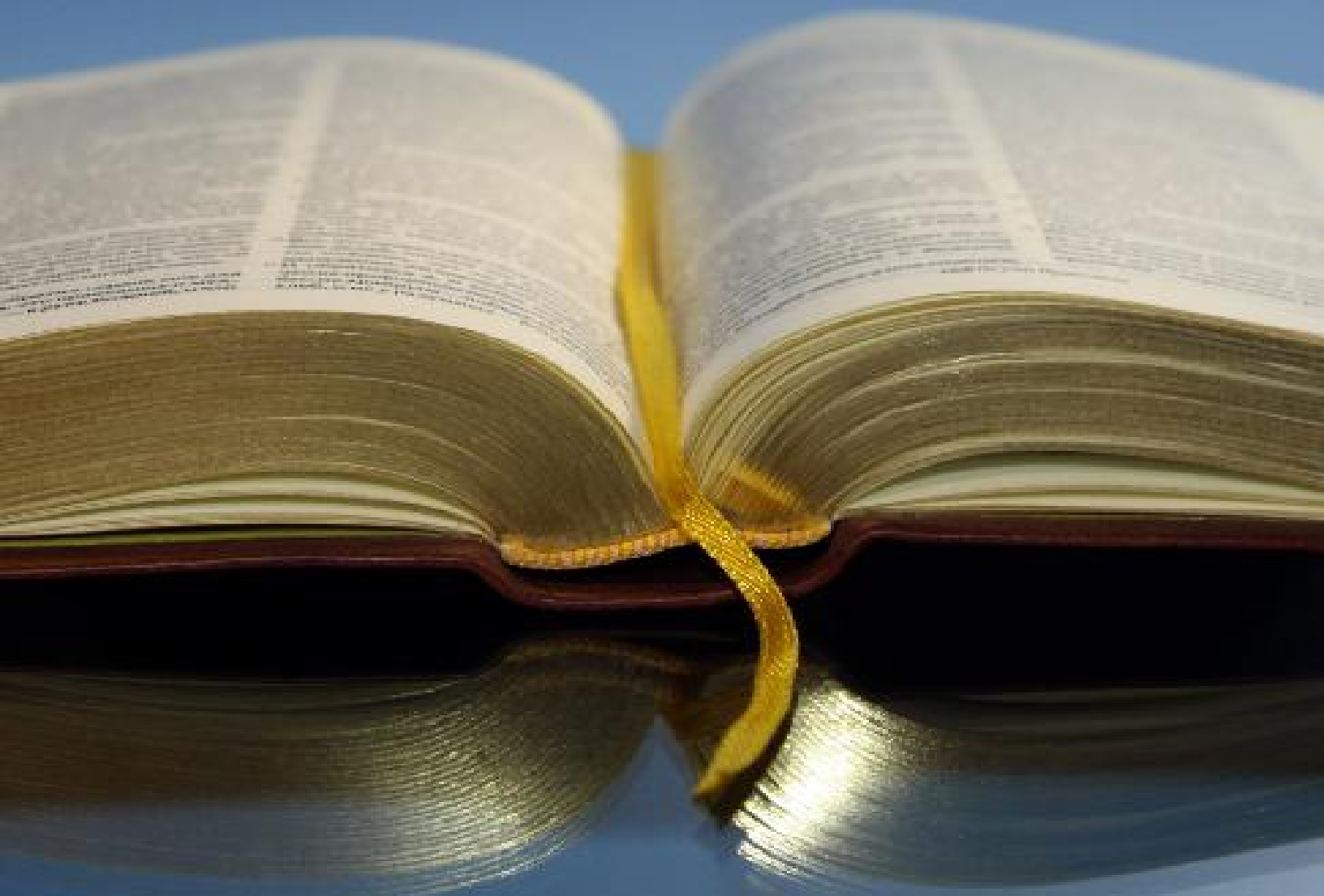
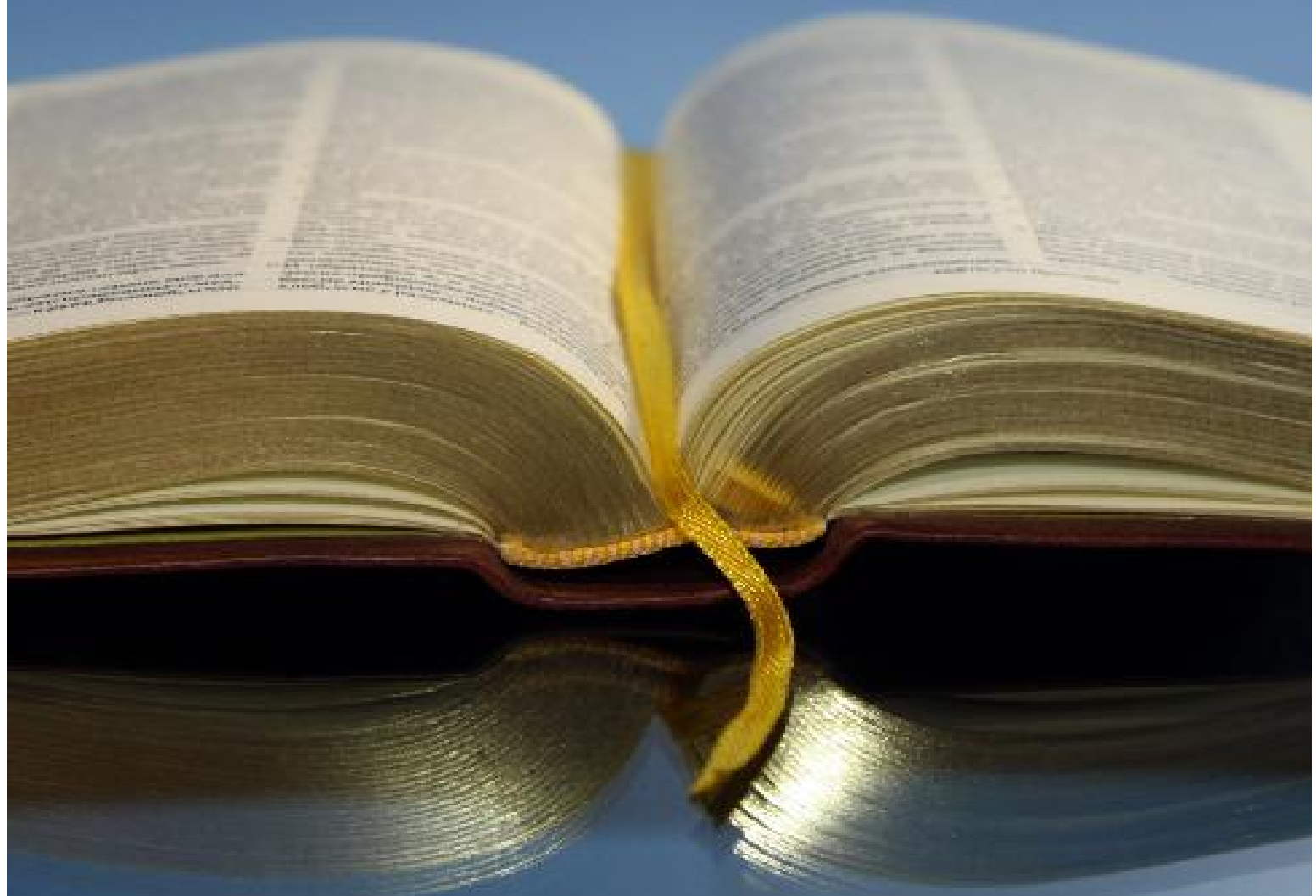


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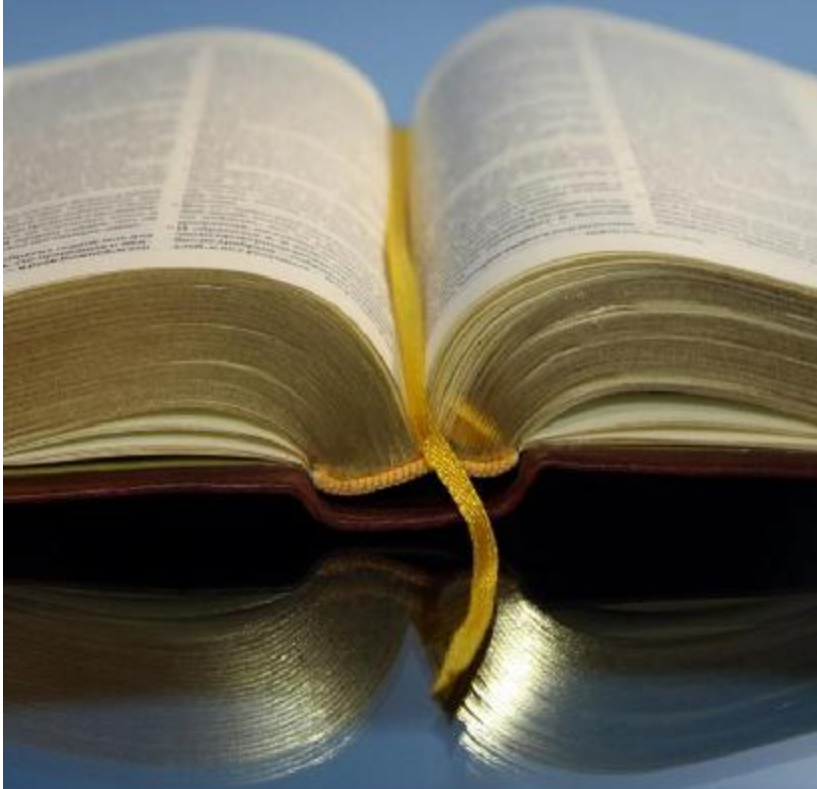
DR. VICTOR GILL

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS



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DR. VICTOR GILL

Biblical Principles

Of

Success

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my beautiful wife Tracey, a faithful partner and friend who has stood by my side through the years, through the good and the bad times. Without her loving support this accomplishment would not have been possible.

To my three kids, Victoria, Vanessa and Dave, they are such

an inspiration and joy to me.

To the beloved brethen of
Redemption Christian Centre. You
have been there for me in so many
ways. Thank you.

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FOREWORD

In the day that the Apostle Paul
wrote his first letter to Timothy,
the danger in the church was its
inclination towards unwholesome
asceticism. today the church's
problem
is
leaning
towards
unwholesome indulgence. Men's
own inclinations will always be the
guide of their conduct concerning
truth and duty. Very often
scripture is interpreted to conform
to the desire of one's heart.

However, in this book the write,
although still a young man,
functioning in a contemporary
society with misplaced emphases,
has been able to stay close to
biblical interpretation and in so

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doing, has produced a work of inspiration and scriptural balance. For the person who is not swayed by fads and unscriptural popular opinion - but desires to succeed in a holistic manner, that can be translated *good success*, this is a book you must read.

Having known Dr. Gill, his wife and family for many years, and having the honour in assisting in a small way to mould his character, I know he has written out of the abundance of his experience.

Someone has said, minds are like parachutes; they work best when they are open. That's the way to read this book.

Rev. Dr. Alister Alexander

Daybreak Assembly Trinidad

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Introduction

Nothing stirs and motivates me more,
than when I think about the fact that I
have only one life to live in this world.

We all have one life to live. The time
to live it is very limited, and it is not a
rehearsal, nor a virtual reality, but a
valid
reality.

Having

this

consciousness makes me want to do
my best with the little time God has
given me on this planet. Generally
speaking everyone wants to do their

best. We all want to be successful; no one wants to fail or sets out to be a failure. Yet the truth is that countless people, who make sincere attempts to succeed in life, do fail.

Many fail because they believed that they were a law unto themselves. They were ignorant of or ignored the fact that there are established universal laws for successful living. There are

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laws which determine quality of life and success. Anyone who goes against those laws simply sets himself / herself up for failure.

Sad to say but true, there are many who are going in that direction, only to become victims of similar fate as those that have gone before. As the Word of God says,

There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 16:25)

Years ago I heard my pastor, Bishop Dr. A. Alexander say something that I cannot afford to forget. He said, “*Before you take a thousand steps, make sure you put the first one in the right direction.*” To me that is sound counsel.

The timeless and absolute principles
for living found in God's Word
provide the right direction. I like the
way the Psalmist David puts it,

***Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light
to my path.***

(Psalm 119:105)

***...all Your precepts concerning
all things I consider to be right; I
hate every false way. (Psalm
119:128)***

We are told in the book of Proverbs,

***For the commandment is a
lamp, and the law a light;
reproofs of instruction are the
way of life. (Proverbs 6:23)***

The prophet Isaiah said,

***...If they do not speak according
to this word, it is because there is
no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20)***

Based on the proven biblical
premise that God's way is the only
way to true success, here are some
biblically
based
and
timeless

principles, principles which if applied, would guarantee success.

May God bless you as you read.

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CHAPTER ONE

Laying The Foundation

If the foundations are destroyed,

What can the righteous do?

(Psalms 11:3)

It is important to lay a solid foundation, by establishing a biblical philosophy of success. This will help to facilitate a clear understanding of what true success is.

The most fundamental principle of success is to understand what is true success. Much is being said about success today, but we need to be able to clearly define and articulate what is true success. According to the English dictionary, success is: “*The favorable*

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or prosperous termination of attempts or endeavours. The attainment of wealth, position, honour, or the like.”

That’s the basic definition of the English dictionary. However the Word of God has a different definition of success. This is God’s definition,

That you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. (3 John 2)

God's definition is clear, dynamic and inclusive. God's perfect will and ultimate desire for His children in this life, is success in three fundamental areas:

1.

Success in material things.

2.

Success in physical health.

3.

Most of all Success in spiritual

life (one's relationship with

God).

12

This is true success. True success is threefold; it is complete. The wise man

Solomon said ...a *three-fold cord is*

not

quickly

broken

(Ecclesiastes

4:12).Having success in one or two of

the above-mentioned areas is not the

success that God desires for His

children. The Word of God makes it

clear that God will for His people, is a

three

dimensional

success.

This

dynamic kind of success will be our experience only as we inculcate in our lives the biblical principles upon which they are based. The Word of God is the channel of true success. In the book of Joshua, God told Joshua something simple and simply profound; God said,

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your

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way prosperous, and then you

will

have

good

success.

(Joshua 1:8)

Notice that the Word of God did not simply say, you will have success but it said, *you will have good success.*

Not all success is *good success*. Not all success is “successful” because not all success is threefold or based upon the principles of God’s Word. The only

good and true success is the success that is based on the principles found in God's Word.

There Is A Making Process

We need to understand that there is a making process. God doesn't just want you to be like a Christmas tree looking bright and pretty on the outside but dead on the inside. That is the way it is with the world, but you are a living tree connected to the true vine which is

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the Son of God. God is mainly concern about the inner man and the ultimate direction of your life regarding eternity. In His wisdom, for a period of time, God may allow many of His children to be in want. Usually He does this that He may supply a greater need for His children. You see, God's will is for His children to learn patience and trust in Him. The Word of God says,

“So he humbled you, and allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna... that he might make you to know that man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.”

(Deuteronomy 8:3)

In the wilderness God caused the children of Israel to suffer hunger, and when they cried out to Him He

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miraculously supplied their need in a way they never expected. God sent food from heaven called *Manna*. God did this in order to teach them values from a divine and eternal perspective.

When God led the children of Israel out of Egypt the Bible tells us that God did not lead them by the shortest path to their destination. As a matter of fact, the path by which God led them was not only longer but it was totally impossible. God led them by the way of the Red Sea, even though He knew that Pharaoh would go after them there, and they would have no where to run. He did this in order to challenge the minds of the children of Israel, and prepare them to trust him in the future.

He was preparing them to face the formidable enemies up the road. The Word of says,

Then it came to pass, when

Pharaoh had let the people go,

16

that God did not lead them by

way

of

the

land

of

the

Philistines, although that was

near; for God

said,

"Lest

perhaps the people change their

minds when they see war, and

return

to

Egypt."

(Exodus

13:17)

But let patience have its perfect

work, that you may be perfect

and complete, lacking nothing.

(James 1:4)

God is more concerned about making

His children holy, than He is about

making them happy. He is more

concerned about establishing His

righteousness in our hearts, than

putting His material substances in our

hands. Contrary to the emphasis in the

world, in the eyes of God success is

measured by more than material

possessions.

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The Need For A Biblical

Perception Of Reality

The Word of God contains both history and revelation. In the context of revelation the Word of God challenges our perception of reality in many areas of life, including the area of success. For example, the common notion of most people is that a person who has the material things of this world is successful and happy.

However this is not true, for according to the Word of God, Jesus said,

...for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. (Luke 12:15)

Umm... I suppose that statement of Jesus knocks the wind out of the sails of some. The fact of the matter is, according to the biblical concept of

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success, material prosperity by itself cannot define success. Let's look deeper into what the Word of God has to say on this line,

For the turning away (or the ease) of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools

shall destroy them. (Proverbs

1:32)

*For I was envious at the foolish,
when I saw the prosperity of the
wicked. (Psalm 73:3)*

To set the records straight, the above
verses make it very clear that the
foolish and the wicked do prosper
materially but their prosperity will
only destroy them. The Bible says,

*When the wicked spring up like
grass, And when all the workers
of iniquity flourish, It is that*

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they may be destroyed forever.

(Psalm 92:7)

*1A Psalm of David. Do not fret
because of evildoers, nor be
envious of the workers of
iniquity.*

*2For they shall soon be cut down
like the grass, And wither as the
green herb. (Psalm 37:1-2)*

*35I have seen the wicked in great
power, And spreading himself
like a native green tree.*

*36Yet he passed away, and
behold, he was no more; Indeed
I sought him, but he could not
be found. (Psalm 37:35-36).*

In Luke's Gospel chapter twelve, Jesus called the rich man a fool because he only gave attention to the material aspect of his life. Seeking to improve his physical welfare he decided to

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build bigger barns to store his goods. However, he did not regard the frailty of his mortal frame, his spiritual needs and the iniquitous condition of his soul. God called such a man a fool.

The Bible says,

“But God said to him, 'Fool!

this night your soul will be

required of you; then whose will

those things be which you have

provided?’” (Luke 12:20).

If God calls a person a fool, with all due respect, that's what they are. Men are fools when they concern themselves only or mainly with the material things of this life, the things that are fleeting and temporary, that they may leave without even a moment's notice.

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A Warning To The End Time

Church

It is important to understand that the messages to the seven churches in Revelation chapter two and three had

contemporary

and

prophetic

significance.

The

prophetic

significance of the letters could not be seen in prospect (looking forward) but in retrospect (looking backward) when sufficient history had unfolded.

Today we can look back and see clear parallels in relation to what the Bible says about each church age and the historical features of each church age, up to this present time, which is the final church age.

Ephesus

The Relapsed Church (Rev. 2:1-7).

The first century church A.D 32-100.

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Smyrna

The Maltreat Church (Rev. 2:8-11).

The first to the fourth century.

Pergamos

The Worldly Compromising Church (Rev. 2:12-17). The fourth to the sixth century.

Thyatira

The Counterfeit Church (Rev. 2:18-29). The sixth to the sixteenth century.

Sardis

The Expiring Church (Rev. 3:1-6). The sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

Philadelphia

The Soul Winning Church (Rev. 3:7-13). The eighteenth to the twentieth century.

23

Laodicea

The Halfhearted Church (Rev.3:14-22). The twentieth century and onward.

Laodicea prophetically represents the last church age, the age in which we now live, from A.D.1925 and onward.

To this church Jesus said, ... *you say,*

'I

am rich,

have become

wealthy, and have need of

nothing' and do not know that

you are wretched, miserable,

poor,

blind,

and

naked

(Revelation 3:17).

Jesus did not rebuke the church for its material abundance. He rebuked the church for the false concept that

material abundance by itself is an indication of its success. He rebuked the church for the false and foolish

24

concept that being financially sound means everything is fine.

The church today needs to be aware of this tendency and deception. In

Matthew 13:22 Jesus revealed that riches can be very deceitful. In other words

financial

wellbeing

has

tremendous potential to deceive the heart by causing many to think that their success is an indication of God's approval. Many times that is simply not the case. Every child of God needs to be reminded, that their success lies first of all in their devotion to God.

