God can keep natural disasters from ruining our lives.

When some sort of natural phenomenon or severe weather is threatening you or your loved ones, employ Matthew 16:19 or 18:18-20 and pray, "In Jesus' name, this (hurricane, tornado, hail storm, ice storm, mud slide, volcano, drought, infestation of locust, ... you name it) go. The protection and peace of God come. Thank You, Jesus, for doing this." Through such prayers God has diverted, diminished and destroyed many natural phenomenon and severe weather conditions that have threatened us and our loved ones.

Once during a severe thunderstorm the tornado sirens went off. I stood by our bedroom window and was led by Jesus to pray in His name and bind Satan and his bad weather and loose the Holy Ghost and His ministering angels to protect us from harm. Within the hour the neighborhood next to ours was destroyed by a tornado. Our house, which stood but five hundred feet away, went untouched and did not even lose power, as did most of our neighbors.

During Hurricane Katrina, Gayle's mother, who lived in New Orleans, had to evacuate. Once evacuated she began to worry that her house would flood. Gayle was led by Jesus to get her to come into agreement and pray, "In Jesus' name, to the door but no more!" And that is exactly what happened. The flood water came up to her door and no further.

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One of the many purposes for praying in tongues is to loose the Holy Ghost and His ministering angels upon the earth to destroy Satan's evil and create God's good. We have no idea of what Satan is sending to reek havoc upon others, but God does. As the Holy Ghost stirs us to pray, God can intercede and remove the danger Satan is trying to cause. We don't have to know why, or even who or what. We just need to stay open to the Holy Ghost's prompting.

We had a pastor who one day had a strong urge to pray for the Yucatan. That is all he felt; he didn't know why, but he immediately began to pray – both in English and in his Holy Ghost prayer language. Later, he found out that a major hurricane had been bearing down on the area, but by the time it made landfall, it wasn't anywhere near as powerful and destructive as people had been expecting.

Remember, we live with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost in the Kingdom of God upon this earth, which has been corrupted by Satan. God knows what is needed when it is needed. All we have to do is stay open to hearing and obeying His voice. Together, with Jesus, we can take power over Satan no matter how he attacks. Whether it's mental, emotional, financial, physical disease and debilitation or natural phenomenon, believe, speak and receive total victory.

FULFILLED LIFE

When you get Spirit-born you receive a new will, the will of God. By renewing your mind with God's Word and ways you get progressively transformed from self-centered thinking and acting to God-centered thinking and acting. As you turn your life over to God and listen and talk to Jesus, you will see your life change. You will start to reap all the benefits of a loving fellowship with Jesus.

You will no longer need to impress anyone. You will no longer need the approval of men to ensure your success in life. Through Christ in you, you are eternally successful and freed from the tyranny of Satan and natural-minded, self-serving men. Through Jesus you are dead to the world of men and alive

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to the world of God. No one or no thing can separate you from God. No weapon formed against you can prosper since God is for you. No evil can successfully come against you once you recognize its attack and defeat it in the name of Jesus (Isaiah 54:17; Romans 8:38-39).

By working out your salvation and increasingly thinking and acting through the Word of God, you change for the better. You become more and more likeable as you learn to love rather than manipulate others. Jesus' personality becomes your personality. Love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control evidence themselves in you (Galatians 5:22-23). Seldom do you take offense at the rudeness, slights and verbal attacks of others. Rarely do you mentally, emotionally or physically retaliate. You are quick to forgive and even quicker to ask for forgiveness when you sin. Your new way of God thinking and acting not only personally helps you to love yourself, as God loves you, but to love others, as God loves them, even unsaved disagreeable others.

Jesus died that all men might live through Him in the Spirit of God. God loves us all. But God can only provide His love, protection and prosperity to those who love Him. We are God's fishermen who use the bait of God's Good News in our lives to attract other men and women to Jesus. Our changed life impresses our relatives that we are the "real deal" and maybe worth listening to now that we are doing so well. Others we come in contact with are either attracted to Jesus in us or put off by Jesus in us. Those who positively respond we share God's Good News with them. The others we stay open and friendly to in case they ever decide to give Jesus a try. All we have to do to fulfill God's plan for us is to Agape Love fellowship with God and put on His Word, will and ways. As we grow from immature children of God into mature daughters and sons of God, we enter into God's vision and ministry for us. That's what we'll talk about in our next and final chapter.

