

Like Father Like Son

A Study on Developing
The Heavenly Father's
Qualities in His Children

By Randy Brodhagen

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

INTRODUCTION

It is my prayer that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give to you as you read, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. (Ephesians 1:17)

The finest thing that we could be doing is thinking upon the things of our God. The Word of God tells us that we need to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen rightly dividing the word of truth. (2nd Timothy 2:15) We have studied so that you are now free to enter into a realm of meditation upon the truths of God in this book. Thank God for your desire to grow in the awareness of the things of God!

“O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.” (Psalm 119:97-104)

“O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth.” (Psalm 105:1-5)

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Chapter 1

GOD'S MAJESTY

As we focus on the things of the Lord, we sit back and meditate or think upon all that God has done for us.

Let's focus in this chapter upon understanding the majesty and greatness of our God who is King of kings, God of all, the Creator, the Lord, the Life Giver, the one who is able to meet the need of anyone in this entire world because He is the One who has made everything. He knows about everything because He alone is God and there is none like Him.

“Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? And the things that are coming, and shall come, let them show unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: Have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?” (Isaiah 44-6-10)

THE Lord God of hosts says, *“I am the only God. There is none beside Me! You can make all kinds of other gods, but none of them can do for you what I can, because I am the only true God and there is none like Me.”*

There is a fellow named Elijah in the Old Testament. He was a prophet of God. A man who was sold out to God. A man who was desiring to walk with God by obeying God's Word to bring the life of God to God's people. However, the people of Elijah's time had set up other gods. They wanted to seek after other things of this world. So one day, Elijah challenged the prophets of these other gods telling them, *“If your god is real, let us set up a test and let us each build an altar and then you call upon your god and I will call upon mine, and to prove whose God is real by having them send fire*

down to consume the offering.” They all agreed. The priests of the other gods, after calling upon and pleading to their god all day long without any result, began to knife themselves trying to get their god to do something. Their god never did anything. NO matter how they cried, pleaded, and afflicted themselves, their god did not do anything. Elijah kept asking them, *“Where is your god – cry a little louder – he does not hear you or maybe he is deaf.”* Then it came to be Elijah’s turn. He dug a moat around his altar, filling the moat with water and poured water over the altar. He knew his God was going to do something. He looked up into heaven and called to his God. No sooner did Elijah pray then the heavens shook and the fire came down from God consuming the entire altar and rock and moat that was around the altar. Elijah’s God is the only true God and there is none like Him. Elijah was a man just like us. (James 5:17) God will show Himself true to us, just as He did to Elijah.

Let us think upon this for a moment. God is true and He will move in behalf of them that seek Him by faith. He is the only one who is able to meet our needs. As we meditate upon these things we grow to understand who is our God, so that we can come expectantly before Him.

Many times we find that people attempt to make God into their own images so that they can deal with Him. By so doing we are bringing God down to our level, instead of us rising up to the level of God to which the Father, through Jesus Christ, has called us. (Ephesians 3:20) We must understand that God is limitless. There are no boundaries upon God. There is nothing that He cannot do. He is beyond our natural understanding. *“God is able to give far more exceedingly abundantly than anything that we are able to even ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.”* God is able to do the impossible in behalf of them that believe. He is the Creator.

We need not limit God by our understanding or thinking. By God’s Word, we have the ability to bring our thinking up to the level which God intends for us. It is by God’s Word and the ministry of god’s Holy Spirit that we are actually able to think and know the thoughts of God.

“But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: For the Spirit searcheth all things, yeah, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the

things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1st Corinthians 2:9-12)

I would encourage you to continue in God’s Word and to praise and give God glory. God is able to heal any spiritual, physical, and mental infirmity. God is able to meet any family or personal need. God is able to give life to the lost. God is able!

We do not need to prove our God. We need to only accept His Word as true and act upon it. It is then and only then that we will experience the fullness of knowing God and that He will do exactly what He says in behalf of them that believe.