Our material prosperity by itself cannot approve us in the sight of God.

For that fundamental reason we are told,

... If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them. (Psalm

62:10)

25

According to the original Hebrew, the

verse can be also read this way, *if riches increase don't be fooled by it, or don't be blinded by it.* This may be applied not only to one's own riches but also the riches of others. There is a human tendency to quickly approve people who appear to be materially successful (see James 2:1-7). However we need to examine the Word of God again, *...If riches increase do not be fooled by it.* The Word of God calls upon us to acknowledge that the foolish and the wicked do prosper. The foolish or the wicked is the man who treats sin lightly and shows no regard for the Word of God and the condition of his soul before God. Only by the fear of God can one access true riches,

Humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4)

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We need to look for more than money and material prosperity before we label someone as being successful. We need to look for the fear of God and godly character in a person. The following Psalm underscores the fact that a person can be materially successful, living in a measure of peace and

comfort and yet be a complete failure

in God's sight.

Psalm 73

*1 Truly God is good to Israel, to
such as are pure in heart.*

*2 But as for me, my feet had
almost stumbled; My steps had
nearly slipped.*

*3 For I was envious of the
boastful, When I saw the
prosperity of the wicked.*

*4 For there are no pangs in their
death, but their strength is firm.*

27

*5 They are not in trouble as other
men, Nor are they plagued like
other men.*

*6 Therefore pride serves as their
necklace; Violence covers them
like a garment.*

7 Their

eyes

bulge

with

abundance; they have more

than heart could wish.

8 They scoff and speak wickedly

concerning

oppression;

they

Speak loftily.

*9 They set their mouth against
the heavens, And their tongue
walks through the earth.*

*10 Therefore his people return
here, And waters of a full cup
are drained by them,*

*11 And they say, "How does God
know? And is there knowledge
in the Most High?"*

*12 Behold, these are the ungodly,
Who are always at ease; They
increase in riches.*

28

*13 Surely I have cleansed my
heart in vain, And washed my
hands in innocence.*

*14 For all day long I have been
plagued, And chastened every
morning.*

*15 If I had said, "I will speak
thus," behold, I would have been
untrue to the generation of Your
children.*

*16 When I thought how to
understand this, It was too
painful for me*

*17 Until I went into the sanctuary
of God; then I understood their
end.*

*18 Surely You set them in slippery
places; you cast them down to
destruction.*

*19 Oh, how they are brought to
desolation, as in a moment! They
are
utterly
consumed
with
terrors.*

29

*20 As a dream when one awakes,
so, Lord, when You awake, You
shall despise their image.*

*21 Thus my heart was grieved, and
I was vexed in my mind.*

*22 I was so foolish and ignorant; I
was like a beast before You.*

*23 Nevertheless I am continually
with You; You hold me by my
right hand*

*24 You will guide me with Your
counsel, And afterward receive
me to glory.*

*25 Whom have I in heaven but
You? And there is none upon
earth that I desire besides You.*

*26 My flesh and my heart fail; but
God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.*

*27 For indeed, those who are far
from You shall perish; You have
destroyed all those who desert
You for harlotry.*

*28 But it is good for me to draw
near to God; I have put my trust*

30

*in the Lord GOD, that I may
declare all Your works. (Psalm
73:1-28)*

The Psalmist begins the Psalm with his conclusive discovery, “*Truly God is good to Israel...*” It did not always seem so to him because he was seeing the prosperity of the wicked while he himself was suffering. Though he had been walking in the fear of God, in innocence of heart and uprightness, he was experiencing trouble and suffering. Therefore for a period of time he was confused and was tempted to follow the ungodly. He said, “*I was envious of the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*”(KJV). Have you ever felt that way? He describes the prosperity of the wicked in this way,

7*“Their*

eyes

bulge

with

*abundance they have more than
their heart could wish.”*

12*“Behold these are the ungodly,
who prosper in the world, they
increase in riches.” (Psalm 73:7,
12)*

What was strange to the Psalmist

David was that while the wicked were prospering, he, a righteous man, was suffering. This experience confused him, and this is still the case with many. He describes his suffering as a righteous man this way,

14*For all day long have I been
plagued, and chastened every
morning...*

16*When I thought how to
understand this, It was too
painful for me.*

The Psalmist said he never understood this paradox until he went into the sanctuary of God. There are some things that we will never understand until we go into the sanctuary and seek

God and His counsel. The Psalmist said, *Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood...(V.17).*

When He God opened his eyes he said, ***I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You (V.22).***

However he begins to sum up by saying,

24You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

25Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.

The Psalmist understood eventually that

a
righteous
person
might

experience suffering in this life; while

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at the same time the wicked can be living like fat cats, prospering and multiplying in riches. The truth nonetheless is that material abundance by itself is no success, according to God's definition of success. A truly successful person may experience times of great need and depression.

However the most important thing is that one has a good relationship with God.

Putting God First

Again, true success according to the Word of God is threefold; material, physical, and spiritual, but above all God must come first. Jesus said, ***But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)***

Our number one priority should be a right relationship with God. Our greatest and dearest treasure is in our 34

hearts and that is the Holy Spirit; it is God Himself, He is *the pearl of great price*. He said unto Abraham, ***I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward (Genesis 15:1.)*** As we love and reverence God. As we bring our lives under the discipline and the counsel of His Word, we can be assured of the complete package of success.

For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)

21 Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; Thereby good will come to you.

22 Receive, please, instruction from His mouth, And lay up His words in your heart.

35

23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up; You will remove iniquity far from your tents.

24 Then you will lay your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks.

25 Yes, the Almighty will be your gold and your precious silver

(Job 22:21-25)

Ophir was a place in southern Arabia known for its fine gold, it was the place from which Solomon traded goods for gold. The Word of God further declares, *He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6)*. Notice it does not say; *God is a rewarder of them that seek for reward, or a rewarder of them that seek Him for reward*. No, it does not say that, but it says, *God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him*, full stop.

The emphasis is on **Him**. Our focus ought to be on Him the *blessor* and not on the blessing. He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. When we seek Him first, then the blessing will come. Then you will have not just success but good success. Your money will not be funny, it will not be filthy lucre (1 Timothy 3:3 KJV). Once we put God and His Kingdom first in our lives every other thing will fall into place in due course (Matthew 6:33). We will bear fruits in our season. To the man who gives God His rightful place in his life God says,

***He shall be like a tree planted by
the rivers of water, that brings
forth its fruit in its season,
whose leaf also shall not wither;
and whatever he does shall
prosper. (Psalm 1:3)***

There is a due season for every faithful child of God, there is a due season for you. Every season is important, if you are in a dry season it is only to prepare you for your wet season.

Be Patient

“God makes a promise, faith believes it, hope anticipates it, and patience waits for it.” (Isaiah 46:10)

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11)

These verses make it clear to us that God is in control of time and destiny. He is the beginning and the end. When we are patient it shows that we understand that God is in control. It shows that we understand the transcendence of God’s ways and thoughts above our ways and thoughts and the preeminence of His purpose

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above ours. When we are patient we don’t murmur nor complain. Somehow we know that God is too good to forget us and too wise to make a mistake. We just know that all things will work together for good, to them that love God and are *the called according to*

His purpose. We rest in the knowledge of His sovereignty.

However the sovereignty of God must always be balanced with human responsibility. It is important to understand that although God has a plan for our lives, if we don't trust Him and patiently wait for His timing so that His plans for us can come into full fruition, we can mess up the plan.

Timing Is Important

It was always in God's plan for Israel to have a dynasty of kings. This is made plain in Genesis 17: 6 "*...and*
40

kings shall come out of thee." See also Deuteronomy 17:14-15,
28:36.

Because the people lacked the patience to wait on the perfect timing of God, they provoked Samuel the servant of God for a king (1 Samuel 8:4-5). God gave them a king but not according to His perfect will (1 Samuel 9-10).

God warned Israel that the king they requested would be a big

disappointment to them. Nevertheless they said, *give us a king anyway* (1 Samuel 8:22). God gave them Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. However the perfect will of God was for the king to come out of the tribe of Judah. The patriarch Jacob many years before prophesied this,

“The scepter (or kingly rule)

shall

not

depart

from

Judah...” (Genesis 49:10)

41

All through Scripture Judah is referred to as the kingly tribe. However there is a reason why God did not give them a king from the tribe of Judah. It is recorded in the Torah,

“A bastard shall not enter into

the congregation of the Lord;

even to his tenth generation

shall he not enter into the

congregation of the

Lord.”

(Deuteronomy 23:2)

An illegitimate child, one born of unmarried parents was considered a bastard. This is the way the New King

James puts it, “One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD .” Such a person and his lineage were not allowed to enter the congregation (to take any official or prominent position in the congregation of Israel) until the ten generations had passed.

Now in Genesis chapter 38, the Scripture reveals that Judah the head of the kingly tribe went with a prostitute. As a result Zarah and Pharez, two illegitimate children (bastards) were born. Pharez was the first born of the twin therefore the kingly line would flow through him. Remember only in the tenth generation will the curse of a bastard be broken, according to Deuteronomy 23:2. Look now at the book of Ruth and see the lineage of Perez:

18 Now this is the genealogy of

Perez: Perez begot Hezron;

19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram

begot Amminadab;

20 Amminadab begot Nahshon,

and Nahshon begot Salmon;

43

21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz

begot Obed;

22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse

begot David. (Ruth 4:18-22)

There we see that in the kingly line, from Pharez to David there were literally ten generations. The point is, when the people asked Samuel for a king the timing was off. God could not give them a king from the tribe of Judah the kingly tribe, which was His perfect will (from which tribe Jesus Himself would come). Why? Because there was a curse that had to be broken at the tenth generation; according to the law and the tenth generation had not come as yet.

When Israel asked for a king, the time for the curse to be lifted was very close but not yet. If they had displayed a little more patience their whole history would have been written differently.

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The same applies to us, if we are going to receive God's choicest blessings on our lives, If we are going to receive a David instead of a Saul, we must be

willing to patiently wait on Him. He knows much more than we do. Many lives would have taken a different course in history if they had shown a little more patience.

I have seen many believers who were wonderfully attuned to the Spirit of God and who were poised for a takeoff. I knew with all my heart that they were set to go places with God.

However they failed big times because of a lack of patience. A lack of patience has robbed them of their blessing and success.

Like Abraham, they brought forth an Ishmael instead of an Isaac. Like Esau, many have sold their birthright, their deep fellowship with the Lord for a

45

bowl of soup; for some quick fix.

Some have mortgaged their future for fleeting frivolities. God alone knows how many could have been giants and stalwarts of the faith but, sad to say, they couldn't wait on the Lord. They sold out for a quick fix.

The Test Of Time

One of the greatest tests you will face as a child of God is the test of time.

Sometimes everything might be going

wrong and it may seem as if God has forgotten you on the shelf. Time seems to be washing over you while others appear to be getting ahead and moving on with their lives. Satan will whisper many suggestions in your ears. He will tempt you to take the fast track and do things your own way. But you need to understand that God puts the compass before the clock. The clock speaks of speed but the compass speaks of

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direction. It is not how fast you get there but how you get there, that matters most to God. He is more concerned about your character than costume and cosmetic. The costume and cosmetic are all the things of this world without God blessing.

God's blessing is something no one can manipulate their way into. You cannot speed it up or force it. You can only wait and believe for it.

As you wait on God He will take you through painful experiences in order to prepare You. At times you may have to walk alone, you may feel as though something is wrong with you; but hold on, it is all part of the way and the process, which you will come to

appreciate if you refuse to faint.

I know what it is to suffer in the will of

God. I can identify with lack and

poverty; I know what it is like to feel

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the excruciating pain of rejection and

not by a few. I know what it is like to

lie on my bed and feel the hot tears run

down the sides of my face because of

hurts and pains caused by very close

associates, I know because I have been

there. Thank God I can tell it now, but

it was not easy. But I can happily

declare that though it was not easy it

did me well; it was worth it. Thank

God I can rejoice today but I first had

to say like Queen Esther of old, "*if I*

perish I perish but I will wait on the

Lord."

Today I am in awe at the faithfulness,

supreme goodness and providence of

God. All that I went through was of

God. He planned it all for my own

good. Through the vicissitudes of time

and my experiences He has subdued

my foolish pride, humbled me and

taught me many invaluable lessons.

Oh, the fathomless love of God! Today

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I am not bitter but I am better. Thanks

to God.

Because of my experience I know, and I am fully convinced that if many of God's people would wait patiently on Him, He would come through for them in marvelous ways. Many will look back and wonder how they got over..

They will be awe-struck at what God has done and the mighty long way from where God has brought them.

Most of all they will thank God that He put the compass before the clock.

There is almost not a day in my life when I am not amazed at what God has done and is doing and I am forever grateful.

But it did not come overnight. I had to learn to wait, humble myself, make some wrong things right and continue to believe in the supreme and merciful goodness of God. I had to believe that

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God would come through for me according to His tender mercies so clearly revealed in His Word. His Word was all that I had, but it was more than enough and still is.

Are you willing to wait and continue to be faithful regardless of how difficult it gets and regardless of how long it

takes for God to come through for you? Remember that God is the only person who is never in a hurry, yet always on time. Also remember that even if you fail along the way, failure serves only as preparation once you are willing to acknowledge your failure.

A Great Cloud Of Witnesses

Many of the great men and women of God who have made their mark in history and have left their footprints in the sands of time, had to face and pass

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the test of time before they came into blessing, honour and greatness.

When I look at many of the outstanding servants of God in the Bible, I realize that many were tried by God for many years before He brought them into the fullness of their destiny.

There were many years of pain, testing, suffering, rejection and lack etc, however these were the most critical years. These were the years of making and pruning. These were the years that were formative and also determinative of whether they would go forward or backward. Whether they would walk in their high calling or the low calling. Whether they would make

a mark in history, make a mess, or just
fade away into mediocrity.

Those were the days when they had to
say “No!” They had to say no to many
appealing

and

even

legitimate

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distractions. Those were the days of
proving by God. Those were also days
of gaining precious experiences.

Abraham spent twenty-five years in

Canaan

before

he

received

the

promised seed Isaac. Jacob spent

twenty years serving his uncle Laban

before God blessed him with his own.

It took thirteen long years before

Joseph’s

dream

was

gloriously

fulfilled. Moses spent forty years in the

Midian desert taking care of his father-

in-law’s sheep before God raised him

up and sent him to Pharaoh king of

Egypt, to lead a nation out of bondage.

For some time you may have to
patiently and faithfully take care of
someone else's stuff, before God
blesses you with your own.

Even though David was anointed king
in the place of Saul, he spent fifteen
years on the run from Saul before he
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became king. During this time he lived
in a cave called Adullam in Palestine
and also in a place called Ziklag,
which was in the hills of Palestine.

What a residence for the chosen and
anointed of God. For some time
David's circumstances did not match
his position in God's sight. However,
as he continued to patiently wait on
God his circumstances lined up with
his
position.

Child
of
God
circumstances cannot change position
but position changes circumstances.

Patience was a necessary prerequisite
for promotion in the lives of all these
men mentioned above. The important
thing to consider is that during their

time of waiting they never quit believing, never doubted God, never became desperate grabbers. You may grab and get something (a handful) but that cannot be compared with the

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reward of patiently waiting on the Most High God. The Bible says,

For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him. (Isaiah 64:4)

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (Hebrews 12:1)

One of the good things about patience is that through it one grows and gains precious experience to fit the call of God; experiences that would not have been possible had one not gone

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through the valley. You don't just go through stuff; you grow through.

Growth is an inevitable by-product of
patience.

Patience is a necessary path on the
road to biblical success. The Word of
God declares the following,

***“The Lord is good unto the soul
that
wait
for
him....”***

(Lamentation 3:25)

***But let patience have its perfect
work, that you may be perfect
and complete, lacking nothing.***

(Hebrews 10:36)

***...imitate those who through
faith and patience inherit the
promises. (Hebrews 6:12)***

While you are waiting, God prepares
you, He makes you; He puts all the

55

necessary things in place for the
fulfillment of His purpose for your life.

The Bible says,

***But let patience have its perfect
work, that you may be perfect
and complete, lacking nothing.***

(James 1:4)

Patience

is

indispensable

for

fruitfulness. The Bible says,

But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

(Luke 8:15)

The attitude of some believers is like the brother who prayed and said, *Lord give me patience and I want it now*. So many today want to get everything now.

56

Beloved, overnight success only lasts overnight. It is like a shooting star that quickly fades into the dark and nebulous obscurity of outer space.

Patience on the other hand prepares us for God's best. Patience tempers us; it subdues pride and bridles the tongue. It is also a great demonstration of true faith in God. And that is all Jesus will look for when he comes. Jesus asked the searching question "*...when the Son of Man comes, will he really find faith on the earth?*" (Luke 18:8) It is said rightly said, "The true measure of a man is the height of his ideals, the

breadth of his sympathy, the depth of his conviction and the length of his patience.”

I often tell folks: *If you hold up, God will show up.* God is no respecter of persons; He only respects principles. So lineup with this principle of

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patience and you will lineup with the blessings of God.

Wait on God! Believe God! Don't grab, don't defraud, don't steal, don't murmur, don't compromise and don't slander others to promote yourself.

Wait on your turn no matter how long it takes. What God has for you, no one can ever take. God has a unique plan for you. Wait on the Lord and again I say wait. Remember, God is never in a hurry, yet He is always on time.

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CHAPTER THREE

Have A Healthy

Attitude

“You can be right with a wrong attitude.”

First of all let us consider the definition of the word Attitude. According to Webster's dictionary, *“Attitude is manner, disposition, feeling etc, with*

regards to a person or thing, tendency or orientation especially of the mind.”

In other words attitude is the way one thinks, feels and reacts to people, or things. Attitude has to do with one's mentality, the way a person thinks and consequently acts toward people in particular.

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A person's attitude towards others can either be healthy or unhealthy, good or bad, positive or negative.

A person with a healthy attitude is a person who possesses some measure of interpersonal or people skills. Such a person knows how to interrelate, interface and get along with others. A person with a good attitude knows how to receive praise from others without becoming puffed up and how to receive criticism without becoming offended.

Three Reasons Why A Healthy Attitude Toward Others Is Important

1.

Because our knowledge and perception of people are never one hundred percent accurate and feelings are subjective.

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2.

No man is an island by himself.

We are all a part of a society, and

in

the

process

of

social

maturation there are three levels:

Dependence, Independence and

Interdependence. The highest

level is not Independence but

Interdependence

because

we

need other people to become all

that we can become.

3.

Because we are called to live our

lives in a world where no one is

perfect, not even you. That is not

fair, it is the truth. We need other

people in our lives even though

they have faults. Where there is

no vision the people perish and

where there are no people the

vision perishes.

Jesus Had The Favour Of Man

We do not need only the favour of God

in our lives in order to succeed. We

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also need the favour of man. The Bible has the following to say about Jesus,

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Luke 2:52)

Since Jesus needed the favour of man, in order for His purpose in the earth to be fulfilled, how much more you and I? The Bible says, *He increased in favour with God and man.*

Some may say, *I have the favour of God; I don't need the favour of men,* however Jesus did. He did not seek it; He just did not shun it. It is Jesus Himself who said, *we need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.* If Jesus put to redemptive and eternal use the favour of men, then I think it would be preposterous or foolish on our part not to do the same.

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We can learn a lot by looking at the life of Jesus. Jesus' life was insulated but never isolated. He did not live in a vacuum or as a hermit. Jesus was always around people; He was very sociable and befriending.

Several times in the Gospels we see

Him having dinner in homes. Levi made a great feast at his home and invited Jesus as the main guest of honour (Luke 5:29-32, Mark 2:15-17). He attended a dinner at the house of Matthew a notorious tax collector (Matthew 9:9-13). He attended a dinner at the house of a certain Pharisee (Luke 7:36). He attended a dinner at the house of Zacchaeus, another notorious tax collector (Luke 19:1-7). As a matter of fact, the public ministry of Jesus commenced at a marriage feast (John 2:1-11).

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There was something in the Jewish culture of the first century called “Table Fellowship.” When the Jews came together to eat it was for much more than physical nourishment.