Chapter 17

DILIGENTLY PURSUE GOD'S VISION

God has both a general and specific vision for our life. His general vision, for all of us, is for us to be conformed into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. His specific vision, for each of us, is the unique way He wants to use us. As we engage in thought by thought love fellowship with God and love Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength, God will reveal that vision to us.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained (called us to minister) that we should walk in them.

To begin to fulfill God's vision for our life, we must first believe that God's plan for us to become conformed into the image of His Son, Jesus, is true. Once that truth gets inside us, we will seek God's Word and ways by entering into intimate fellowship with Father, Jesus and Holy Ghost. We will start to grow beyond a self-centered child of God into a God-centered son or daughter of God who thought by thought fellowships with God (John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 10:5).

GROWING BEYOND A CHILD

Growing beyond a child is necessary. Immature children of God do not consistently and diligently communicate with God. They do not distinguish between the voice of their soul and the voice of God's Spirit (Hebrews 4:9-12, 5:13-14). God is unable to reveal to them His specific vision for their lives,

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much less guide them on how to accomplish each task and step of that vision. God's immature children remain self-centered religious turtles who hide out in themselves and do little to advance Jesus' work on earth. Or, they pursue what they think or others tell them is God's specific vision for their lives. However, if what they pursue is not God's true vision for their lives, they will not be successful at it.

Believers abandon ministries all the time because they, not God, chose those ministries. This can also happen to the ascension gift ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. If a person decides to become an ascension gift minister rather than God calling them into an ascension gift ministry, the person will not succeed. Other believers know the vision God has for them but do not consciously thought by thought allow God to direct that vision. They try to do it themselves and it all comes to naught.

God's plan is for us to fellowship with Him and be led by Him in everything we do. This is how God grows us up from ignorant, unreliable children to sons and daughters who He can trust to fulfill the good works of the specific vision He has ordained for each of us. (Ephesians 2:10).

MINISTRY

God's specific visions always involve ministry. For the most part ministry means working with people, not preaching God's Word from behind a church pulpit. A minister is simply a vessel, a conduit, an outlet for God to reach out to others. Ministry mandates that we are in fellowship with God. Ministry is not us deciding how, when, where and to whom we should minister. Rather it's us allowing Jesus to minister how, when, where and to whom He wants to minister to through us.

God is not a respecter of persons. He does not put one believer above or below another (Acts 10:34). ***“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).”*** God does not discriminate between the sexes. In the books of the New Testament you will find both

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men and women ministering. All God ever looks at is our willingness to love, obey and serve Him through His vision and ministry for our life, regardless of who or what we are in the natural.

Part of God's vision includes the people He wants to touch through us, whether they are people we greet in the parking lot, toddlers we train in Sunday School, pastors we talk to in a conference, or family members, friends, fellow workers, church members, neighbors and the people of our community (2 Corinthians 5:20).

As already noted, God's general vision for Jesus was to become the Word of God made flesh, God's Son on earth. For thirty years Jesus fulfilled His general vision of Sonship. At 30 years of age, He finally entered into the fullness of His specific vision as God's Messiah, the Christ and Savior of men. Through fulfilling God's general vision for Him, Jesus was able to fulfill God's specific vision for Him.

This is the process God has established for His ministers. We are to thought by thought work with Jesus and let Him conform us into His image (Philippians 1:6). As we fellowship with Jesus and progressively think and act more like Him, God begins to lead us into various ministries. These teach us how to minister and lead us towards God's specific vision for us (2 Corinthians 10:5; John 5:19). We can see this process at work throughout the New Testament, such as with Peter and Paul.

Peter was a rough and tough fisherman when Jesus called him to become His disciple. For 42 months Peter was at Jesus' side learning how to think, act and minister as Jesus did. When Jesus ascended for the last time into heaven, He commanded Peter and the others to go to Jerusalem to await the promise of the Father.