Eating together was richly symbolic of friendship. At these formal dinners the invitees sat around a “U” shaped table called a “triclinium.” Contrary to the custom of that day, Jesus practiced a radically open table fellowship, in that He ate with all kinds of people, the rich, the poor and the outcast. Jesus was friendly to people, whether rich or poor. Let me hasten to say, He was not

a

compromising

friend

but

a

sympathizing friend, one who cared
for the souls of men.

He was always in contact and
communication with people, yet He
remained undefiled. There is a big
difference between insulation and
isolation. Isolation is withdrawal from

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people. Insulation on the other hand is
the ability to protect oneself from the
negative influences of people without
isolating yourself from them.

The other day I heard someone say,
people mean problems. Let's face it,
that statement has some truth in it, but
once you recognize that, most of your
problems are solved.

One needs to come to the realization
that once you are dealing with people,
at times you will encounter problems,
sooner or later. That is a fact we

cannot

deny.

Some

people

are

relatively easy to get along with.

However there are others who are problematic.

Notwithstanding the fact that a few people will be problematic, the important thing is the kind of attitude one adopts. One needs to adopt an

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attitude that allows you to interface and interrelate with people in a meaningful way, as much as is possible. The Word of God says,

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. (Romans 12:18)

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)

There are interpersonal skills that one can adopt in order to foster peaceful and

purposeful

coexistence

with

others. For example, it is very

important to understand that in many

cases, a negative experience plus a

negative response equals a negative

outcome. On the other hand a negative experience plus a positive response equals a positive outcome. It all boils
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down to the attitude with which we approach life. The Bible puts it this way,

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

(Romans 12:21)

The following quote from an unknown author highlights the dynamics of attitude in a very vivid way and underscores all that has been said so far on the topic of attitude.

“The longer I live the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude is more important than experience, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failure, than success, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearances, greatness and skill.

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It will make or break a company, a church or a home.

*The remarkable thing is that we
have
a
choice
everyday
regarding the attitude we will
embrace for that day. We cannot
change the past; we cannot
change the fact that people will
act in a certain way. We cannot
change the inevitable.*

*The only one thing we can do is
to play on the one string that we
have and that is our attitude. Life
is 10% what happens to me and
90% how I react to it. And so it is
with you. We are in charge of our
destiny.”*

It has been rightly said that it is not our
aptitude
but
our
attitude
that
determines
altitude.

Our
attitude

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determines our rise or demise, our

success or failure.

I think the most important thing I have learned about attitude is that a person can be right about something and yet wrong in their attitude. Such a personal blind spot can stand between you and your success in this life. Indeed attitude is more important than facts.

I also realize that God often consoles and comforts His children, not by altering their circumstances or the things that seem to militate against them but by altering their attitude toward the things that militate against them.

One of the great human freedoms that we possess is the ability to choose our attitude in any given circumstance. If you can't change your fate, change your attitude. Only then you may come

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to know what the Scripture means when it says,

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

Remember

your

attitude

will

determine your altitude. The simple person that God may allow to cross your path today, may know somebody, who knows somebody, who knows somebody, who knows somebody that is ordained by God to connect you to your destiny. Therefore, deal wisely with everybody.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Be Humble

“Humility is the Christian garment that never goes out of style.”

As a young Christian I had an insatiable desire for the presence of God. I loved to pray and therefore I made friends and associated myself with those whom I saw praying a lot. But during those early years of praying and fasting I saw some things that puzzled me. To make a long story short, I have seen some very prayerful people do some of the most sinful and downright foolish things. It almost made spending quality time with God look like the wrong thing to do, but I have come to recognize that the problem was not prayer but pride,

spiritual pride.

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The Word of God repetitiously exhorts us to be always humble. In the economy of God, the way up is down.

The Word of God says,

Therefore, as the elect of God,

holy and beloved, put on,...

humbleness

of

mind...

(Colossians 3:12)

The opposite or absence of humility is pride, and if there is one sin God hates more than all others, it is pride.

Therefore pride is at the top of the list of the seven sins that God hates.

(Proverbs 6:16-19)

What is pride? Pride is high-mindedness, unbridled self-esteem, arrogance, conceit and ostentatiousness. It is said to be as common as the air we breathe; therefore no one is beyond it.

The first and greatest sin is the sin of

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pride. Pride is more deadly than every other vice. It is a perverted state of mind. It is a form of madness. King

Uzziah fell because of his pride

But when he was strong his

*heart was lifted up, to his
destruction, for he transgressed
against the LORD his God by
entering the temple of the
LORD to burn
incense
on
the
altar
of
incense.*

(2

Chronicles 26:16)

It is through pride that Lucifer became

the devil. The Bible says,

*12How you are fallen from
heaven, O Lucifer, son of the
morning! How you are cut down*

to

the

ground,

You

who

weakened the nations!

13For you have said in your

heart: 'I will ascend into

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heaven, I will exalt my throne

above the stars of God; I will

also sit on the mount of the

congregation on the

farthest

sides of the north;

14I will ascend above the heights

of the clouds, I will be like the

Most High.'

15Yet you shall be brought down

to Sheol, to the lowest depths of

the pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

Your heart was lifted up because

of your beauty; you corrupted

your wisdom for the sake of

your splendor; I cast you to the

ground, I laid you before kings,

that they might gaze at you.

(Ezekiel 28:17)

Satan fell because of pride and so do many. Satan became proud because of his beauty, wisdom and position. It is said, people are usually proud because

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of their race, grace, face and place.

Pride is a deadly vice and no one in the world is absolutely free from this vice.

“Unchastity,

anger,

greed,

drunkenness, and all that, are

like flea-bites in comparison...

"Pride gets no pleasure out of

having something, only out of

having

more of it than the next

man... It is the comparison that

makes you proud: the pleasure

of being above the rest..." (C.S.

Lewis on Faith; pg.39; Copy

Right 1998; Printed by Thomas

Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee.)

Pride is repulsive to everyone when

they see it in others.

I have heard it said, when you have

nothing you have nothing to be proud

of. That is only partially true. It is

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important to understand that pride is a

condition of the heart. You don't

necessarily have to have anything to be

proud. Neither does having anything

mean one should be proud. You can be

poor and proud or rich and proud. It is

all a condition of the heart.

Pride, needless to say, is very foolish.

For the Bible declares,

When pride comes, then comes

shame; But with the humble is

wisdom. (Proverbs 11:2)

Humble Yourself

There is only one way to avoid, or deal

with the pitfall of pride and that is by

taking personal responsibility for one's words and conduct. The Word of God says we must *humble ourselves*.

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Humility is not something you pray for, because if God humbles you it will be very painful. The Bible does not exhort us to pray for God to humble us, no! Never pray that prayer, because such a prayer is not biblical. What the Bible emphatically says is, "*humble yourself*."

What you can pray for however is for God to reveal to you whether there is pride in any area of your life or whether there may be any other thing amiss. You can pray, like David "search me oh Lord...see if there is some wicked way in me..." Many times we need to pray like that because pride is something very hard to detect in one's own life. It is easier to see it in the life of someone else, than to see it in our own lives.

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However it is wise to conduct oneself in a humble manner at all times because the Word of God says, ***Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a***

fall. (Proverbs 16:18)

The story of David and Saul is an example par-excellence, of how God honours humility. God was pleased to raise up and bless little David and not only to raise him up and make him king but to establish his throne forever.

Why? Because he was willing to humble himself under the mighty hand of God.

David was no *fly by night*. The oil that Samuel anointed the head of David with proved to be no quick fix. Quick fixes will only spoil you quickly. It took humility and patient suffering under the mighty hand of God, before

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David could come into the full manifestation of the purpose for the anointing that he received at the hand of Samuel.

Many want to be blessed by God today but they are not willing to pay the price. Many times the price is humility, patiently suffering, facing hurts and rejections without caving in. Knowing how to make up when there is a break up. Knowing how to say, "*I am sorry.*" I have said that through the years. I believe that our willingness to

say I am sorry is one of our greatest strengths.

Honor Those Over You In The Lord

Respecting and honouring those in authority over you in the Lord is more important than words can say. One

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remarkable

verse

in

the

New

Testament might suffice ,

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

(Jude 9)

I am stung by the above verse every time I read it. Now let's look at that verse again from the Amplified Bible, *But when even the arch angel Michael, contending with the devil, judicially argued about the body of Moses, he dared not presume to bring an abusive condemnation against him, but simply said, "The Lord rebuke you!"*

If Michael the archangel, not just any angel but the *arch* or *chief* angel

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showed a measure of respect for the authority of Satan, “*even though he is Satan*” then this is enough to show us that authority is a very serious thing.

David recognized this truth, and that is why he showed respect for Saul throughout his dealings with him, even though Saul was acting like a devil.

Saul hunted after David’s life relentlessly with three thousand choice warriors of Israel. Saul was so angry with David, that at one time the priest’s of the city of Nob who knew nothing about David’s running from Saul took him in, fed him and send him on his way with goodwill.

When Saul heard about it he killed eighty five innocent priests with their families and further drew the sword against the entire city. Yet when David had the opportunity to kill Saul in the

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cave of Engedi he refused and only cut a piece of Saul’s robe.

On another occasion David and Abishai slipped into Saul’s camp while everyone was asleep. Abishai pleaded

with David to allow him to kill Saul

(1Samuel 26:8), yet David refused.

Take note of the response of David to

Abishai's request, "*And David said to*

*Abishai, **Destroy him not: for who can***

stretch forth his hand against the

LORD'S

anointed,

and

be

guiltless?"(1 Samuel 26:9)

Even though Saul was acting like a

devil and was apparently in a

backslidden condition, yet David

continually recognized his authority

and called him God's anointed. This is

one of the most profound lessons in the

Scripture.

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God will never raise up a man if he

cannot humble himself and honour

those who are over him in the Lord.

God will not put in authority those

who are not submissive or have not

first submitted themselves to authority.

The devil may raise up such a

character but certainly not the God of

the Bible.

If you want God's blessing on your

life, one of the best things that you can

do is to respect and honour those over you in the Lord. One of the biggest mistakes a child of God can make is to seek to promote himself / herself by impulsively sidestepping and defaming the authority that God has placed him / her under.

Such behaviour is a blueprint for failure. Humility is not an option if we want the favour and blessing of God

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on our lives. It has been rightly said that humility is not stupidity.

Oh! If more of the people of God would take to heart this simple yet profound truth. Satan has literally emasculated and destroyed many dynamic saints of God because they did not realize what a serious sin and curse it is to walk in pride and dishonour those in authority over them. If you have made that error then spare no time; make it right and don't try to beat around the bushes and justify yourself. It is better not to go than to go with a spirit of self-justification.

The Word says, *confess your faults one to another*. The word “*confess*” in the Greek is *homologia* a compound word,

homo (the same) and logia (to speak).

Therefore it means to speak the same thing, to agree with God and His

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Word, to speak the truth. True confession is not trying to justify yourself. True confession is agreement with the truth. In other words, if you have sinned, say so.

If ever you decide to go to a brother or sister, to your pastor or your pastor's wife to confess some wrong doing or attitude, the devil would oppose that idea and try to talk you out of it. He might say to you, "*Don't be a fool, don't ever do that because you would only be bringing yourself down in their eyes.*" However consider what the word of God says,

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. (1 Peter 5:6)

Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders.

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Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the

humble." (1 Peter 5:5)

...for everyone who exalts

himself will be humbled, and he

who humbles himself will be

exalted. (Luke 18:14)

Never worry about how it will look in the eyes of men but be worry about how it will look in the eyes of God.

When you humble yourself in the eyes of God He will exalt you in the eyes of men.

Avoid Strife

There is a subtle manifestation of pride that many are not aware of. Did you know that strife (contentiousness) is a

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manifestation of pride? Look at what the Word of God clearly says,

He who is of a proud heart stirs

up strife, but he who trusts in

the LORD will be prospered.

(Proverbs 28:25)

Only by pride comes strife...

(Proverbs 13:10 KJV)

Because of the fact that contentious attitude is a manifestation of pride and prides destroys, the Word of God strengthens the point by further declaring,

fool's

lips

enter

into

contention, and his mouth calls

for blows. (Proverbs 18:6)

A contentious attitude is equal to beating up your own self. When I discovered this truth in God's Word, it

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changed my life. If you want God's blessing on your life, by all means avoid strife. Why bring blows, suffering and hardship upon yourself.

Be a peacemaker, a trouble-shooter and not a troublemaker. According to the Apostle Paul there is really no winner in a situation of strife. The evil flames of strife might consume both .

The Bible says,

But if you bite and devour one

another, beware lest you be

consumed

by

one

another!

(Galatians 5:15)

The wise man Solomon said,

It is honorable for a man to stop

striving, Since any fool can start

a quarrel. (Proverbs 20:3)

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If you want to come to honor stay out of conflict; don't be meddling with that. Refuse to be contentious or problematic. Humble yourself by ceasing from strife. For it is written,

Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility. (Proverbs 18:12)

Don't Brag About Your Accomplishments

I never realized that bragging was a serious sin of pride until I read the story of Hezekiah in the Bible.

Hezekiah was a great man of God, one of the finest examples of faithfulness in the Old Testament. He upheld the principles of righteousness and did what was pleasing in the sight of God; therefore, God was with him in a special way. When King Sennacherib

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of Assyria came against Hezekiah and Judah God supernaturally intervened by sending an angel to fight on the behalf of Hezekiah.

21 Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man

*of valor, leader, and captain in
the camp of the king of Assyria.*

*So he returned shamefaced to
his own land. And when he had
gone into the temple of his god,
some of his own offspring struck
him down with the sword there.*

22Thus

the

LORD

saved

*Hezekiah and the inhabitants of
Jerusalem from the hand of
Sennacherib the king of Assyria,
and from the hand of all others,
and guided them on every side.*

(2 Chronicles 32:21-22)

90

Because of the great victory that God

gave

to

Hezekiah

he

received

enormous fame and honor,

And many brought gifts to the

LORD

at

Jerusalem,

and

*presents to Hezekiah king of
Judah, so that he was exalted in
the
sight
of
all
nations
thereafter. (2 Chronicles 32:23)*

However, the Bible reveals that
Hezekiah did not respond properly to
the favor and blessings of the Lord that
was bestowed upon him. Instead his
heart became lifted up and he did not
give God the glory. We are told,

*But Hezekiah did not repay
according to the favor shown
him, for his heart was lifted up;
therefore wrath was looming
over him and over Judah and
Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 32:25)*

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When the King of Babylon sent an
envoy to Hezekiah he displayed all his
treasures and all of his armory to them.

Because of this action of Hezekiah
God was displeased and purposed to
send judgment to him and all Judah.

We are told,

*13And Hezekiah was attentive to
them, and showed them all the*

house of his treasures -- the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory -- all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

14Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?" So Hezekiah said, "They

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came from a far country, from Babylon."

15And he said, "What have they seen in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them." (2 Kings 20:13-15)

At a glance the conduct of Hezekiah in showing his armory and treasures to the Babylonian ambassadors might seem a trivial thing that should cause no offence at all. As a matter of fact it should be seen as an act of common civility to strangers who had come

from a distant country. But God saw what human eyes cannot see. God saw the heart and the wrong motive of Hezekiah.

It is seemed that due to the great victory he received he valued himself 93

too much and became braggadocios and cocky. He probably thought he had accomplished the great victory because there was something special about him. However one looks at it, it was a test that Hezekiah failed.

However,

regarding

the

ambassadors of the princes of

Babylon, whom they sent to him

to inquire about the wonder that

was done in the land, God

withdrew from him, in order to

test him, that He might know all

that

was

in

his

heart.

(Chronicles 32:31)

Take heed. Remember to give God the glory for all the favors He bestows on

you.

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Don't Brag About Your

Accomplishments

I never realized that bragging was a serious sin of pride until I read the story of Hezekiah in the Bible.

Hezekiah was a great man of God, one of the finest examples of faithfulness in the Old Testament. He upheld the principles of righteousness and did what was pleasing in the sight of God; therefore, God was with him in a special way. When King Sennacherib of Assyria came against Hezekiah and Judah God supernaturally intervened by sending an angel to fight on the behalf of Hezekiah.

21 Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria.

So he returned shamefaced to his own land. And when he had

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gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there.

22 Thus

the

LORD

saved

Hezekiah and the inhabitants of

Jerusalem from the hand of

Sennacherib the king of Assyria,

and from the hand of all others,

and guided them on every side.

(2 Chronicles 32:21-22)

Because of the great victory that God

gave

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enormous fame and honor,

And many brought gifts to the

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However,

regarding

the

ambassadors of the princes of

Babylon, whom they sent to him

to inquire about the wonder that

was done in the land, God

withdrew from him, in order to

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test him, that He might know all

that was in his heart. (2

Chronicles 32:31)

Take heed. Remember to give God the glory for all the favors He bestows on you.

The Example Of Jesus

Jesus is our perfect example of true humility. Humility was displayed in the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ more than in any other person in the Bible.

We are exhorted in the book of Philippians to have a mentality like that of Jesus. The Word of God says,

5Let this mind be in you which

was also in Christ Jesus,

*6who, being in the form of God,
did not consider it robbery to be
equal with God,*

*7but made Himself of no
reputation, taking the form of a
bondservant, and coming in the
likeness of men.*

*8And being found in appearance
as a man, He humbled Himself
and became obedient to the point
of death, even the death of the
cross.*

*9Therefore God also has highly
exalted Him and given Him the
name which is above every name
(Philippians 2:5-9)*

Let us break it down. The words
“*being in the form*” refer to the pre-
incarnate condition, which is carried
over into His earthly life. That is, our
Lord was in the form of God before He
became man. Yet although He took
upon Himself humanity with its

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limitations (except sin), He was still in
the form of God. He lost nothing of
His deity and the prerogatives that go
with it.

In fact, the Word says, “*...he did not
consider it robbery to be equal with*

God...” Which means He did not think equality with God and to display that equality, a thing to be seized unlawfully; or as a treasure to be retained and displayed with hazardous consequences.

In other words, Jesus knew it was His right to express His deity when and however He chose to. Yet instead of fully displaying His form as God, He made himself of no reputation, by His own choice.

By His own choice He emptied Himself, in that He refrained from displaying His legitimate privileges

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and rights. He put aside His privileges and rights to display His divine attributes and took upon Himself the form of a servant in order to serve and save many. How wonderful, how marvelous, how graceful!

This is the supreme example of humility. If anyone had rights to assume anything it was Jesus Christ, yet though He had all rights, He humbled Himself and became as a servant.

Think about that. Jesus had the rights to do many super human things while

on earth. He could have earned for Himself great reputation and fame among men far beyond what He experienced. Yet He chose not to. That is the kind of humility He displayed. Even so, as God uses us, we must be careful not to attract too much attention to ourselves.

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Remember when Jesus walked on the water it was in the night. He could have done it in the day for everyone to see but He chose not to. Jesus limited the manifestation of His divine nature and did only what the Father told Him to do. The Bible says,

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. (John 5:19)

We who are anointed by God must remember this example, and also remember Satan as a contrast to Jesus' example. Satan was also anointed, he was called the *anointed cherub* (Ezekiel 28:14), but Satan was not satisfied to serve God with his

anointing. We are told that he wanted to be like God, like the Most High (Isaiah 14:14).

When we use our anointing without divine guidance, we are in a sense seeking to operate like God (and not as servants of God), a privilege that we don't have and a privilege that Jesus had, yet one He did not assume.

Moses made that error of using his anointing outside of divine will when he struck the rock the second time.

Though water came out abundantly, he was punished severely. Let us seek to be like Jesus who humbled Himself and therefore was highly exalted.

Remember Satan tried to exalt himself and was humbled. Our work is to humble ourselves, God's work is to exalt us. If we try to do God's work and exalt ourselves God will do our work and humble us. Our best choice

is to humble ourselves. There is virtue in humility and God has promised to bless the humble in heart.

CHAPTER FIVE

Know The Truth

About Material

Prosperity

“Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.” (Psalms 35:27)

This chapter is meant to clearly show that material prosperity is God’s will for His children. First of all it is very important to understand that though some may abuse the doctrine of material prosperity, the fact remains that it is a doctrine of the Bible and one that we ignore to our own peril. I have seen many of God’s children disillusioned and virtually defeated because they did not know how to trust

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God in the area of their financial needs.

Particularly vulnerable are those young adults between the ages of twenty to forty years. This is a period in life when people want to settle down and establish themselves materially for their comfort and the comfort and security of their families. However, because many are not thoroughly educated on how to trust God for the material things of life, they get caught up in the cares of this life and

eventually backslide. Some backslide even while they are still in the church.

The Need For Balance

The church has run with the revelation of spirituality but has neglected the other two vital areas of prosperity.

These are physical health and financial provision.

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Many of those denominations that

have

accepted

the

scriptural

revelations on spiritual salvation and

physical health (or divine healing) as

the will of God for the church today,

have rejected or neglected the doctrine

of material prosperity as also a part of

God's present will for the church.

Then there are those who take material

prosperity too far; it is their main

message. We need a balance. *Truth is*

not on this bank, or that bank of the

river but in the river that flows

between the banks.

However before one can have faith for

anything, one must first be convinced

beyond the shadow of any doubt, that

it is the revealed will of God for you to

have it. For the Bible declares,

***“So then faith comes by hearing
and hearing by the Word of
God.” (Romans 10:17)***

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The guilt and hang up that many believers have regarding material abundance, is due partly to the present over-emphasis on financial prosperity in the church today. This has caused many brethren to stumble on the subject of material prosperity.

However the real problem has its roots in the rise of monasticism in the ancient church (315-590 A.D).

During that time many withdrew from society and lived in caves in the hills along the banks of the Egyptian Nile.

Some practiced Asceticism (*the belief that the body is evil and therefore deserves to be punished, and that poverty and suffering is humility*).

They also practiced celibacy

(*abstinence from sex*). Such beliefs,

though they may be appealing to some, are nowhere to be found in the Word of God. They are at best only the traditions of men.

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Yes, there is suffering in the Bible; at times the righteous will suffer. But suffering is never meant to be an end in itself, only a means to an end. The child of God may be persecuted or even lose his or her life for the Gospel's sake. However that does not mean that material abundance is not for us today. We need to rightly divide the truth.

Job was the wealthiest man alive in the East in his time, yet he was a righteous and God fearing man. Yes, God tried him by allowing the devil to take away his wealth and other things but in the end God gave him double for his trouble, double of all that he had before. God will give you double for your trouble too. The only thing God did not give Job double of was his wife, even though she proved to be of no great help to him in his time of suffering. Job never divorced her and

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remarried. He was an upright man. No

wonder God blessed him so much; He could trust him with the blessings.

I believe that the critical thing is, can God trust his people with material abundance? Will you be faithful after God has blessed you. It is said that prosperity has more power to hurt than adversity. That is why God must prepare you before he blesses you.

God's Original Plan

The Bible teaches prosperity in three dimensions:

1. Material Prosperity
2. Physical Prosperity
3. Spiritual Prosperity

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(1) MATERIAL PROSPERITY

It was not in the original plan of God for man to know lack of any kind.

God's will for man from the beginning was prosperity. In the beginning man was placed in a garden (Genesis. 2:8).

In the garden there was everything man needed for his happiness and fulfillment. Whatever man would ever need, if it were not apparent on the surface of the garden, was nevertheless there for man to harness. In the garden there was gold and every precious stone. God's will was abundance not

poverty and lack.

(2) PHYSICAL PROSPERITY

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were in perfect soundness of health.

They had perfect physique; their bodies were perfect specimens of the human body.

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(3) SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

In the beginning man was made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis.1:26-27). Man was morally perfect, flawless and innocent. Man knew no sin. Man enjoyed sweet fellowship and communion with God (Genesis.3:8).

Man had authority and dominion over the creation (Genesis. 1:28). Adam was the crown of creation, the master of creation. He ruled and reigned as a vice regent under God's authority.

In the Garden of Eden **God blessed Adam and Eve** and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28).

Adam was the master of creation and God was his master. As long as Adam remained under the covering of God's dominion and authority he was in authority on the earth.

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Sin Destroyed God's Plan

Our first parents knew no bondage,
until the day that Adam sinned against
God
by
conscious
disobedience
(rebellion). By obeying the enemy
instead of God, Adam lost all that he
had in the Garden of Eden. He brought
himself under the dominion and
authority of Satan the enemy of God.
Through sin Adam and Eve lost
everything.

(1) Material prosperity was lost:

Man came to know poverty and lack.

God Himself literally drove man out of
the prosperous garden in which He
originally placed him. The Bible says,

***23Therefore the LORD God sent
him out of the garden of Eden to
till the ground from which he
was taken.***

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***24So He drove out the man; and
He placed cherubim at the east
of the garden of Eden, and a
flaming sword which turned
every way, to guard the way to
the tree of life. (Genesis 3:23-
24)***

(2) Physical prosperity was lost:

Man came to know sickness, disease and death that took him back to the dust from which he was taken.

(3) Spiritual prosperity was lost:

Adam and Eve lost their sweet fellowship and communion with God.

They died spiritually. The image and likeness of God in them became

flawed, they were no longer morally

perfect and upright; they were now

sinners. Because they did not abide

under the covering of God's authority

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they lost their dominion and authority.

Dominion and authority over the earth

was given over to Satan (Luke 4:6).

God's Will Has Not Changed

Not long after Adam fell, God

announced a plan to destroy the works

of the devil; this is recorded in Genesis

3:15 *And I will put enmity between you*

and the woman, And between your

seed and her Seed; He shall bruise

your head, And you shall bruise His

heel. This is called the *proto-*

evangelion, or the first announcement

of the gospel in scripture.

God is the author of material

prosperity, physical prosperity and

spiritual prosperity (fellowship with Himself). God's will for everyone is prosperity in these three areas. He proved that this is His will by giving unto man all these things from the very

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beginning. This is the abundant life (John 10:10).

We know His will is the same because the Word of God tells us that God does not change. He does not vary in His ways. The Bible says,

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

(James 1:17)

There is no variableness, neither any shadow of turning with God. The words "*Shadow of turning*" in the Greek Language is *tropes aposkiasma*, which means: The shadow-mark cast from a heavenly body in its turning or revolution. We call this an eclipse. The moon may eclipse the sun, and the earth may eclipse the moon but

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nothing can eclipse God. God simply cannot change. It is written,

For I am the LORD, I do not

change... (Malachi 3:6)

Therefore the fundamental essence of God's original will for man remains the same.

God's Restoration Plan

Thousands of years before Christ was born the gospel was preached to Abraham. This was the same gospel that was initially announced in Genesis 3:15. The Bible says,

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the

the

119 nations shall be blessed."

(Galatians 3:8)

Because God's original will for man remained the same, God put in motion a plan of complete restoration. To accomplish this restoration God called and made a covenant agreement with Abraham (this will fulfill Genesis 3:15). Abraham became the father of the Hebrew nation and the father of all who would believe in his Seed after

the flesh, Jesus Christ. The Bible says,

1When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.

2" And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."

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3Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:

4" As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.

5" No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

6" I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

7" And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in

*their generations, for
an everlasting covenant, to be
God
to
you
and
your
descendants after you.*

*8"Also I give to you and your
descendants after you the land*

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*in which you are a stranger, all
the land of Canaan, as an
everlasting possession; and I
will be their God." (Genesis 17:*

1-8)

Notice verses two and six, these verses cover material and physical aspects of prosperity. The words in verse seven "...to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." cover the spiritual aspect of prosperity. Based on God's covenant arrangement with Abraham,

He blessed him with all that Adam lost. The Word of God says,

*Now Abraham was old, well
advanced in age; and the LORD
had blessed Abraham in all
things. (Genesis 24:1)*

The LORD has blessed my

*master greatly, and he has
become great; and He has given*

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*him flocks and herds, silver and
gold, male and female servants,
and
camels
and
donkeys.*

(Genesis 24:35)

Two very important words to notice

are

the

words

establish

and

generations.

And

I

will

establish

My

covenant between Me and you

and your descendants after you

in their generations, for an

everlasting covenant, to be God

to you and your descendants

after you. (Genesis 17:7)

The word “*establish*” means: *to*

continue, to perform or to cause to

stand. Therefore what God said unto Abraham was not to begin and end with Abraham but to continue with his seed in their "generations."

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The covenant continued with Isaac

The Word of God says,

But My covenant I will establish

(continue) with Isaac, whom

Sarah shall bear to you at this

set time next year." (Genesis

17:21)

And the LORD appeared to him

the same night and said, "I am

the

God

of

your

father

Abraham;

do not fear, for I

am with you. I will bless you

and multiply your descendants

for My servant

Abraham's

sake." (Genesis 26:24)

13The man began to prosper,

and continued prospering until

he became very prosperous;

14for he had possessions of

flocks and possessions of herds

124

and a great number of servants.

So the Philistines envied him.

(Genesis 26:13,14)

The covenant continued with Jacob

The Word of God says,

Thus

the

man

became

exceedingly prosperous, and had

large flocks, female and male

servants,

and

camels

and

donkeys. (Genesis 30:43)

I am not worthy of the least of all

the mercies and of all the truth

which You have shown Your

servant; for I crossed over this

Jordan with my staff, and now I

have become two companies.

(Genesis 32:10)

Please, take my blessing that is

brought to you, because God has

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dealt graciously with me, and

because I have enough. So he

urged him, and he took it.

(Genesis 33:11)

The covenant continued with Joseph

Even though Joseph became a slave,
and subsequently was put into prison,

none of those things made void the
covenant promise. God was with

Joseph and the blessing of God was on

whatsoever he put his hands to. The

Word of God says,

And the Lord was with Joseph,

and he was a prosperous man,

and he was in the house of his

master the Egyptian. (Genesis

39:2)

Even

as

a

slave

Joseph

was

prosperous. We are told,

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And his master saw that the

LORD was with him and that

the LORD made all he did to

prosper in his hand. (Genesis

39:3)

Joseph did not remain a slave. He

emerged from slavery and from prison

to become the second in command in

Egypt. The king of Egypt said,

40 You

shall

be

over

my

house, and all my people shall be

ruled according to your word;

only in regard to the throne will

I be greater than you."

41 And Pharaoh said to Joseph,

"See, I have set you over all the

land of Egypt."

42 Then Pharaoh took his signet

ring off his hand and put it on

Joseph's hand; and he clothed

him in garments of fine linen

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and put a gold chain around his

neck.

43 And he had him ride in the

second chariot which he had;

and they cried out before him,

"Bow the knee!" So he set him

over all the land of Egypt.

(Genesis 41:40-43)

The covenant continued with Israel

Israel was delivered from the bondage

of Egypt because of the covenant. The

Bible says,

24 So God heard their groaning,

and

God

remembered

His

covenant with Abraham, with

Isaac, and with Jacob.

25 And God looked upon the

children of Israel, and God

acknowledged them. (Exodus

2:24-25)

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He also brought them out with

silver and gold, And there was

none feeble among His tribes.

(Psalm 105:37)

The covenant continues with Christ

and His body (the church)

Christ is the point of connection for the

Gentile world to the covenant promise

made to Abraham. Through Jesus

Christ we have become legitimate

heirs to the blessings of Abraham. This

is why God said,

In your seed all the nations of

the earth shall be blessed,

because you have obeyed My

voice. (Genesis 22:18)

14 That the blessing of Abraham

might come upon the Gentiles in

Christ Jesus...

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28There is neither Jew nor

Greek, there is neither slave nor

free, there is neither male nor

female; for you are all one in

Christ Jesus.

29And if you are Christ's, then

you are Abraham's seed, and

heirs according to the promise.

(Galatians 3:14, 28, 29)

Through Christ we have been legally and fully brought into the family of Abraham, and have become legal heirs to the covenant.

Jesus brought about the spiritual aspect of the covenant promise. He gave back to man the privilege of fellowshiping with God in a way that man was not able to since Adam sinned in the garden. Christ restored the image and likeness of God in man, in all who believe in Him. Christ restored dominion and authority to humanity.

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Christ, due to the covenant with Abraham, restored spiritual life to humanity. This is the reason why when He died, He went to Abraham's

Bosom to fulfill the covenant promise made to Abraham and his seed. To the saints that died and were held in Abraham's Bosom, He proclaimed,

...I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. (John 10:10)

The Old Testament saints enjoyed only two dimensions of prosperity. They enjoyed these two areas as long as they kept their side of the covenant agreement and walked in obedience to the principles of the Law. The two dimensions are, material provision and physical health (Deuteronomy 28). They did not have the Spirit as we do today.

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Before Christ came the Holy Spirit was not given to indwell men in a general way. The Spirit only (in typology) indwelt and rested upon a few select individuals, but now since Christ came the Holy Spirit is given to everyone who believes in Christ. We have received the new birth, son-ship, and the very nature of God, as a result of union with Christ. We have received God's greatest gift. We have received

what it takes to worship God, not by means of a stone altar, nor from the outer court of the temple. We can now draw nigh to God, and enter into His very presence with full assurance of faith. We have what it takes to come boldly before His throne and to live forever in the unveiled and holy presence of the living God. We have become partakers of the very nature of God (2 Peter 1:4).

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However, the problem today is that we have become so excited about our spiritual blessing, that we have neglected the other two areas of the covenant. Nevertheless, it is God's will that we walk in all three. This is what John meant when by the Holy Spirit he said,

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. (3 John 2)

God wants us to prosper, materially, physically, and spiritually. It will take

this three-fold cord together, in order
to advance the kingdom of God in
these last days. The early church had
all three. They had the Spirit, they had
healing,

and

they

had

material

prosperity. The Word says there was
none that lacked among them, people
of means were saved and they sold

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lands and houses and brought the
money and laid it at the apostles feet,
and distribution was made unto the
brethren, so that no one lacked (Acts
4:34-37).

However it is theologically correct to
say that material prosperity was
promised to O.T. saints (Israel) once
they

were

faithful

to

God

(Deuteronomy 28). But to the N.T.

saints (the church) we were promised
rejection and suffering once we remain
faithful to God. Paul said, *all that will*

live godly in Christ will suffer persecution (1 Timothy 3:12). Again he said, For unto us it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake (Philippians 1:29). Jesus said, if they hated me they will hate you (John 15:18-20). Therefore today suffering and prosperity must be held in a delicate balance. It is aptly said, Truth

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is not in the thesis nor the antithesis but the synthesis which reconciles the two. It is not on this bank or that bank of the river but in the river which flows between the banks.

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CHAPTER SIX

Be A Giver

In the book of Revelation we read of a book which no man can open except Jesus. For some this is their pocket book.

The way to receive material or financial blessings from God is by giving. Whatever we sow that is what we would reap. The laws of sowing and reaping were placed in the earth by God since the very beginning, and they

are still operative and in effect today.

The Word of God says,

While

the

earth

remains,

***seedtime and harvest... shall not
cease. (Genesis 8:22)***

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***...whatever a man sows, that he
will also reap. (Galatians 6: 7)***

The laws of sowing and reaping work,
not only in the area of the sowing
natural and moral seeds, but also in the
area of sowing financial seeds. The

Word of God clearly says, *...whatever
a man sows, that he will also reap.* We
sow by giving; Jesus Himself said,

***Give and it shall be given unto
you. (Luke 6: 38)***

I have had my share of poverty. In a
measure know what it is like to be
there. However the time came when I
felt I had enough of that life. I wanted
a change; therefore, I began to cry out
to God; I told Him all about my needs.
I told Him I needed this, I needed that,
and I needed the other; and God
answered me. The answer I got was
not the answer I expected. The answer

I received from the God was not what I expected but it changed my life. The answer was simple but profound. What He told me revolutionized my entire life.

He said to me, "*You need to give.*"

Here I was telling God about my needs and His answer was that my greatest need at that time was to give. When I heard those words , at that very moment my eyes were opened; those words were words of life to me. I did not question or argue with the Holy Spirit because I knew it was the wisdom and revelation of God. When He said those words to me, in my spirit revelation was instantly birthed and I clearly understood what He was saying to me. It was like all of a sudden, the light came on upstairs and the darkness was totally dispelled.

I was telling God *I need, I need, I need* but He answered me by saying, "*You need to give.*" My biggest and greatest need was not to receive but to give. The Holy Spirit was telling me that when I give, all my needs would be supplied. He was telling me that my

success is measured by what goes out and not by what comes in.

These simple words, "*You need to give*" changed my life, and they can change yours too. When you realize that giving is a need; when the revelation of your need to give gets a hold of your consciousness, your life will never be the same. When I discovered that giving was a need I made it my business to supply that need.

I heard the Holy Spirit further speaking to my heart, "*you cannot receive anything with your hands*

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closed." He also quickened to my attention the fact that the Father is a giver; He gave His only Son in order to bring many sons to glory.

Years ago I heard an old deacon by the name Dixon Phillip say, "*You are what you read.*" Arising out of that experience with the Holy Spirit was a desire to read all the literature I could get my hands on, pertaining to the subject of giving and receiving.

We are the product of information; no one can rise above what he knows. A problem cannot be solved on the same

level on which it was created. Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results is defined as a form of madness. Before our circumstances can change we must change; and we can change by changing the information that we have been feeding ourselves with.

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We need to know what the Bible says on giving and receiving.

The knowledge I received through the study of the Word of God changed me. Not only my thinking, but also my material status was changed in a tremendous way. God is still changing it for the better. I began giving and God began blessing me in tremendous ways. It works and the people of God need to be informed in this regard.

According to Galatians 3:14 all believers have been blessed with the blessing of Abraham. The Abrahamic blessing is actually the blessing of God. "*Abrahamic blessing*" is a theological term for the blessings of

God through Christ the physical seed
of Abraham. It is God's blessings
according to Christ's riches in glory. It
is the legacy of every child of God; it
is your family inheritance. Do you

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really

want

to

possess

your

inheritance.

You Can Have It

It is not enough just to know that you
are blessed by God through the seed of
Abraham. You need to know how to
access and possess your blessing. Do
you know how to possess it? The Bible
tells us how. The Bible says,

***“Give and it shall be given unto
you.” (Luke 6:3)***

Notice that the Bible does not say give
and you shall receive, but it says, *give
and it shall be given unto you*. What
does the “it” stands for? That “*it*” is
not chance or luck. For the unsaved it
is a blessing that they can access by
virtue of the prevenient grace of Jesus
Christ but to the child of God it is your
covenant legacy. Just in case you want

to know what is the prevenient grace of God; it is what theologians call the anticipatory grace of God. It is grace that is extended to sinners, with the anticipation that they would be saved. Without this grace of God extended to mankind no sinner would live on this earth in God's sight and therefore none would have a chance to be saved. It is the goodness of God that is meant to lead to repentance.

The way to draw from your heavenly bank account, your covenant legacy is by giving. The way to become financially successful is by giving. By faith begin to act upon the Word of God; through faith begin to act like you know you have it by giving generously with cheerfulness. "*Give and it shall be given unto you.*" If you know and believe that you are rich in Christ then how can you be stingy?

Begin to sow and in due season you

will surely reap. This principle works. If you have not been operating in that grace, now is the time to begin.

Understanding Offerings

First of all one need to give to God.

Giving tithes and offering is a must for material prosperity. The Bible says,

8"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'in what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.

9You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.

10Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that

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there will not be room enough to receive it.

11"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:8-11)

Notice that the God did not only rebuke His people for not bringing the tithes but also the offerings (plural).

...you have robbed Me! ...In tithes and

offerings (v.8). If you don't give offerings generously you are also robbing God. If the church you attend ministers life to you and that church is building or raising funds for a particular project that is Spirit led and will enhance the ministry, you are obligated to support it. You need to give a generous offering as the Lord may impress upon your heart. There

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are different kinds of offerings and they are not optional; they are commanded. The Bible says,

4And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, "this is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying:

5'Take from among you an offering to the LORD. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD: gold, silver, and bronze (Exodus 35:4-5)

Notice carefully that the Bible says, *...This is the thing which the LORD commanded...*

The belief that offering for the spirit led work of God is left to the choice of

God's people is not supported by
Scripture. If you want to be blessed

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you must honour God by giving to
Him of your possessions in order to
support His work in the earth.