Peter and 119 others received the promise of Father God on Pentecost morning, as the sound of a rushing mighty wind filled the place where they were gathered. The wind of the Holy Ghost brought in heavenly tongues of fire which sat upon the head of each of the 120 disciples. The Holy Ghost baptized every man and woman in the place with the same fire of

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witness that Jesus had received at the Jordan when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him (Mark 1:10-15).

Once baptized, Peter, along with the 119, began witnessing to the Jews who'd come from all over the earth to celebrate the holy day of Pentecost. Thus, Peter began to fulfill his specific ministry – ministering to the people of Jerusalem.

Saul of Tarsus was a religious zealot, who tortured, imprisoned and killed Jesus' followers. While on his way to capture Christians in Damascus, Jesus appeared to Saul, telling him to quit killing Christians and serve Jesus. Saul converted to Christianity and Jesus changed his name from Saul to Paul. For three years Jesus kept Paul in Damascus preaching and teaching the people about Jesus Christ. Paul then went to confer with Peter and the other Christian leaders who told Paul to continue to fulfill his specific vision and ministry to the people outside of Jerusalem (Acts 26:1-20).

God always provides us with others to learn from and be supported by. His apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and, most especially, pastors, are there to help us mature into Jesus' image and step into the ministries God wants us to operate through. Our personal fellowship with God and other mature Spirit-led believer and ascension gifted ministers enables us to hear what we need to hear and do what we need to do to continually grow in God (Ephesians 4:8, 11-15).

If you haphazardly jump into a ministry and claim it as your own without first seeking God, you will not be successful at it. You will eventually burn out in the ministry and perhaps get turned off from ministry of any sort. Likewise, if you get ahead of God, you will not be able to grow into the fullness of the ministry. Remember, we gradually grow from faith to faith and glory to glory. You can't complete a 26 mile marathon if you don't first learn how to walk and then progressively learn how run for longer and longer distances. Let Jesus train you and direct your steps and you will progressively become the minister God intends for you to become.

You can't discover and enter into the power and glory of God's specific vision for you if you do not first dedicate

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yourself to growing beyond a child into a daughter or son of God. A sign of Spiritual growth is that your focus comes off you and onto God. You begin to love and serve God for who He is to you rather than what God can do for you. A good question to ask yourself is: "Does it matter if anyone sees me do this, or knows that I do it?" If the answer is no, then Jesus can trust you to let Him minister through you as He needs to. If the answer is yes, then you must die to yourself and come to the realization that ministry is not about showing you off to others. It's only about pleasing God by letting Jesus continue His ministry of reconciliation to you and through you.

OUR MOTIVATIONAL GIFTS

There are many different ministries that need to be done in order for the local and world-wide Body of Christ to successfully function. Jesus is the head of the Body of Christ. We are the members of His Body. We are appointed, anointed and gifted by the Holy Ghost to minister in way(s) that will enable us to contribute our part to the whole of the Body of Christ.

We are Jesus' arms, legs, eyes, ears, hands, fingers, feet, toes, etc. Each of us has a very important specific task or tasks to do. If we don't do what Jesus calls us to do, we not only hinder ourselves and our local church but we keep the Body of Christ from growing and going about God's business of saving the lost and raising ministers of reconciliation and ambassadors for Christ.

So how do we specifically know what God wants us to do? God gives us glimpses of what He has in mind for us through our motivational gifts. If you examine yourself, you will usually discover you are motivated to think and act in ways that draw you to specific activities and thus specific types of ministries.

Romans 12:6-8 lists the seven common categories of motivational gifts. All believers have some sort of major or minor gifting in one or more of these categories.

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Romans 12:6-8

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teaches, on teaching; or he that exhorts, on exhortation: he that gives, let him do it with simplicity; he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let's look at each one and see if you can recognize a motivational gift God has provided you with. We'll also look at how our manly soul can misuse or dilute these gifts.

- 1) **PROPHECY:** Drawn to personal intimacy with God. Has insight into people and situations. Spiritually impelled to speak the truth of God. Recalls and quotes scriptures. Hates evil. Does not compromise. Abhors incompetence and poor leadership whether someone else's or their own. Recognizes when others are out of line. Knows when they have been out of line and allows Jesus to correct them.

Do not let this gift turn you into a bully. Those with a motivational gift of prophesy can minister hurt rather than help if they employ soul-led criticism rather than building up, encouraging and comforting people with the love, Spirit and Word of God.

It is only the love, Spirit and Word of God, not the critical mind of man, which has the power to convict and convert Christians. Use your gift to be a beacon of light and lovingly lead people out of the darkness of their sin and self-delusion into the marvelous light of God's dear Son.

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- 2) **HELPS MINISTRY:** Does not need to be told what should be done in order to keep the church physically neat and in good running order. This includes maintaining the inside and outside of the physical church, ushering or engaging in ministries that require technical or craft skills. A person can also help cook, clean, do office work, work with the children and coordinate the physical setup of social functions. Those in helps ministry should understand that not everyone will have this motivational gift and shouldn't get upset if someone else does not "help" as much as they do.

Because many helpers are dedicated to insuring things stay in order during a service, they often can't fully participate in prayer, praise, worship and listening to the Word of God during the service. This can hinder their Spiritual growth. Helps ministers must insure themselves that they are growing in God through daily personal prayer, praise, worship, Word study and ongoing fellowship with God.

- 3) **TEACHING:** Driven to study and understand God's Word. Likes to share what they have learned. Can annoy others by providing all sorts of small details rather than quickly sharing the heart or point of a matter.

Those with a teacher gift can injure others with a legalistic religious spirit that pushes people instead of leading them. A God-led teacher does not beat people over the head with God's Word in an attempt to get them to submit to it.

A teacher lovingly provides people with the truth of God's Word. Even when a person outright rejects God's truth, the teacher does not

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reject the person, but remains ever ready to reveal God's truth to the person, once the person decides the truth of God is what they want to hear.

- 4) **EXHORTATION (ENCOURAGER):** Is impelled by the Spirit to lift people up. Always finds something good, positive or creative about any person or situation. Likes to encourage, instruct, comfort and urge people to press on.

Encouragers can annoy others by stepping beyond the bounds of Godly encouragement and push people to think and act in a Godly way rather than encourage people where they are at and let God do the pushing in His time and way.

- 5) **GIVER:** Often a business minded person who is Spiritually guided to make money to support the operation of their local church and the world Body of Christ. Also might like to provide other resources to support church operation.

Can sometimes cross over from being Spirit-led to becoming soul-obsessed with making and providing money and resources. This can cause friction with others.

A giver must be sure only to give that which God leads them to give to whom God leads them to give it to. A giver should never need to be recognized and applauded by others or use their giving to gain some sort of influence with the pastor or a position in the church.

- 6) **RULER (LEADER):** Organizer, admini-

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strator type who is led to solve problems and create order and efficiency. Must be securely led by the love of God to love others, otherwise they can easily become frustrated when others do not see or agree with what they see or think needs to be done. Problems can also arise if they become too bossy and dictate what to do rather than leading and encouraging others to act.

- 7) **MERCY:** Has a heart for the hurting. Willing to listen and offer insight and help. However, unless securely grounded in their love relationship with God, the mercy heart can be emotionally hurt when others do not positively respond to help, understanding and aid. They can easily reject those who they think are rejecting them.

Those with the gift of mercy can also become easy marks for phonies who put on an act in order to get money and aid from an immature Christian. If you are gifted with mercy, you need to make sure you hear from God before doing more than listening and talking to a person. Otherwise, in your eagerness to help, you could inadvertently hinder a person from bottoming out and reaching out to Jesus.

Examine yourself. See which categories of motivational gifting ring a bell in your heart. Then ask God to reveal to you the specific motivational gift(s) you have. Sometimes a gift will draw from two or three categories of gifting. For example, say you realize God has gifted you to minister emotional healing to people who have been emotionally brutalized. Though that is the specific gift God has given you, you will have to draw on other Spiritual gifts. You will need a heart of

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mercy to reach out to others who are often strangers to you. You will also need to draw upon the gift of teaching to provide them with the Word of God. You may need to draw upon the gift of prophesy to provide them with a word of knowledge or word of wisdom, or you might need to be able to discern a particular evil spirit that is making them emotionally sick. But know this: God is forever faithful to provide you with whatever you need to minister your gift to people.