***9Honor the LORD with your
possessions, and with the first
fruits of all your increase;***

***10So your barns will be filled
with plenty, and your vats will
overflow***

with

new

wine.

(Proverbs 3:9-10)

***1Cast your bread upon the
waters, for you will find it after
many days.***

***2Give a serving to seven, and
also to eight, for you do not
know what evil will be on the
earth. (Ecclesiastes 11:1-2)***

Notice the Word says cast your bread
upon the waters and not your leftovers
or bread crumbs. Don't cast the things
that you can do without but the things

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that you need. You bread is what
sustains you, it is that which is vital to

you, and yet God says cast it upon the waters, give it away.

The point is, at times God may speak to an individual to give in an unusual way, for the support of His work and at the same time to give that person a financial breakthrough. When you obey God and refuse to depend on your own understanding, you cast your bread upon the water. By so doing, through faith you unlock the abundance of God. Dare to become a faith giver, a liberal giver and watch God move on your behalf and give you a breakthrough increase. Praise God!

Don't Mess with The Lord's

Tithes

With regards to the issue of tithes, the biggest financial error you can ever

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make is to take God's tithes and use it on yourself. If you want a curse on your life then go right ahead, help yourself but remember the Bible says if you do that, *you are cursed with a curse*. However, if you want to see

your way financially and otherwise
you must and again I emphasize, you
must give to God what is His. The
tithes belong to God and it must be
brought into the storehouse of the
Lord. Let us look at what God said by
the prophet Malachi. He said,

***8"Will a man rob God? Yet you
have robbed Me! but you say, in
what way have we robbed You?"***

In tithes and offerings.

***9You are cursed with a curse,
for you have robbed Me, even
this whole nation.***

***10Bring all the tithes into the
storehouse, that there may be
food in My house, and try Me***

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***now in this," says the LORD of
hosts, "If I will not open for you
the windows of heaven and pour
out for you such blessing that
there will not be room enough to
receive it.***

***11"And I will rebuke the
devourer for your sakes, so that
he will not destroy the fruit of
your ground, nor shall the vine
fail to bear fruit for you in the
field," says the LORD of hosts;***

12" And all nations will call you

blessed, for you will be a

delightful land," says the LORD

of hosts. (Malachi 3:8-12)

The word tithe actually means *tenth*; it

is the tenth of one's earning . God said

one tenth of our earnings belongs to

Him. And anyone who touches it is

immediately brought under a curse .

God said , *you are cursed with a curse.*

The reason behind this curse is that

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whatever God sets apart for Himself is

holy and to use a holy thing in a

common way is to immediately invite

a curse on your life.

When the children of Israel went into

Canaan under the leadership of Joshua

the first city the conquered was to be

devoted to God as a kind of first fruit

offering. Apart from Rahab the whole

city was to be put to the sword and the

silver and gold etc, set apart for the

house of God. The Bible says,

18" And you, by all means

abstain

from

the

accursed

things, lest

you

become

accursed when you take of the

accursed things, and make the

camp of Israel a curse,

and

trouble it.

19" But all the silver and gold,

and vessels of bronze and iron,

are consecrated to the LORD;

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they shall come into the treasury

of the LORD." (Joshua 6:18)

The Hebrew word for accursed

actually means *devoted*, that which is

devoted to God. This is clearly brought

out in the following NIV translation,

But keep away from the devoted

things, so that you will not bring

about your own destruction by

taking any of them. Otherwise

you will make the camp of Israel

liable to destruction and bring

trouble on it. (Joshua 6:18)

The Words accursed and devoted in

Scripture come from the same Hebrew

word and are used interchangeably

because whatever is devoted to God is

also accursed once is taken and used

by man in a common way. This is why

Achan and his family were put to death. Because they took of that which

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was devoted to God it became a curse to them (Joshua 7 & 8).

This is exactly the same principle that applies with the tithes. Like Jericho, God has devoted a tenth of the earnings of His people to Himself. It is not man's decision and it is not something you debate about, it is something to obey. It is a principle that Abraham practiced long before the law of Moses. The Word of God says,

19 And he blessed him and said:

"Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

20 And blessed be God Most

High, who has delivered your

enemies into your hand." And

he gave him a tithe of all.

(Genesis 14:19-20)

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Even Jesus spoke in favor of the need to pay tithes.

Woe

to

you,

scribes

and

*Pharisees, hypocrites! For you
pay tithe of mint and anise and
cummin, and have neglected the
weightier matters of the law:
justice and mercy and faith.*

These you ought to have done,

without

leaving

the

others

undone. (Matthew 23:23)

Observe carefully the words, *These
you ought to have done*, referring to
the Pharisees payment of tithe even of
the smallest of things. Is God receiving

tithes

from

the

church

today?

Certainly, the Bible says so,

Here mortal men receive tithes,

but there he receives them, of

whom it is witnessed that he

lives. (Hebrews 7:8)

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Today he that lives (Jesus Christ)

receives tithes. Tithing is not a

dispensational principle but a timeless

principle. Therefore, to touch the tithes is to touch the accursed (devoted) thing and thereby incur a curse upon yourself. God clearly said if you mess with His tithes, *You are cursed with a curse.*

Everything Belongs To God

Some people make a big fuss about giving to God, but according to the Word of the Lord,

The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. (Psalm 24:1)

For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You. (1 Chronicles 29:14)

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Everything belongs to God; we are only stewards and keepers of what belongs to Almighty God. Therefore, when we give to God we only give back to Him what is already His.

Nobody has a right to boast in themselves over anything that they possess, regardless of who they are and

what they have. This is why the apostle Paul said,

For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

God simply allows us the benefit of giving to Him so that He can bless us in return. The truth is, when you bring the tithes to the Lord, you are not giving God a 10% instead he is giving 157

you 90% with added blessings for your obedience.

Give To Others

You also need to give to others if you want to be a success financially. The Word of God says,

The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself. (Proverbs 11:25)

He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, And He will pay back what he has given. (Proverbs 19:17)

Give a portion to seven, and also

to eight; for thou knowest not

what evil shall be upon the earth.

(Ecclesiastes 11:2 KJV)

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If you truly have faith to ask God for money, then you should also have faith to give money. By so doing, you would be making room for God's supernatural increase.

If you hold on to what you have, then that is all you will have. You need to practice giving Paul said,

...see that you abound in this

grace also. (2 Corinthians 8:7)

Giving is a grace that can be increased, a grace that you can abound in. Again, remember that the prosperity of the believer is not measured by what comes in but by what goes out.

The Measure You Sow Is The Measure You Reap

There are three levels of provision on which the child of God can choose to

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live;

they

are:

insufficiency,

sufficiency and abundance. You can

determine your level. The Word of

God says,

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. (Luke 6:38 KJV)

6But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

7So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

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8And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having

all

*sufficiency in all things, may
have an abundance for every
good work. (2 Corinthians. 9:6-
8)*

Notice the Bible says, *For with the
same measure that you use, it will be
measured back to you.* It also says, *He
who sows sparingly will also reap
sparingly, and he who sows bountifully
will also reap bountifully.*

We all can determine the degree of
our financial success by the degree to
which we are willing to act upon the
Word of God. We all need financial
prosperity to be fulfilled; for God
Himself said in His Word,

...money answers everything.

(Proverbs 10: 19)

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Say goodbye to poverty; begin to sow
your seeds and continue to sow your
seeds. As you give of your finances
know that God cannot lie; He
promised that as you give He will
cause you to always have an abundant
supply, for every good work.

*And God is able to make all
grace abound toward you, that
you,*

always

having

all

sufficiency in all things, may

have an abundance for every

good work. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

God is able to make all grace abound toward you. Not just grace for material things but all grace. You may be satisfied and contented with your financial position but you need the anointing on your life, good health, and many other blessings. When you begin to practice giving you will receive in return more than money.

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God will cause you to have *all*

sufficiency in all things and an

abundance for every good work. God

will put His favor on your life. The

favor of God is what will put you over;

we are told in the book of Proverbs

that the favor of God is better than

silver and gold,

A good name is to be chosen

rather than great riches, loving

favor rather than silver and

gold. (Proverbs 22:1)

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Have The Presence of God

*“There can be no true success
without the presence of God in one’s
life.”*

A constitutional analysis of man from
the
standpoint
of
Biblical
Anthropology
confirms
four
fundamental factors.

1.

Man was made morally free
(This means that he was made
with the ability to choose
between right and wrong).

2.

Man was made responsible for
his moral choices (He will bear
the consequences of his moral
choices).

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3.

Man
was
made

morally
accountable
to
God
(God
determines
the
reward
or
punishment for his choices).

4.

Man was made dependent on
God (Without God's presence
and input in his life man is
incomplete).

Let me elaborate on number four. Man
was made dependent on God. Adam's
complete prosperity depended on his
fellowship with God. Fellowship with
God was an indispensable and vital
part of man's life. In the book of
Genesis we are told that God visited
Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:18).
Think about that for a moment. Think
about the fact that before the fall of
man, God was not distant or hidden
from man; God was not a mystical
being.

Adam and Eve walked with God and had fellowship with God. Adam and Eve were familiar with the presence of God. Man's original dwelling place was the presence of God. Man was created to live in fellowship with God. The presence of God was man's native element and his habitat as far as original design and purpose is concerned.

Because man was made dependant on God's presence for his wholeness, man cannot be successful without the presence of God in his life. A man seeking success outside of the presence of God is like a fish trying to live outside of water; it is impossible, the fish will die. Any man who lives outside of God's presence is dead and will never know true fulfillment.

Man's life was originally intended to be fulfilled only in God's presence.

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The Temple Of God

We have already seen in the previous chapter God's restorative plan for man

through the call of Abraham.

Through Abraham God raised up the nation of Israel. Israel was forced into slavery by Egypt and remained in bondage for many years. However, God in time visited the children of Israel and brought them out of bondage. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt's bondage, God commanded His servant Moses to build Him a sanctuary also called the tabernacle (dwelling place).

His purpose was that once again He might dwell among men, consonant with His original purpose. This is made clear in the following verse,

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“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” (Exodus 25:8)

The sanctuary had three divisions; the courtyard, the holy place and the holy of holies. In the holy of holies there was a golden chest called the Ark of the Covenant. On the top of the Ark of the Covenant there were two golden cherubims

with
their
wings
outstretched
facing
each
other.

According to Scripture, between the
two cherubims was the place where the
presence of God dwelt,

***“...the ark of the covenant of
the Lord of hosts, which
dwelleth
between
the
cherubims...” (1 Samuel 4:4)***

This Ark of the Covenant was situated
in the most holy place behind the veil.

The veil which was four inches thick,
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twenty feet wide and forty feet high,
was that which separated Israel from
the immediate presence of God.

As the children of Israel journeyed
through the wilderness toward the

Promised

Land,

wherever

they

encamped, they set up the sanctuary

called the tabernacle, which was a portable shrine.

Throughout their pilgrimage in the wilderness toward the Promised Land, the Shekinah presence of God (or the veiled presence of God) who dwelt between the cherubims, was seen. It was seen as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The cloud by day kept them cool and protected them from the blistering sun of the desert. The pillar of fire by night kept them warm, for the desert is extremely cold at night.

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The presence of God with Israel was that which made them a holy and peculiar people, above all other peoples of the whole earth. As long as the presence of the Lord was with Israel, all their needs were met and their enemies were no match for them. When the children of Israel came into the Land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, the tabernacle was set up in Shiloh. It remained there for many years. Therefore Shiloh was the first permanent dwelling place for the tabernacle. The Bible says,

Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled

together at Shiloh, and set up

the tabernacle of meeting there.

And the land was subdued

before them. (Joshua 18:1)

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Many years later around 960 B.C. a second sanctuary was erected called the temple . It was built at Jerusalem by King Solomon. After some years the Babylonians took Judah into captivity and the temple of Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, in 515 B.C.

After the Babylonian captivity in 515 B.C., a third sanctuary (temple) was built in the same place by the leader of the returnees from the Babylonian captivity, whose name was Zerubbabel.

Several centuries later, Herod the Great ordered the construction of the fourth temple (actually a renovation of the third).

When Jesus Christ the Son of God came and died on the cross something marvelous happened. The veil of the

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temple, which was four inches thick by twenty feet wide by forty feet high, was supernaturally torn from top to bottom. That veil, which separated men from God's presence for centuries, was torn open. This signified that the presence of God was now accessible to all mankind through faith in the death of the Son of God.

The death of the Son of God was to us:

A VICARIOUS DEATH:

He represented us in death.

EFFICACIOUS DEATH:

The shed blood was effective to cleanse from sin

A SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH:

He was substituted for us in death.

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AN EXPIATORY DEATH:

It gave satisfaction to God for the damage done by Sin.

A REDEMPTIVE DEATH:

It gave freedom from the bondage of Satan and sin.

A MERITORIOUS DEATH:

It has eternal merit in the sight of God.

A PROPITIATORY DEATH:

It made peace between God and us.

A RECONCILIATORY DEATH:

It restores fellowship with God.

Because of Jesus Christ's death on the cross we enjoy fellowship in God's presence. We are told in the book of Matthew,

Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top

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to bottom; and the earth quaked,

and

the

rocks

were

split

(Matthew 27:51)

The reason why the Word of God specifically said, it was torn from top to bottom and not bottom to top, is to indicate that it was not torn by man but by the unseen hands of God Himself.

Moreover, the fact that the veil was twenty feet wide, forty feet high and four inches thick made it impossible for human hands to tear. By the divine tearing of the veil, God was saying, I now make my presence available to every individual who would come to me. It meant that anyone could come and drink from the eternal life-giving fountain of the presence of God. The Apostle John said,

*“In the last day, that great day
of the feast, Jesus stood up and*

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*cried, saying, if any man thirst,
let him come unto me and drink.*

*He that believeth on me, as the
Scripture hath said, out of his
belly shall flow rivers of living
water.”(John 7:37-38)*

The torn veil also signified that the presence of God had left the old temple once and for all. The Roman emperor Titus later destroyed the old temple in 70 A.D.

A New Temple

God has come out to man. Before, God dwelt behind three veils: The veil of the outer court, the veil of the holy place, and the main veil of the holy of holies. One man, the High Priest, approached God once a year but now God is saying, I have come out to be with all men (*all who believe*) forever;

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for every hour of every day, three hundred and sixty five days a year.

As a matter of fact, God, through His infinite love and grace, based on the meritorious death of His Son on our behalf, has decided to make the bodies

of believers His own temple.

Since the destruction of Herod's temple by Titus in 70 A.D. no other temple has been constructed. However it has been revealed to us today, that the bodies of the saints are the temple of the Lord. The Apostle Paul said,

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the

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Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (2 Corinthians 6:16)

The Secret Of God's Blessings

What made the temple in the Old Testament special? It was not the outward adorning nor the expensive decoration, but the presence of God. The presence of God which resided in the unseen and secret place of the holy

of holies. The presence of the Ark was a symbol of the presence of God. As long as the Ark was in the temple, the presence of God was with His people.

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Once the Ark was removed from the temple, the temple lost the presence of God and became just as any ordinary house. When the ark was removed the temple lost its glory and significance and *Ichabod*, "*The glory is departed*" was written over the house.

The Ark of the Old Testament was symbolic of the manifest presence of God. Wherever the Ark was, there was the manifest presence of God. The presence of God over the Ark secured the blessings of God on the nation of Israel. The presence of God via the Ark of the Covenant even caused material blessings to come upon certain individuals. The Bible says,

11The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

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12Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed

the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. (2 Samuel 6:11-12)

The presence of the Lord was only in the house of Obed-edom for three months, yet it affected him and his whole household; even the servants began to prosper.

The blessings were so outstanding and noticeable that the king's men saw it and told him. The king became jealous and sent for the ark immediately from the house of Obed-edom. The presence of God in our lives will accomplish much more in a shorter space of time than any other means. One moment in 180

God's presence transformed Job's thinking (Job 42). One encounter with God's presence changed young Isaiah forever (Isaiah 6). Paul came face to face with the resurrected presence of Jesus and it changed him instantly (Act 9). The presence of God is the microwave of Christian development. It is the steroid of Christian strength.

The presence of God in our lives is what makes the big difference.

Without the presence of God in our lives it does not matter what else we have, our lives will become vain, empty and hollow instead of hallowed (holy).

The Lost Ark

From since the time of Joshua the house of God was situated at Shiloh.

The Ark of the Covenant was there in the house. It was a well-known and

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glorious house. However, God was grieved because of the sins of the children of Israel in the days of Eli the high priest (1Samuel 2:12,17,22).

Therefore He allowed their enemy, the Philistines to defeat them in battle.

Four thousand died in battle in one day . The Bible says,

Then

the

Philistines

put

themselves

in

battle

array

against Israel. And when they

*joined battle, Israel was defeated
by the Philistines, who killed
about four thousand men of the
army in the field. (1 Samuel 4:2)*

Instead of repenting of their sins the
Children of Israel even went further by
taking the Ark of God from the house
of God in Shiloh. They took the Ark to
carry it before them into battle against
the Philistines. They were about to

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make one of their biggest mistakes.

We are told in the Word of God,

*3And when the people had come
into the camp, the elders of
Israel said, "Why has the LORD
defeated us today before the
Philistines? Let us bring the ark
of the covenant of the LORD
from Shiloh to us, that when it
comes among us it may save us
from the hand of our enemies."*

*4So the people sent to Shiloh,
that they might bring from there
the ark of the covenant of the
LORD of hosts, who dwells
between the cherubim. And the
two sons of Eli, Hophni and
Phinehas, were there with the
ark of the covenant of God...*

10 So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there

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fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.

11 Also the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died...

22 And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured." (1 Samuel 4:3-4, 10-11, 22)

Because the children of Israel did not treat properly the presence of God with them they lost it. This is a lesson for Christians today. If we flirt and play around with the presence of God in our lives we will lose our fight against the enemy. Then eventually we will lose our greatest treasure, the presence of God in the sanctuary of our hearts. If we walk in habitual and presumptuous sin, God will allow the enemy, the devil, to steal the ark of His presence from us. The point is that it can be lost

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and once we lose it, the glory is

departed.

Nothing

we

do

can

compensate for the presence of God.

No amount of sacrifice in a *gloryless* temple will please or appease God. It is sad but true; today many are trading that divine, luminous and eternal glory for worldly pleasures and temporary things.

Our Greatest Possession

The presence of God is the greatest thing we can ever possess in this life.

David knew this as a fact. David knew it was the presence of God that made him the great man he was. That is why when David sinned with Bathsheba the wife of Uriah, he never cried, Lord take not the kingdom from me, or take not my wealth from me. Instead he cried out to Almighty God and said,

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Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 51:11)

Moses also knew the indispensability of God's presence if one is going to

succeed, therefore he told God , “*if your presence is not going with us we are not going*”(Exodus 33:15). The fact is, if the presence of God is not going with us as the end time church we are not going anywhere, however hard we may try. Without the presence of God man is a definite failure because we were made dependent on God.

The Secret of Our Strength

Without the presence of God we are too weak to contend with the devil. We need much more than human strength

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to succeed and especially in these evil days. The Word of God says,

...In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

...the joy of the Lord is our strength. (Nehemiah 8:10)

Therefore we can safely say that the presence of the Lord makes us strong.

As a matter of fact Isaiah the prophet tells us,

But those who wait on the

LORD

shall

renew

their

strength; they shall mount up

with wings like eagles, they shall

run and not be weary, they shall

walk and not faint. (Isaiah

40:31)

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How To Abide In God's

Presence

Before you can abide in the presence of God, one must first of all receive the presence of God by the New Birth.

The

New Birth comes

through

repentance of sin and faith in Jesus

Christ (John3:1-21). From then onward

to abide in the presence of God, one

must abide in the Word of God.

The ark represented the presence of

God and the only objects that were in

the ark were two copies of the Word of

God, a pot of manna and Aaron's rod

that budded.

The Word of God and the presence of

God go together. God is one with His

Word. Where the Word of God is there

is the presence of God. In order to

have the presence of God we must

align ourselves with the Word of God.

We cannot genuinely seek God

without searching the scripture with an

ardent desire to obey it. We must seek

God's face with an open Bible.