TALENTS – DIVINE GIFTS

An artistic talent, such as music, painting, writing, etc., might have been in evidence in your life before you came to the Lord. He will sometimes convert it into a divine gift. The difference between a natural talent and a divine gift is that a natural talent is soul-led and self-centered. It elevates the person. A divine gift is Spirit-led and God-centered. It elevates God and His Good News.

Gifts of God will speak to you. They will urge you to step out in faith and do what they are calling you to do. If it is a gift of God, you will find it easy to do, enjoy what you are doing and creatively affect the lives of others. Your gift will grow in precision and power as you more and more operate through it. The effort you devote to developing your gift will be full of joy and time well spent.

GOD’S SPECIFIC VISION BRINGS PEACE

God’s specific vision for your life will always agree with God’s Word and bring peace to your heart. It is usually simple in its understanding, though it may eventually require many different parts to bring it to completion. You should be able to plainly write down your vision so that you can read, understand and run with it (Habakkuk 2:2).

If you can’t find a scripture, principle or concept of God’s Word to support what you are envisioning to do then it’s not of God. Even when you do discover Word to support your

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vision, you still have to thoroughly check out with God if it is His vision or your vision.

If it is of God, you will be able to press on even when nothing seems to be happening. If not of God, you will let go of your vision when it seems to be going nowhere. Don't waste your time with a vision that is not supported by God's Word and God's voice within your heart. Once you know your vision, you won't seek to do what others do but rather focus upon what God has for you to do.

Your vision will inspire you to press on no matter what comes against you. You must actively work your vision or it will never be more than a wish. Wishes don't fulfill God's specific vision for you. Working out your vision through fellowship with God and following His leading is the only thing that can bring you the peace and prosperity Jesus has in mind for you.

Proverbs 3:5 and Romans 12:2:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths . . . into His good, acceptable and perfect will for your life.

NO NEED TO RUSH

Do only what God directs you to do, one step at a time. God's not in a rush. Your maturation in the ways of Jesus is what counts most to God. Once you prove yourself truly dedicated to God, then He can begin to have faith in you to do what His specific vision for you will require you to do.

No matter how impossible it appears for you to fulfill your specific vision or even complete the current step your vision requires, you should always be at peace. Remember, it's not your vision. It's God's vision and the Word says that God is faithful to perform it (Philippians 1:6). Just let Him. You are not responsible for anything but bringing your next thought to

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Jesus and letting Him tell you what to do with it. Simply do what He says and let the Holy Ghost work things out. We're not responsible for originating or empowering ideas into creation. We are responsible for staying in fellowship with the originator and empowerer of the ideas, so those ideas can pass through our mind and mouth. No matter what specific vision God gives us, we will grow and help others grow in Christ if we dedicate ourselves to faithfully fulfilling our vision.

All things work for the good for those who love God and respond to His call to live the life of Christ and fulfill His vision. All of us are to become the New Testament minister of reconciliation and ambassador for Christ that God has uniquely purposed for each of us to become.

We don't turn our backs upon the sinners God sets before us; instead, we minister to them through the patience, prayer and words God gives us, meeting and loving them where they are. We don't hide out in our churches and keep Christ to ourselves; instead, we share our love for God and one another. We help each other step into our believer or ascension gift ministry to our local church, the Body of Christ and the world around us, just like the first New Testament Ministers of Reconciliation and Ambassadors for Christ did over 2,000 years ago. In short, we fulfill God's vision and ministry for us and live the abundant life of Christ.

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Suggested Internet Articles

Rethinking The Tithe by Douglas Weaver.
Should The Church Teach Tithing by Russell Earl Kelly.

Suggested Books

The Search For Significance: Seeing Your True Worth Through God's Eyes by Robert S. McGee
How To Heal The Sick by Charles and Frances Hunter.
Breakthrough To Your Miracle by Jason Noble.
The Pursuit Of God by A. W. Tozer.
The God Chasers by Tommy Tenney
Seventy Reasons For Speaking In Tongues by Bill Hamon.
Knowing Spiritual Reality by Jeff Moore