In order to abide in God's presence we

must also understand the value of time

spent in prayer. We must understand

that the time one takes seeking the face

of God is not time spent but invested

time, redeemed time, it is time put to

its optimum use . It is written,

For a day in Your courts is

better than a thousand. (Psalm

84:10)

Here the Bible challenges us with

regards to the way we spend our time.

How can one day spent with God be

better than a thousand spent anywhere

else? Yet if you believe the Word of

God you have to believe that also and

in so doing yield yourself to prayer.

To abide and have more of the

presence of God there must of

necessity be a strong desire for it. For

God does not share his choicest

blessings with casual seekers. The

following passages of Scripture make

this abundantly clear,

*For I will pour water on him
who is thirsty, and floods on
the dry ground; I will pour My
Spirit on your descendants, and
My blessing on your offspring
(Isaiah 44:3)*

*13And it shall be that if you
earnestly*

obey

My

commandments

which

I

*command you today, to love the
LORD your God and serve Him*

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*with all your heart and with all
your soul,*

*14then I will give you the rain
for your land in its season, the
early rain and the latter rain,
that you may gather in your
grain, your new wine, and your
oil. (Deuteronomy 11:13-14)*

*And you will seek Me and find
Me, when you search for Me
with all your heart. (Jeremiah
29:13)*

1As the deer pants for the water

brooks, so pants my soul for

You, O God.

2My soul thirsts for God, for the

living God. When shall I come

and appear before God? (Psalm

42:1-2)

1O God, You are my God; early

will I seek You; my soul thirsts

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for You; my flesh longs for You

in a dry and thirsty land Where

there is no water.

2So I have looked for You in the

sanctuary, to see Your power

and Your glory.

3Because Your loving kindness

is better than life, my lips shall

praise You. (Psalm 63:1-3)

Psalm 63:1-2 is probably the greatest expression in all of Scripture, of a man's passion for God. It is a Psalm of David when he was as a fugitive and renegade in the wilderness of Judah. It was a dry and scorching place, where literally there was no water and no food. Yet most astoundingly, instead of crying out for water and relief of his life from such a formidable and miserable condition, David's only cry was for more of God. He wanted God

more than this present life and the things it offers. He wanted the very life

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of life itself. No wonder he became so great in this life; it is because he cared not for life as much as he did for the one who gave it. He put God first, he said, *Your loving kindness is better than life.*

In order to abide and increase in God's presence one must desire Him more than anything else. Desire is the key. It must be made clear that the only thing worth living for more than anything else in this life is the presence of God. That more than anything else, guarantees quality of life and success now, and qualifies us to live forever in the kingdom of God. It is what makes the church the church and a man or woman the best that they can ever be.

This is why the Bible says,

23 Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his

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wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches;

24 But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and

knows Me, that I am the LORD,

exercising

lovingkindness,

judgment, and righteousness in

the earth. For in these I

delight,"

says

the

LORD.

(Jeremiah 9:23-24)

The most exciting and worthwhile thing in life, is to live from day to day in pursuit of more of God's presence.

No amount of money, material things and worldly aggrandizement can suffice for the glorious presence of Jesus.

Beyond The Presence Of God

On two occasions Moses spent forty days and forty nights in the presence of

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God. If any Old Testament figure knew the presence of God, it had to be Moses. However, although Moses Knew the presence of God the Bible makes it quite clear that he requested something more. He wanted to experience the glory of God.

18And he said, "Please, show me

Your glory."

19Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

20But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

21And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.

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22"So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.

23"Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33:18-23)

The Word glory comes from the Hebrew word kabod which means *weight*. Kabod is the full weight of the splendor and manifestation of God's presence. In other words it is the fullness of His presence. In the natural

body, no one can bear the full weight
of God's presence and survive.

In a small measure God granted to
Moses his request but not without
conditions.

God

told

Moses

forthrightly, *You cannot see my face
for no an can see me and live.* Notice

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what God said after that. He said, *You
shall stand on the rock.* Then He went
further than standing on the rock and
said, *I will put you in the cleft of the
rock.* The Bible makes it clear that the
rock in the wilderness was Christ,

And

all

drank

the

same

spiritual drink. For they drank

of that spiritual Rock that

followed them, and that Rock

was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:4)

Only through Christ can anyone one
see the glory of God. By standing on
the rock Moses identified himself with
Christ; when he was placed in the cleft

of the rock he went further and
identified himself with Christ in death.

From the cleft of the rock Moses saw
only the back of God and not His face.

The back of God is an expression
which means the reflection of God
after he had already passed. Some

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scholars compare what Moses actually
saw to the exhaust of a car after it had
already past.

What Moses saw transformed His life
forever; even the children of Israel
could not look into the face of Moses;
he had to cover his face with a veil.

Anyone who sees the glory of God will
never be the same. The Bible says,

***So when Aaron and all the
children of Israel saw Moses,
behold, the skin of his face
shone, and they were afraid to
come near him. (Exodus 34:30)***

Few men in history have gotten a
glimpse of the glory of God, and those
who did have left their mark on
history. Peter, James and John were
fortunate to get a glimpse on the mount
of transfiguration; also the apostle Paul
had a glimpse on the road to

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Damascus. However, the glory of God is available to all the children of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Christ is the ultimate expression of God's glory.

What Moses saw cannot be compared to what we today have in Jesus Christ.

Concerning Moses' experience in comparison to what is revealed in Christ, the Bible says,

9For

if

the

ministry

of

condemnation had glory, the

ministry

of

righteousness

exceeds much more in glory.

10For even what was made

glorious had no glory in this

respect, because of the glory that

excels. (2 Corinthians 3:9-10)

Although we have a greater glory available to us today. If one is going to come into that tangible experience with God there is of necessity a price that one must pay. It is not enough to

one must go into the cleft of the rock.
Our all must be given to God; self
must be crucified through quality and
lengthy time spent in the holy presence
of God.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Know God's Word

***“Heaven and earth will pass away but
my words will by no means pass
away.” (Matthew 24:35 NKJV)***

A sound knowledge of the Word of
God is indispensable for true success.

One of the kings that sat upon the
throne in the nation of Israel was
commanded to have a copy of the
Word of God in order to preserve his
kingship. Moses the servant of God
said,

***14"When you come to the land
which the LORD your God is
giving you, and possess it and
dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a
king over me like all the nations
that are around me,'***

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***15"you shall surely set a king
over you whom the LORD your
God chooses; one from among
your brethren you shall set as***

*king over you; you may not set a
foreigner over you, who is not
your brother.*

*16" But he shall not multiply
horses for himself, nor cause
the people to return to Egypt to
multiply horses, for the LORD
has said to you, 'You shall not
return that way again.'*

*17" Neither shall he multiply
wives for himself, lest his heart
turn away; nor shall he greatly
multiply silver and gold for
himself.*

*18" Also it shall be, when he sits
on the throne of his kingdom,
that he shall write for himself a
copy of this law in a book, from
the one before the priests, the
Levites.*

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*19" And it shall be with him, and
he shall read it all the days of
his life, that he may learn to fear
the LORD his God and be
careful to observe all the words
of this law and these statutes,*

*20" that his heart may not be
lifted above his brethren, that he
may not turn aside from the*

*commandment to the right hand
or to the left, and that he may
prolong his days in his kingdom,
he and his children in the midst
of Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:14-
20)*

Even the king in Israel needed the
Word of God above horses, gold and
silver in order to prolong his days in
his kingdom. If a king so needs the
Word of God for his success, everyone
needs it in order to be successful.

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David began the book of Psalms with
these words,

*1Blessed is the man Who walks
not in the counsel of the
ungodly, nor stands in the path
of sinners, nor sits in the seat of
the scornful;*

*2But his delight is in the law of
the LORD, and in His law he
meditates day and night.*

*3He shall be like a tree planted
by the rivers of water, that
brings forth its fruit in its
season, whose leaf also shall not
wither; and whatever he does
shall prosper. (Psalm 1:1-3)*

Take a close look at what David is

telling us. He is telling us that the man who reads the Word of God, such a person will be like a tree planted by rivers of water. Planted, not growing by chance. Planted with purpose.

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Planted by the hands of the Almighty God, and whatever God plants no devil nor man can destroy, for he will be planted by the life sustaining and satisfying water of God's Word.

His leaves shall be always green; such a person will always have a sense of freshness and prosperity. The Word further says, *he shall bring forth fruit in his season*. Not he might bring forth fruit but he *shall* bring forth fruit, in his season.

We may all go through rough and difficult times but if we continue in the Word of God our season of blessings will come. There is a season for everyone, there is a season for you if you hold steadfast and believe the Word of God. The Word of God again emphatically declares: *Whatsoever he does shall prosper*.

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One of the reasons why Israel missed their visitation when Christ their

messiah came to them and suffered
destruction by emperor Titus in 70 AD
is because they did not understand the
Scripture. Jesus said, *you did not know
the time of your visitation. (Luke
19:44)*

Passion For The Word

We live in a time when many people
are professing to be saved and born
again but there is not a deep hunger for
the Word of God. Many are so busy
with earthly cares there is little or no
time to spend in the Word of God. The
only Word they receive is what they
hear preached once a week on a
Sunday morning or when they turn on
the T.V. Thank God for the great
preaching
and
teaching
on
the
television. However nothing ought to
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take the place of personal and private
time in the Word.
Nothing is more important than
personal study and meditation in the
Word. God has given the Holy Spirit
to every believer in order that they

might know the Word of God. It is written,

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. (1 John 2:20)

But the anointing which you have received abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as that same anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. (1 John 2:27)

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That anointing has been given to every child of God to assist him in his personal study and to enable him to discern truth from error. Now don't get me wrong, you will always need the ministry of the Pastor, Prophet, Apostle, Evangelist and Teacher but God never meant for these to take the place of your personal study of the Word of God.

Every believer ought to have an appetite and passion for the preached Word and the written Word. Job of old

said,

***I have not departed from the
commandment of His lips; I
have treasured the words of His
mouth more than my necessary
food. (Job 23:12)***

The Apostle Peter said, as a new born
baby has a very strong desire for its

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mother's milk to the point where it
cries and cries for that milk, even so
every child of God, should have a
similar desire for the Word of God in
order to grow and develop. The living
Bible puts it this way,

***Long to grow up in the fullness
of your salvation, cry for this as
a baby cries for milk. (1 Peter
2:2 L.B)***

A great spiritual resource for living a
successful Christian life is faith. True
faith only comes by the Word of God.

The Word of God says,

***So then faith comes by hearing,
and hearing by the word of God.
(Romans 10:17)***

Therefore Satan will do everything in
his power to keep us from the Word of
God.

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One of the things that made David a great and successful person was his ardent love for the Word of God, and his passionate devotion to the Word of God. David said to God,

I rejoice in your word as one that finds great treasure. (Psalm 119:162)

Oh, what profound words! You need to pause and think about that for a while.

David saw something in the Word that we need to see today. Again David said,

More to be desired are they than gold, yea than fine gold. Sweeter also than the honeycomb.

(Psalm 119:10)

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The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver. (Psalm 119:72)

Therefore

I

love

Your

commandments more than gold,

yes, than fine gold! (Psalm

119:127)

Today many are neglecting the Word of God in pursuit of money and all that it can buy. But David said I love your Word more than gold, even more than fine gold. In Matthew chapter thirteen Jesus said the deceitfulness of riches chokes the Word.

One cannot love the Word and love money at the same time. When you truly understand the Word of God you will love it more than anything else.

By the Word were all things brought into existence. Therefore there can be no greater treasure than the Word of

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God. True success comes by knowing, loving and applying the Word of God to one's life. The Word of God is the only sure thing in the world today.

Jesus said,

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. (Matthew

24:35)

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CHAPTER NINE

Be Obedient To

God

“Every great person first learned

obedience.”

In the book of 1 Samuel we have some profound words that show beyond the shadow of a doubt the high regard God places on obedience. The Bible says,

22 Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is

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as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

Both Saul and David were kings of Israel; King Saul was the predecessor of King David. Both Saul and David committed sin during their reign but God reject Saul and forgave David.

Why did God reject Saul and forgave David? Was it that Saul's sin was greater than David's sin? Let us consider the sins of the two men.

Saul went out to war and fought

against the Amalekites but David on the other hand refused to go to war. Saul was committed to the battle and won but David stayed home and committed adultery with Bathseba the wife of Uriah. Saul refused to kill some animals and Agag the king of the

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Amalekites. David on the other hand killed Uriah (a devout man) the husband of Bathsheba, one of his own brethren, with the sword of the enemy. If we would stop here it is obvious that David's sin would appear greater.

However, the difference with David and Saul is that when David was rebuked by the prophet Nathan he immediately acknowledged his sin.

The Bible says,

So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die." (2 Samuel 12:13)

Saul when confronted by Samuel the prophet refused to acknowledge his sin. The record says,

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19"Why then did you not obey

the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

20And Saul said to Samuel, "But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

(1 Samuel 15:19-20).

Had Saul confessed his sin he would have found mercy but in arrogant rebellion he refused to acknowledge the prophetic voice of God. It is evident that God deeply hates this kind or arrogant rebellion.

Saul rejected the Word of the Lord.

Therefore the Lord rejected Saul from being king. Notice that the Word did

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not simply say God rejected Saul, but it said the Lord rejected Saul from being king.

Now, he was not rejected from being a member of the kingdom, but he was rejected

from

being

king.

This

indicates to us that, the way we

respond to God's Word, the measure

of our obedience, determines the

measure of our promotion in the

kingdom of God. This principle is

conspicuously revealed in the Word of

God.

Adam was a vice regent in Eden. In

other words he ruled as king over

creation under God. As long as Adam

was under God's authority he was in

authority. However, his authority came

to an end the very day he stepped over

his boundary, the very day Adam

disobeyed God's Word he lost his

authority. When he disobeyed God's

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Word he was also put out of the

paradise of God (Genesis 3:23-24).

Let's face it, obedience will put us up,

disobedience will pull us down.

Obedience will open doors of great

opportunity in the service of God

toward men but disobedience will

close doors of great opportunity. Our

attitude towards God's Word says and

determines a lot.

True Worship

Today there is a lot of emphasis on worship. Yet the truth is, much of what we call worship misses the mark by a very wide margin. What is true worship? It is very significant to note that the first time the word *Worship* is mentioned in the Bible it is when Abraham in obedience to God took his only son Isaac to Mt. Moriah to sacrifice him there. The Bible says, 218

5And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."

6So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. (Genesis 22:5-6)

There can be no true worship without obedience, and if a person obeys God only in the things that please him or her that person does not know true obedience.

Obedience is absolute submission to

the will of a good God, regardless of how it appears to one's understanding, and regardless of how costly it seems.

Isaac was not simply Abraham's only

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son, but he was his heir and son of promise. Abraham's future dreams were bound up in Isaac. Until we are willing to let go of everything, even our future dreams, for the sake of obeying God, we do not know true obedience or true worship.

Isaac was Abraham's promise, his future and his pride, yet he was willing to release all of that into the hands of God. It is only as we are willing to give up everything in obedience to God that we embrace the spirit of true worship. Only then can God trust us with much. God abundantly blessed Abraham, why? Because he obeyed His voice in that which was most painful to do. He released his best to God and God reciprocated with His best. God said to Abraham,

16 And said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because

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you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son,

your only son

*17"blessing I will bless you, and
multiplying I will multiply your
descendants as the stars of the
heaven and as the sand which is
on the seashore; and your
descendants shall possess the
gate of their enemies.*

*18"In your seed all the nations
of the earth shall be blessed,
because you have obeyed My
voice." (Genesis 22:16-18)*

God always blesses obedience.

Worship In Spirit And In

Truth

To the Samaritan woman at the well

Jesus spoke these words,

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But the hour is coming, and

now

is,

when

the

true

worshippers will worship the

Father in spirit and truth; for

the Father is seeking such to

worship Him. (John 4: 23)

I have always wondered what is meant

by “**worship in spirit and in truth...**”

One day the Holy Spirit opened my eyes and showed me that Jesus Himself in that same chapter reveals to us what it means to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Jesus said,

My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. (John 4:34)

Jesus said my meat is to do two things:

(1) To do the will of the Father. That means it was His cardinal desire and firm commitment to do the Father's

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will, in terms of preaching and ministering etc.

(2) To finish the Father's work. By this

He spoke of His own death on the cross, through which alone the

Father's work for Him on the earth would be accomplished. That is why

on the cross He said, "*it is finished.*"

Jesus was the epitome, and perfect example of one who worshipped in spirit and truth. True worshippers are obedient all the way, to the very end, even unto death. They present their very lives to God the Father as living sacrifices holy and acceptable.

Many may lift up their hands to worship but that is as far as it goes.

Worship to many is only a physical work out. True worship on the other hand is obedience to God. It does not matter how much worship seminars we

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conduct, true worship is not in voice and music, not in a form but a heart that is obedient to God. It is about time we put the emphasis where it belongs.

What good is the form of worship if there is no truth.

Now true obedience is sacrificial. It costs something to obey God. On the same Mt. Moriah where Abraham sacrificed, David also built an altar and made a great sacrifice to God. David was offered everything for free; the land and even the animals, but David refused and bought them. In response to the free offer David said these profound words,

***I will not offer unto the Lord
that which cost me nothing. (1
Chronicles 21:24)***

Again it was on that same mountain that Solomon's temple was built,

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which has come to be known as the temple mount. What is all of this saying to us? It is no doubt saying

quite

clearly

that

obedience

is

sacrificial, and sacrifice is the heart and corner stone of true worship. The prophet Isaiah reveals the way God views the forms and rituals of worship that are not genuine, that does not come from an obedient heart.

He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol... (Isaiah 66:3)

Esteem The Word Highly

The way we esteem the Word of God, whether the written Word, or a

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personal word from God determines a lot.

The men and women who receive great favour and honour from God and occupy positions of godly influence in the body of Christ are always those who possess a high regard for the

Word of God. The prophet Isaiah

makes this very clear,

...But on this one will I look on

him who is poor and of a

contrite spirit, and who trembles

at My word. (Isaiah 66:2)

The NIV says, “ *...This is the one I*

esteem... ” God will highly esteem and

exalt those who have great reverence

for His Word. Those who are obedient

to His voice. This was the significant

difference between David and Saul.

Saul treated God’s Word with

contempt but over and over in the

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Psalms David expressed fervent love

for the Word of God. Notwithstanding

the Bible also predicts that in these last

days there will be false ministers who

shall command large following (2

Peter 2:1-2).

Any success without obedience to

God’s Word is only a bait of Satan for

our souls. Remember in Matthew

chapter four Satan told Jesus, bow

down and worship me and I will give

you all these kingdoms. This tells me,

that just having things is not proof of

true success.

True success is not just having, it is

also being. It is more being than having. It is not just what I have; it is who I am. It is not just having reputation; it is having character.

There are lots of hell bound people with great material possessions but their character before God is poor.

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True success is not just being established but it is being established in righteousness. It is written,

In righteousness you shall be established. (Isaiah 54:14)

Sometimes the ways of God and the Word of God do not seem to make sense; but we ought not to obey God only when what He says makes sense to us or makes us comfortable. We ought to obey God because He is God and when we do, He will bless because He is God. We will receive the blessings of God. God told Abraham to offer up his son, his only son as a sacrifice, does that make sense? Yet because he obeyed, God blessed him. If the command seems to be extreme, the blessing that follows will also be extreme, as was the case with Abraham. God has promised to bless

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the faithful, both in this life and in the
life to come

But

he

shall

receive

an

hundredfold now in this time,

houses, and

brethren,

and

sisters,

and

mothers,

and

children,

and

lands,

with

persecutions; and in the world to

come eternal life. (Mark 10:30

KJV)

It does not matter what God tells you
to do, if you know for certain it is God,
then the best thing to do is obey Him.

Obey

God

regardless

of

the

antecedence or the consequence.

The Ten Lepers And Peter

In the book of Luke we have a very instructive little story where ten lepers cried out to Jesus for mercy and as

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they obeyed Him they were all cleansed. The Bible says,

11 Now it happened as He went to

Jerusalem

that

He

passed

through the midst of Samaria

and Galilee.

12 Then as He entered a certain

village, there met Him ten men

who were lepers, who stood afar

off.

13 And they lifted up their voices

and said, "Jesus, Master, have

mercy on us!"

14 So when He saw them, He said

to them, "Go, show yourselves

to the priests." And so it was

that as they went, they were

cleansed. (Luke 17:11-14)

As they went they were cleansed. As

they obeyed the Word of the Lord to

go show themselves to the priest they

were cleansed. Obedience is always the way to the blessings of God.

Consider the case of Peter on the Galilean shore. After toiling all night on the sea he had caught nothing. Jesus said unto him: *“launch out into the deep for a catch...”* And Peter began to argue about how he had toiled all night and he had caught nothing. Then he probably said to himself wait a minute, this is no ordinary person speaking and he obeyed the Lord. As he did he was overwhelmed

by

the

stupendous

results on account of his obedience. He did not have room enough for the fishes he caught (Luke 5:3-8).

Obedience to His Word had a major part in most of Jesus' miracles. We can never be right disobeying God and we can never be wrong obeying Him. It is as simple as that.

Obeying Delegated Authority

To obey God is good but we must also obey those whom God has placed in the position of delegated authority over

us. As a matter of fact if you truly obey the Word of God you will obey delegated authority because the Word of God commands us to do so. The Word of God says,

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.

Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. (Hebrews 13:17)

Many believers need to realize that their pastor is God's spiritual covering for their lives.

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God has placed your pastor in a position of authority over you, for your own benefit. To slander, defame or defy the authority of your pastor is to invite misery upon yourself and your family to say the least.

The story of Korah, Dathan and Abiram in the book of Numbers chapter sixteen, gives us a vivid example of how serious God takes insubordination to pastoral authority.

All who rebelled against Moses' authority died a horrific and untimely

death.

David's wife Michal the daughter of King Saul became barren because she spoke disrespectfully about David (2 Samuel 6:16-23).

It is very important for us to remember that obedience to God and His

233

delegated authority is a fundamental principle of success.

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CHAPTER TEN

Overcome

Discouragement

“He that will eat the kernel must crack the nut.”

Discouraging situations are inevitable.

No success comes without some kind of challenge at some point in time in your life. No success comes without the challenge of facing discouraging periods. Every successful person knows fully well that, *“Human progress never rolls in on the wheels of inevitability.”* (Martin Luther King)

It is said, *“The heights that great men reached were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companion slept were toiling upward through the night.”*

Throughout our lives, time and time again we are going to face defining moments, we will encounter discouraging situations, situations that seem impossible to overcome.

However what is very important is that whenever a discouraging situation arises one should be fully determined to overcome that situation, if not it might overcome you. Daring to go beyond the boundaries of discouragement is all a matter of choice.

That choice, ever so often is a critical decision; a decision determinative of one's success or failure. It is said that more people fail as a result of discouragement than anything else.

Discouragement

Most, if not all, of the discouraging situations that the child of God faces are not the product of chance or some haphazard reason. No! They are the product of the devil. They are literally

fabricated and designed by the very
council of hell. They have been
concocted
by
intelligent
unseen

enemies. Who are these enemies?

Well, the Bible tells us clearly who
they are. In Ephesians 6:12 we are
told,

*For we do not wrestle against
flesh and blood, but against
principalities, against powers,
against
the
rulers
of
the
darkness of this age, against
spiritual hosts of wickedness in
the heavenly places.*

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This is telling us in no uncertain terms,
that Satan and his emissaries are the
conspirators and the culprits behind the
potentially debilitating problems that
befall us. Consider what the prophet
Isaiah has to say,

No weapon formed against you

shall prosper... (Isaiah 54:17)

The prophet Isaiah is telling us that the problems we face in this life, the weapons that come against us are not circumstantial. No! The reality is, they are

formed,

fabricated,

custom

designed

by

nefarious,

wicked,

intelligent,

unseen

beings

to

discourage and rob us of success.

I have come to realize that if I am going to be successful in my walk of faith, I must acknowledge the true source

and

the

purpose

of

discouragement and be determined to

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overcome it. I have a choice, it is

either I let the mountains move my

faith or I let my faith move the mountains.

We must harness in our lives a strong faith in God's Word, resilience, and determination to overcome all the attacks of the enemy.

Today more than ever there is battle for the minds of believers. Satan is waging an all out war; seeking to wear down and wear out the saints of the Most High God, through family problems, financial cares, health disorders and depression. More than anything else he wants us to compromise the holy standards of God's Word.

The battle is rapidly intensifying as we advance further into this last phase of the end time. However God abides

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faithful to His promises, and the devil is a liar.

A Time Of Crisis

One

of
the
most
prophetically
profound
and
chronologically
significant
verses
in
the
New
Testament is found in the book of
Romans. It says,

***For if their (Israel) being cast
away is the reconciling of the
world,
what
will
their
acceptance be but life from the
dead? (Romans 11:15)***

The temporary casting away of Israel
resulted in the reconciliation of the
Gentiles to God, through the medium
of the Church. The Bible says the
receiving of Israel again will mean life
from the dead. The initial sign of the
receiving of Israel again took place on

May 15th, 1948. On that day the State of Israel was established, never to be destroyed again. From that time till now, Jews have returned from 120 nations across the globe.

But notice carefully that the Word of God says *the receiving of Israel again will result in life from the dead*. This literally means that we are in the final phase of human history. We are much closer to the coming of the Lord than we think; at whose coming the first phase of the resurrection of the dead will be completed.

We are in the season in which the rapture can take place any time. To put it another way, we are in the final period of human history, the count down toward the Lord's return. The period in which, things will not become better but will increasingly become worse, until the Lord takes His

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own out of this evil world, just as He took out Noah and Lot. This is bad news for the faithless, faint hearted and apostate but good news for the faithful for it signals to us the soon coming of the Lord.

This is the time of which Jesus

unequivocally said, there will be,

distress

of

nations,

with

perplexity...(Luke 21:25). The nations

will be distress with natural disasters,

pestilences, terror, immorality, war,

political and civil disturbances. Jesus

also indicated, that deception will

reach unparalleled proportion (Luke

21:18,Matthew 24:11). As a matter of

fact Jesus said,

There shall arise false Christs,

and false prophets, and shall

show great signs and wonders;

in

so much that, if it were

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possible, they shall deceive the

very elect. (Matthew 24:24)

With regards to immoral conditions

Jesus said,

And because lawlessness will

abound, the love of many will

grow cold. (Matthew 24:12)

The word “*iniquity*” is *anomia* in the

Greek. The Greek word for law is

nomos the alpha or “a” before the

word gives it an opposite meaning.

Therefore the word anomia literally means “*without law*” and conveys the idea of conditions that are very lawless, because of ignorance of law, or because of willful and contemptuous violation of law. The word “*abound*” means to multiply, and increase rapidly. Indeed today iniquity (lawlessness) abounds, it is increasing exponentially, even by the day.

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The biblical description of the time coupled with the visible and audible confirmation we are receiving daily, are indicative of the fact that this is a time of crisis. We are not going into a crisis, we are right now in a crisis that will only continue to escalate and become worse.

Such a period as this is a conducive environment for Satan to launch his evil attacks against the body of Christ, against Christian marriages, family life, our minds and our ministries. His purpose is to discourage the saints of God. The great news however, is that

God is able to preserve us in all these areas and cause us always to triumph in Jesus as we look to him for help and strength. There is no need to become disconsolate, for God's Word says,

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*...But where sin abounded,
grace abounded much more.*

(Romans 5:20)

Overcoming Satan's Best

Attempts

As a case in point, let's look at David in one of his most discouraging periods.

In 1 Samuel 30:1-2 we see that David and his men were in hiding from King Saul. Because of Saul's jealousy and murderous intentions, they dwelt with their wives and children among the Philistines in a place called Ziklag.

One day, David and his men went away from Ziklag for a while. During their absence the Amalekites went in and took captive all the women and children, but that was not enough to suffice their deep animosity. They then

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proceeded to set the whole place on fire so that it was burnt down completely.

When David and his men returned, all they saw were ashes. There were no dwelling places, no wives, no children, no animals, nothing. Everything was completely destroyed and their wives and children were taken captive. No doubt Satan said to himself, for sure I have him now.

Can you imagine what it looked and felt like? Imagine what it was like for David and his men. Imagine what was going through David's mind. Probably he stood spellbound and speechless for a couple of minutes. David was already on the run from King Saul; now all that he had to comfort him was destroyed. His wives Ahinoam and Abigail, their children, and plus the wives and children of his men were

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taken captive. The impact was severe; the Word of God says,

Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. (1

Samuel 30:4)

Think about that for a moment.

Remember David's men were valorous soldiers. They were not wimps. They

were men of war, mighty men of valor,
six hundred of them. However, so
severe was this blow that they all wept
profusely. Their weeping was so
intense that the Bible says they *wept
until they had no more power to weep.*

Moreover, these men became so
discouraged and disoriented that not
only did they weep until there was no
more power to weep but more than that
they also began to conspire to stone to

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death their leader David. The Bible
says,

And

David

was

greatly

distressed, for the people spoke

of stoning him, because the soul

of the people was grieved, every

man for his sons and for his

daughters but David encouraged

himself in the Lord his God.

(1Samuel 30:6 KJV)

One cannot help but be deeply
impressed by the stupendous courage
displayed by David. In his darkest
hour, the Word of God explicitly says,

...but David encouraged himself

in the Lord his God.” (1 Samuel

30:6)

There was no one to encourage him, everyone wept, and even conspired to kill him. David himself wept; he had

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suffered great loss, and no doubt in circumstances like these weeping can be very spontaneous. Yet, instead of becoming discouraged; instead of becoming bent out of spiritual shape, instead of murmuring against God, the Bible says, *“David encouraged himself in the Lord.”* In the face of great loss rejection and even death, David encouraged himself in the Lord.

Beloved there would be times in your life and in your walk with God when you would face serious circumstances and there may be no explanation and no one to encourage you. You may look for your friends but the arm of flesh will fail you. People you never expected, even people very close to you may turn against you. So-called friends and close associates may forsake you. What do you do in times like these? You would have to

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encourage yourself own self in the

Lord.

It is said when the going gets tough,
the though gets going. If you are going
to overcome you will have to do like
David and, encourage yourself in the
Lord. You will have to have regular
times of soliloquy, times when you
speak the Word of God to yourself.
You will have to remind yourself of
the goodness of God and from where
he has taken you. You will also have to
seek the Lord for strength to come
through.

Observe the words “...*in the Lord.*”

David recognized that there is one who
never fails, one who cannot fail, one
who keeps covenant. I believe David
looked back at the many things God
had already brought him through.

Sometimes it is good to look back in
order to remember what God has

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already done for you, where He has
brought you from. The providence of
God is never seen in prospect (looking
forward). It is only seen in retrospect;
in looking back at the great things He
has already done.

I believe David looked back at the
many things God had done for him. No

doubt he remembered how he slew
tens of thousands of the Philistines,
how he slew a lion with his bare hands,
how he slew the giant Goliath, how he
ran through a troop and leaped over a
wall. Then he probably said to himself,
hold on a while; God has been so good
in the past I know am going to come
through this one. And guess what? He
came through. Oh yes he did. You too
can come through whatever the devil
throws at you.

The Word of God said that David
inquired of the Lord whether he should
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pursue the Amalekites and the Lord
said unto him, "*pursue.*" David
pursued and recovered all that was
taken and much more (1Samuel 30:8-
10, 17-20).

It does not matter what comes your
way, as long as you refuse to give in to
the spirit of discouragement, and
remain faithful to God, you will
overcome. You will recover all that
was taken and much more. What does
not kill you will make you stronger.

Experience has taught me, that before
every great blessing and breakthrough,
Satan must show his ugly head. Trial

always comes before triumph, a valley before a victory. A test usually comes before a testimony. Like Jacob of old the blessing came with a limp.

In 2 Kings chapter two we see that

Elisha

had

to

overcome

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discouragement before he received a double portion of the anointing that was upon Elijah's life.

This

principle

of

overcoming

discouragement before success is a law that applies in any sphere of life. For example it is said that J.C. Penny at the age of fifty-six years was six million dollars in debt and committed to a mental institution. Yet he died at the age of ninety-two years with two billion dollars in assets and a health certificate confirming that he was in his right mind.

Walt Disney went into bankruptcy

seven times and also suffered a major

nervous breakdown yet emerged from

all of that to build an empire.

It is not what happens around you or to you but what happens in you that matter the most. You need to silence
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all negative voices within and around you and focus on the Word of God. As a matter of fact, as a child of God things don't just happen to you but for you. God has decreed that all things must work together for good to them that love Him, to those who are the called according to *his* purpose (Romans 8:28). Remember this, you will either live out your memory of the past, what you behold in the present or your imagination of the future.

Dare to go beyond the boundary of the circumstances that seek to keep you out of your Promised Land.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

Have Integrity

“Your integrity will preserve you.”

According to Webster's dictionary integrity means: *“uncompromising adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of*

moral

character; honesty. The state of being whole or entire.”

According to Lee Stobles, to have integrity is to have wholeness and consistency in your life in a good and moral sense. The word *integrity* comes from the same root of the word “*integer*.” The word *integer* is a mathematical term which refers to a whole number, like seven, thirty or 150 as opposed to a fraction of a number like one-half, two-thirds.

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Therefore,

integrity

speaks

of

wholeness, a solid complete whole.

Another related word is the word

integrated

which

speaks

about

something in all aspects working

together

harmoniously.

To

have

integrity, it means that you must not

only begin good, but you must

continue and end good.

To be quite honest, when I discovered

what true integrity is, I reckoned that

not many people have it today.

However, it is a precious virtue and

every child of God ought to possess

and pursue.

How admirable it is to see someone

who through the vicissitudes of life

and the meandering passage of time

continues

to

live

consistently

according to godly principles and

conviction. There is nothing like

abiding true and consistent through the

256

years. It is said that, *consistency is the*

proof of sincerity. It is a priceless thing

to have a pure conscience, being able

to live with yourself and in public eyes

without contradictions. How beautiful

it is!

However integrity has its price. It will

cost you something to lead a life of

integrity but dividends far outweigh

the cost.

When there is integrity the blessings of

God follow as the following references

reveal,

3And the LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

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4"Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments,

5"then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' (1 Kings 9:3-5)

Integrity Preserves

It is great to start off good, to have a

good beginning in anything is good but what will preserve you and bring you into true success is integrity. Integrity preserves. The Bible says,

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Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, For I wait for You. (Psalm 25:21)

Job understood this, that is why he said,

Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. (Job 27:5)

Integrity will uphold you when everything around you fails. Again the Bible says,

As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, and set me before Your face forever. (Psalm 41: 12)

Find Your Balance

Your balance is your guide in all things. Your balance is the thing you value the most, your main and central goal in life. If one's balance in life is

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pleasure it means, that is what you live for. Therefore in any situation where there are critical choices to be made your principle of guidance and decision making will be to ask, not whether something is right or wrong in

the sight of God, nor how it affects others, but whether or not it gives pleasure. Throughout life your choices will always be based on what gives you pleasure. Therefore it will mean that pleasure is your balance.

The same goes for money. If making lots of money is your balance all your decisions and actions will be regulated according to what makes money. That is the way many businesses in the world operate. That is the way the entertainment industry operates. And sad to say, today many professing Christians are no different, they judge a thing based on the money it makes.

That is a financial interpretation to

260

truth.

Money

is

their

balance.

Wherever the money trail leads they follow. That is a dangerous precedent to live by.

Our balance in life should always be to please God. Integrity should be our constant guide. The Bible says,

The integrity of the upright will

*guide them, but the perversity of
the unfaithful will destroy them.*

(Proverbs 11:3)

A Better Choice

The Word of God says,

*Better is a poor man who walks
in his integrity than a rich man
who is perverse in his speech
and is a (self-confident) fool.*

(Proverbs

19:1

Amplified

Bible)

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*The righteous man walks in his
integrity;*

His

children

are

blessed after him. (Proverbs

20:7)

The sacrifices you make now in order
to live a life pleasing in the sight of
God will not go unrewarded. For God
will certainly bless you. The Bible
says,

Mark the blameless man, and

observe the upright; for the

future of that man is peace.

(Psalm 37:37)

The word *peace* is from the Hebrew

word

Shalom,

which

means:

prosperity, safety, soundness (in body)

completeness, contentment, tranquility

and most of all peace with God

Himself.

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Your blessing will be sure, and the

tremendous thing about it is that, it

will spill over onto your children and

grand children.

You can never lose by keeping your

integrity before God. Don't sell out,

dare to be a man or woman of

integrity.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Walk in Holiness

"...perfecting holiness in the fear of

God." (2 Corinthians 7:1)

Holiness

is

not

the

same

as

righteousness. Righteousness has to do with being right, being judicially and ethically right. It has to do with justice. It is the kind of virtue which humanly speaking gives all their due. However a very important thing to note is that a person can be righteous and not be holy.

Holiness

means

separation,

separateness, apartness, set-apartness

and sacredness. To be holy means to

be different. To be holy is to be set

apart for the purpose of God in all

manner of life. In the highest sense,

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holiness originates with God and

belongs to God. People or things are

required to be holy and are considered

holy by virtue of their relation to God.

Because God is set apart we must be

set apart.

Holiness is the nature and character of

God, the very substance and essence of

His being. By nature God is separate.

Therefore as God's children we are

called to be separate, to be holy and

different in all manner of life.

The greatest challenge and need facing

the Church today is not for wealth,

talent

and

numbers

in

church

attendance

but

for

holiness

(separation) in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. We may do a lot of right things that do not get us in trouble with the State but that does not mean those ‘*right*’ things will not get us into trouble with God.

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The challenge of holiness becomes greater day by day as we approach the *final day* and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God also says concerning many in the church of the last days, “*having a form of godliness but denying its power thereof: And from such turn away!*” (2 Timothy 3:5). What the Word of God is actually saying is that in the last days, many will hold on to an outward form of godliness, of holiness, of religion, but they will not believe in

the power to actually live the life. All they will hold to is the form, while they refuse to believe in the power. The truth is, if God, by His power, can save a person from spiritual death, satanic bondage and sin, then that same power can cause you to do anything that God commands in His Words. For it is... *'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts (Zechariah 4:6)*. Again the Word of God says,

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Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

(1

Timothy 4:1)

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14)

The expressed will of God is that His children be holy. The Bible declares,

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15But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,

16because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:15-16)

Abstain from every form of evil.

(1 Thessalonians 5:22)

As one man said: *today the world is so churchy and the church is so worldly it is difficult to know the difference.*

However, the Scripture is clear on the point that God demands separation for His people. Let us look at an interesting passage of Scripture in the Old Testament,

9You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled.

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10" You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

11" You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, such as wool and linen mixed together.

12" You shall make tassels on the

four corners of the clothing with

which

you

cover

yourself.

(Deuteronomy 22:9-12)

Notice God said don't sow in your vineyard different kinds of seed. God said this because of the differences in the seeds, which would cause the yield to be hindered. When the seeds begin to grow up they would choke each other, so there would be no fruitfulness.

God also said don't put a donkey and an ox to plow together. The reason being, the differences between these two animals in terms of height, size, speed and temper. The differences

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hinder proper plowing and also suffocate the animals.

God again said, even the fabric you wear must not be mixed. Their clothes were to be unique; they were to be

distinguished from the other nations by tassels on the four corners.

If God was so concerned and meticulous about these apparently insignificant issues like oxen, asses, seeds and clothes, how much the very lives of His own children. As a matter of fact, these things were actually written for us. They were written for us, to the intent that we would have a keen sense of separation. That we would not mix with the world and thereby hinder our usefulness and fitness for the kingdom of God. God is not as concerned about oxen and asses as much as He is concerned about His blood-bought children.

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The following parallel passage of Scripture confirms what I am saying,

9For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about?

10Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope

should be partaker of his hope.

(1 Corinthians 9:9-10)

In much the same way the separation of seeds, oxen and asses as well as garments is written to instruct us in holiness and separation from this sinful world. In order for our lives to be fruitful in the sight of God, we must be holy.

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17Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."

18"I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,
says

the

LORD

Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:17-

18, See also James 4:4, 1 John 2:15-17)

We are only guaranteed the fatherly care of God when we come out from among the world.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Give Thanks

“The practice of giving God thanks in all things is the reflection of a heart that truly trusts Him.”

Whether in our lives things are going the way we want them to go or not; whether we are on the mountaintop or in the valley, it is a good thing to maintain a spirit of thanksgiving unto God.

There were several kinds of offerings in the O.T. times; among these offerings was the Peace Offering.

According to Leviticus 7:11-16 there were three kinds of peace offerings:

1.

The Vow Offering.

2.

The Voluntary Offering.

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3.

The Thanksgiving Offering.

A

major

offering

was

the

Thanksgiving Offering; this offering

was a symbol of peace, friendship and

alliance between the worshipper and

God.

The

Hebrew

word

for

thanksgiving is *Towdah* which means

to praise and worship through the

giving of thanks. The Greek word for

thanksgiving is *Eucharis* (a popular

word with Roman Catholics), it is a

compound word. The prefix *Eu* means

well, it is the root from which we get

the English word eulogy, which means

to praise or to speak well of someone.

Another word coming from the same

Greek root is *euphoria* which means a

state of complete well-being. The word

Charis means grace therefore *Eu-charis*

means “*good grace*.” Indeed all grace

is good, but there is something

outstanding about a spirit and attitude

of thanksgiving (gratitude) to God.

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Many of the animal sacrifices in the

Old Testament were burnt completely

on the altar. However after the offering

of thanksgiving was offered, both that

which was the priest's share and that

which was the offerer's were eaten the

same day. The Bible says,

***The flesh of the sacrifice of his
peace offering for thanksgiving
shall be eaten the same day it is
offered. He shall not leave any
of it until morning. (Leviticus
7:5)***

This indicates that when you give God
thanks you are also doing good to
yourself,
you
are
strengthening
yourself, you are dispensing grace over
your own life. When you give God
thanks you invite the favor and
blessing of God on your life. Once you
understand this there is no wonder why
the Bible says,

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***It is good to give thanks to the
LORD, and to sing praises to
Your name, O Most High
(Psalm 92:1)***

In the temple worship the people were
commanded to approach God with
thanksgiving on their lips.

***Enter into His gates with
thanksgiving, and into His
courts with praise. Be thankful
to Him, and bless His name.***

(Psalm 100:4)

Imagine the people of God back then going up to the temple, many of them are faced with all different kinds of problems yet they were saying, “*Lord I thank you, Lord I thank you, through it all I thank you.*”

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Today we are commanded to give God thanks always and in every circumstance.

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Now the Word of God did not say, for everything give thanks but it says, *in everything* give thanks.

In the book of Romans we see that one of the things God gave up men for was the failure to be thankful to Him. The Bible says,

Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts,

and their foolish hearts were

darkened. (Romans 1:21)

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Though we may not have all the things that we want, though we may face situations that are not consoling, it is good to be always thankful to the Lord. Many times God, whose ways are past finding out, allows negative things to come our way for our own good or for some reason our small minds would never be able to comprehend.

Regardless

of

the

situation or circumstance that you might find yourself in, always give God thanks. When things are not going well we should be just as thankful as when they are going well, for God abides faithful.

If we truly examine our lives and see the things God has done for us we will give Him thanks. The mere fact that we are alive to behold the goodness of God in the land of the living is enough to give God thanks for. God is a good

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God and He will always be good and

nothing can change that fact.

When we rise to see another day, to see the beautiful sunshine, the flowers, the wonder of creation we ought to say, *thank you Lord*. The biggest downfall of the nation of Israel was their unthankful attitude. Because of this they were prone to murmur and complain instead of trusting God. They were a very ungrateful people.

That is one of the reasons why the generation that came out of Egypt never entered the Promised Land.

They murmured against God and because of this they never saw the blessing that was laid up for them.

Many of God's people have denied themselves of the ***good success*** that God had for them because, instead of being thankful to God, they gave in to

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the spirit of murmuring. You have to be careful of what comes out of your mouth. For the Word of God declares,

Death and life are in the power of the tongue... (Proverbs 18:21)

I have discovered that when I give God thanks in the face of hardship and perplexities, in the end God causes everything to work together for my

good.

The Valley Experience

There was a time in my life when I had to learn to give God thanks in the midst of the most adverse circumstances.

I can never forget that period of time in my ministry; it was a time of intense trials. It all began when I decided to take the church forward from the little

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room where we started. We began preparing a bigger place for worship. I also began to do my Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Studies, with the intention of completing my Master's Degree. It was at that time that the Holy Spirit spoke to my heart and told me, "*Things are going to become very turbulent but through it all be thankful unto the Lord.*"

I will never forget the very moment when the Holy Spirit spoke those words to me; it remains fresh in my mind. It was a night when a few members of the church and myself

were at the home of a sister who had just died of cancer. Just like that, without ever giving serious thought to the topic of thanksgiving to God; the Holy Spirit spoke loud and clear to my spirit. He said, *“Things are going to become very turbulent but through it all be thankful unto the Lord.”* From that night, for approximately the next

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three years, virtually everything that could go wrong went wrong. There are some things in life we cannot stop from happening but we can decide our reaction.

It started on the church board. For the first time we could not agree. One of the leaders stood against me and the board virtually split. He eventually left the church with his family. Then in the midst of building I was told by the Government authority that the church building could not continue because of a problem with parking facility.

Following that I was accused of almost everything you can imagine a pastor being accused of.

Then my life was threatened. One unsaved man whose wife began attending the church approached me

and threatened to kill me. I must

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confess he sounded very serious and
crazy enough to do it. I was very
scared, but I continued to thank God.

Along with this I was told by one of
the church elders that the *Obeah Man*
(Witch Doctor) in the village was
displaying a big snake around his neck
and saying this is for the pastor.

Through it all I remembered the Word
of God to me and I continued to thank
God and pray.

So many things happened I could
never tell it all; it was like a bad dream
with no end and *Oh! The pain*. In the
midst of all the things that were
already happening, the neighbor next
door threatened to take me to court
over a land issue and noise from the
church. He also told me that the church
we were building was blocking the
breeze from blowing in his direction.

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Several members left the church when
a long-standing member fell into
sexual
misconduct.

Some

even

backslid and never recovered. It was a serious blow for the church, and probably if I were not the pastor I might have been tempted to leave also. It was not easy to think about what happened and it still is not even to this very day.

I am not a singer but I remember the Sunday morning when I stood to preach and the Holy Spirit put a song in my mouth. As I began to sing it, it was like the heavens opened and the Spirit of God filled the place and many began to weep in an unusual way. The song goes like this,

*“Let thy living waters, come
flow over my soul, let your Holy
Spirit come and take control, of
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every situation that has troubled
my mind...”*

Talk about a troubled mind, I have been there. At that time I did not know the relevance that song would have in my life in the following months.

Things became rougher and tougher. My mind came under heavy attack as never before. Like Job things began to go wrong one after the next. However in spite of all the ugly things that

transpired I continued to give thanks. I also want to go on record as saying that *I completely forgive* all the brethren who failed during that season of unprecedented trials. God meant it all for good.

Believe it or not, all I shared above is just the smoke. The fire was yet to come and it was not far away.

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The Fire

About eleven o'clock one night, the phone rang, when I answered it, the person on the other end was crying uncontrollably, so I asked "*what's wrong?*" then he said a certain sister was just brutally murdered by her backslidden husband in front of the church. Now my wife and I had been trying for some years to have a baby, probably for about six years. When she heard the news she was a few months pregnant. The news affected her so deeply that the baby immediately began to miscarry.

I rushed to the church that night; a few members who heard the news were there. It was one of the most despicable and disturbing sight I had ever seen. The story made front-page

news on the two leading newspapers in the nation. Instantly I went into a state

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of mental depression, depression like I had never experienced before. The depression was so strong that I said to myself I don't want my worst enemy to ever experience this. As a matter of fact I did not know what depression was until I experienced it. Believe me, it was hell on earth.

My health broke down and for the first time I had to receive antibiotics from a private doctor. One night, I could not sleep, I felt my inside trembling, I had never felt the presence of Satan so real before as I felt it that night. I became so fearful, words cannot explain. I heard a voice speaking to me, I can't say it was audible but somehow the thoughts were so impressed on my mind, it was like an audible voice and I knew it had to be the devil. He said to me,

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"Stop praying and I will leave you alone, stop preaching about sin and I will leave you but if you continue you will lose your mind, you will end up in the mad

house and on the streets and everybody will say look at him now. You will become the talk of the town."

The devil said,

"Look at the sinners they are happy, they have peace of mind they are not tormented as you are but you are serving God and look at you. You are in a mess; you are constantly tormented, so why not backslide, give up on all this fasting and praying. It is because of fasting and praying, preaching against sin why you are in all this trouble. These things are things to stay far away from."

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Oh! Those words sounded so true.

"Why did I ever get into this prayer and fasting business in the first place?" I asked myself, *"and how can I get out now?"*

This may sound strange, but somehow the words of the devil seemed to make sense, because all I wanted was peace of mind. That night with tears running down my cheeks I cried out to God with all my heart. I said to God, *"I have walked with you faithfully for all*

these years why is this happening to me, I need your help now. God said to me, *“continue to do all the things the devil told you not to do.”* God told me that because of all the things he had spoken over the church, and because the people were looking to me as His man, if I should quit, it will be a great sin. I will be making Him a liar and the faith of the people would be

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destroyed. As a matter of fact, God said to me, *‘if you quit then surely all the bad things that the devil has said will come to pass, but if you continue to trust and thank me, I will bless you.’*

I can’t say exactly how long this depression lasted but it lasted a considerable length of time (several months). I remember being in New York and England and being under very intense depression. The twelve days I spent in England were my worse days on foreign soil, and God knows I don’t ever want to feel that way again.

While I was in England I had to cry out to God for my mind, I had no peace.

Through it all I obeyed God and continued to give Him thanks. I even

preached messages on thanksgiving to the congregation.

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God's Faithfulness

I have only shared a small fraction of what I actually went through for those three years. However, today I can joyfully say, God has turned things around completely. God has proven Himself to me to be absolutely faithful. These things have only made me a wiser person. My faith is stronger now. The church has a bigger and better facility than the one we began building and it is also better located. I did not only complete my Bachelor's degree but also my Master of Divinity degree and Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD). The church bought a vehicle for me. I bought my own house and land, new members were added to the church by the Lord. The church started a television program. My wife and I also had another beautiful and brilliant baby girl Vanessa and a handsome boy named Dave.

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All
of
these

things

happened

immediately after the period of severe

trials and just as the trials came as a

flood, so also the blessings came as a

flood. I can remember a sister

prophesying to me, saying: "*God is*

going to bless you with everything in

one package", and so it came to pass. I

share these things to encourage

somebody and to glorify God.

God is good, He will give you double

for your trouble, so be faithful and

give Him thanks always, as the

Scriptures exhorts us to do. It is

written,

Giving thanks always for all

things to God the Father in the

name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Ephesians 5:20)

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In everything give thanks; for

this is the will of God in Christ

Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians

5:18)

Therefore

by

Him

let

us

continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. (Hebrews 13:15)

Even when it seems hard, we need to offer thanksgiving to God by faith as a sacrifice. The Bible says,

Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing. (Psalm 107:22)

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. (Psalm 107:1)

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Whether you are mountain high or valley low, give thanks. For it is a profound testimony of your firm trust in God. And more than that, He deserves

it

regardless

of

our

circumstances.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Be Constant In

Prayer

“If you are not praying you are

playing and straying.”

The greatest need of the church today is for more prayer. We need to engage ourselves in much more praying as the body of Christ and as individuals. If we fully understand the nature of the time in which we live we will spontaneously give ourselves to prayer, ceaseless prayer.

Where are we in time? According to biblical revelation, from creation to the final judgment there are seven

dispensations. We are living in the sixth dispensation. The following chart

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reveals the name of each dispensation, how long each lasted and how each came to an end. Pay particular attention to how this dispensation of grace will end.

The Time in which we are living is an age of great deception. When the disciples of Jesus asked Him for a sign

of His coming and of the end of the age, the first thing He warned them about was deception. He said,

Take heed that no man deceives you. (Matthew 24:4)

The apostles also revealed that there will be a great spirit of deception in the closing days of time. The Apostle Paul said,

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Now the spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrine of demons. (1 Timothy 4:1)

There will be a falling away (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3). Jude highlights the reality of end time deceivers. Jude said,

For as certain men have crept in unnoticed... who turn the grace of God into lewdness (license for sin)... (Jude 1:4)

We need to realize that one of the judgments of this closing dispensation of grace is deception. God will give some over to the spirit of error. In Romans 1:18 we are told that,

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For the wrath of God is revealed

from

heaven

against

all

ungodliness

and

unrighteousness of men, who

suppress

the

truth

in

unrighteousness.

Today God is turning Churches and denominations over to their sins.

There is a great need for the child of God to be sober and alert in these crucial times and that can only be done through constant prayer. As children of God we need to watch and pray always. Jesus said the following words,

34But take heed to yourselves,

lest your hearts be weighed

down with

carousing,

drunkenness, and cares of this

life, and that day come on you

unexpectedly.

***35" For it will come as a snare on
all those who dwell on the face
of the whole earth.***

***36" Watch therefore, and pray
always that you may be counted
worthy to escape all these things
that will come to pass, and to
stand before the Son of Man."***

(Luke 21:34-36)

The record of the Scripture tells us very plainly that the end time will be a serious crisis period. In the above reference Jesus said that the closing days preceding His second coming will be *as a trap* for the masses of people who live on the earth.

The days that surround the imminent return of Christ will be days designed by the devil to deceive and drown souls in a flood of all kinds of corruption. Jesus said if it were possible even the elect would be

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deceived (Mathew 24:24). He made it absolutely clear that except for watching and incessant prayer there will be no way of overcoming the corruption and deception of the end time. Prayer ought to be the main business of the end time church. Jesus

said,

"Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

(Mark 11:17)

By this Jesus meant that prayer ought to be the number one and preeminent activity of the house of God.

We Are In A War

We are in a subtle and vicious war.

Not a war against flesh and blood but against Satan and his emissaries. This

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war has more casualties than any physical war and the losses are not temporary but eternal. This is why prayer is very important. Until we comprehend the reality of an all out supernatural war we will not know what prayer is for.

There is a war raging in these end times and the casualties don't just lose bodily members or physical life but they lose their souls forever, in hell's fire. We need to pray to avoid the pitfall of deception and eternal damnation. We need to abide in prayer in order that we may serve the Lord acceptably. We need to pray because

in ourselves we are no match for the
devil. We need to pray because there is
heaven to gain and a hell to shun.

The

Scripture

is

replete

with

exhortations and injunctions on the

subject of prayer. It is written,

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*... men always ought to pray
and not lose heart, (Luke 18:1)*

*Praying always with all prayer
and supplication in the Spirit,
being watchful to this end with
all*

perseverance

and

supplication for all the saints.

(Ephesians 6:18)

*"Watch therefore, and pray
always that you may be counted
worthy to escape all these things
that will come to pass, and to
stand before the Son of Man."*

(Luke 21:36)

33Take heed, watch and pray;

for you do not know when the

time is.

34"It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants,

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and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch.

35"Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming -- in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning

36"lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

37"And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:33-37)

Countless books have been written on this great subject of prayer. All of this attention

is

indicative

of

the

indispensability

and

overriding

necessity of prayer. Prayer is to the spirit what breathing is to the body.

E.M. Bounds said, "*prayer shapes our*

future.” It is also said, “*The believer on his knees sees more than the*

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philosopher on his tiptoes.” Profound words!

Prayer is a mighty force that regulates things in the spiritual and the natural world.

Much

more

can

be

accomplished through prayer than all our human strivings and efforts. Elijah prayed and God shut up heaven that it rained not for three and a half years.

He prayed again and the heavens gave rain.

Dare To Ask In Prayer

Many of God’s people are spiritually, physically

and

materially

impoverished because they neglect to pray. Here is what James said,

...Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (James 4:12)

Jesus said,

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Ask, and it will be given to you;

seek, and you will find; knock,

and it will be opened to you.

(Matthew 7:7)

These words *ask, seek* and *knock* are all in the present continuous tense, therefore in essence Jesus actually says, keep on asking and it shall be given unto you, keep on seeking and you shall find, keep on knocking and it shall be opened unto you. The tense stresses persistence and sincerity.

Those who persistently ask, seek and knock will surely receive from God.

Asking in prayer is as mighty in possibility as the God to whom our supplications are addressed. For with God all things are possible. He said unto Jeremiah,

Call to Me, and I will answer

you, and show you great and

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mighty things, which you do not

know. (Jeremiah 33:3)

God invites us to come unto Him and ask in boldness. It is written,

Thus says the LORD, The Holy

One of Israel, and his Maker:

"Ask Me of things to come

concerning

My

*sons;
and
concerning the work of My
hands,
you
command
Me.*

(Isaiah 45:11)

*Let us therefore come boldly to
the throne of grace, that we may
obtain mercy and find grace to
help in time of need. (Hebrews
4:16)*

Prayer is an indispensable prerequisite
for true success. Many times Jesus
spent whole nights in prayer. If Jesus
needed to pray during his earthly

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sojourn, this is indicative of how much
we all need to give high regard and
priority to the exercise of prayer.

Prayer borne along by the Holy Spirit
is mighty in its working.

Earth Working With Heaven

Before God does some things for us
from heaven we must take certain
action on earth first. Jesus said,

Assuredly,

I

say

to

you,

whatever you bind on earth will

be bound in heaven, and

whatever you loose on earth will

be loosed in heaven. (Matthew

18:18)

When Joshua fought in the valley with

the Amalekites, Moses went to the top

of the hill with his hands raised

towards heaven. As long as Moses

hands were held up Joshua prevailed

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and whenever Moses let down his

hands Amalek prevailed (Exodus 17:9-

11).

Before God can bless and increase His

people, they must first inquire of Him.

The Bible says,

Thus says the Lord GOD: "I

will also let the house of Israel

inquire of Me to do this for

them: I will increase their men

like a flock. (Ezekiel 36:37)

Let us therefore come boldly to

the throne of grace, that we may

obtain mercy and find grace to

help in time of need. (Hebrews

4:16)

Use The Word In Prayer

It is written,

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Put Me in remembrance; let us contend together; state your case, that you may be acquitted.

(Isaiah 43:26)

3Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat!

4I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

5I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. (Job 23:3-5)

Thus says the LORD, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:

"Ask Me of things to come concerning

My

sons;

and

concerning the work of My

hands,

you

command

Me.

(Isaiah 45:11)

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Take words with you, and return

to the Lord... (Hosea 14:2)

Keep The Fire Burning

The Word of God says,

A fire shall always be burning

on the altar; it shall never go

out. (Leviticus 6:13)

In the Old Testament God established that the fire on the altar was never to go out. Even so it ought to be with our prayers. God wants us to keep the fire burning constantly on the altar of prayer. The Bible says,

6I have set watchmen on your

walls, O Jerusalem; they shall

never hold their peace day or

night. You who make mention

of the

LORD, do not keep

silent,

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7And give Him no rest till He

establishes and till He makes

Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

(Isaiah 62:6-7)

Pray

without

ceasing

(1

Thessalonians 5:17)

*And there is no one who calls on
Your name, who stirs himself up
to take hold of You... (Isaiah
64:7)*

*He saw that there was no man,
and wondered that there was no
intercessor... (Isaiah 59:16)*

God did not wonder that there was no
preacher,

no

professor

or

no

philosopher but He wondered that

there was no intercessor. In desperate
times the greatest ministry in the
church is the intercessory ministry.

The present day ministry of Jesus is

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the ministry of intercession (Hebrews
7:25).

God is seeking for intercessors to keep
the fire burning on the altar of prayer.

When there is fire on the altar of
prayer constantly, there will be fire in
the pulpit and in the pews. God said,

*So I sought for a man among
them who would make a wall,
and stand in the gap before Me
on behalf of the land, that I*

should not destroy it; but I

found no one. (Ezekiel 22:30)

In Ezekiel's time God found none to stand in the gap but what about now can God find you? It is time to pray as never before.

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