Too often it has been that we look to our own weakness and shortcomings instead of looking to our God. Could it be that we have not really come to know the majesty and power of our God in whom there is no weakness or failing? It is time that we take our eyes off of ourselves and look to God. (Read Isaiah 40:4-31)

This is exciting! As we focus on the majesty of God and His power, we begin to realize that God is limitless and that He wants to use His ability in our behalf. (Read Psalm 111)

God has moved in behalf of us. It is because of this fact that I have joyfully written this book for you. Because I know that this same Lord of all, King of kings, Lord of the universe, Who has measured this universe in His hand, has moved in behalf of each one of us, personally. This majestic God has taken note of each one of us. We are that special to Him. God knew that we needed to know Him. This God is now desiring to touch each one of our hearts that we might receive His Love.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
(Philippians 2:5-8)

This is speaking about the Lord of All, majestic King of kings, coming down into this world, humbling Himself, setting aside all of His God abilities for us to move in our behalf that we might be His people and have His life. He gave His life for us on the cross shedding His blood that whoever believes in Him (Jesus) is not going to perish but will have eternal life.

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

This majestic God came down to meet us right where we are, to set us free. We were lost. We did not even know who is God or even the fact that GOD IS LOVE and loved us. God demonstrated His love to us in sending Jesus Christ that all mankind might have life eternal by confessing Jesus as Lord. The Father God then proclaimed Jesus as Lord of all and King of kings that at the name of Jesus every knee in heaven and in earth and under the earth should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” (Revelation 21:6)

This majestic God, Creator of everything in this universe, to whom there is no time, to whom there is no job too great, moved into this world in the form of Jesus Christ to give us life. As we invite Jesus into our heart as Lord and Savior, by calling upon the name of the Lord, God’s Word says that we will be saved. Not only will we be saved, but God’s Word also says that this majestic God of the universe actually now has come to live in us! We are no longer weak, miserable, and helpless. God is in and with us! (Colossians 1:25-27, Galatians 2:20)

Chapter 2

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S MAJESTY

HUMILITY

We understand that God alone is God. As we have received Jesus into our heart, God is now in and with us. *“Greater is He who is in us, than he that is in the world.”* (1st John 4:4) However, we must never forget that *“the beginning of wisdom is the fear (reverence) of the Lord,”* (Proverbs 1:7) as we relate to our Lord and to one another. (Read James 4:1-10_

We need to place every area of our life under God's majestic and wonderful control. Bitterness, hatred, strife, envy and jealousy are all rooted in pride. We are trying to put ourselves over others and over God. When we are trying to run our lives our own way, things are going to happen which God does not want to happen to us because they are not good, but He is not able to stop them because God will not violate our free choice which He has given to us.

We do not want to be at strife with one another. We want to be loving one another, encouraging one another, rejoicing with one another for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ. When we let our old self that was apart from God rise up and we start to get envious and jealous of one another seeking our own self, then the result is strife. *“You have not because you ask not, and when you ask and receive not because you ask amiss to consume upon your own self.”* (James 4:3) Selfishness! When we put our desires before God's desires, than we open ourselves up to problems which God does not want us to have. God loves us and wants the best for us.

“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before the fall.”
(Proverbs 16:18)

When we start to get ourselves wrapped up in ourselves by putting our will and our desires before God's desires and other's desires, and are looking at ourselves as very important, the word of God tells us we are going to fall on

our face. Unless we humble ourselves before God and turn to Him to direct our ways we will fail.

In the Bible there is an account of people who gathered together to build a tower. (Genesis 11) They were attempting to build a kingdom and name to themselves. This is a work that they were doing to bring glory to themselves. As the building went up, they began to glory in their accomplishment. “See what great things we have done” was coming out of their mouths. And the Lord confused their languages, so they could not understand one another and the work ceased.

Man’s efforts, as impressive as they may seem, are nothing compared to God’s. Let us not put ourselves into the position that we feel what we are doing is so great that we forget that all glory for anything that we do in this life is to go to God! As we stand before the Lord God of hosts, the majesty and power of God are flowing in God’s presence, and in ourselves we are unworthy to come to the Lord God of the universe, except through Jesus Christ.

Another example is in Deuteronomy 8. The Lord God is telling the children of Israel, *“after you have received all the blessings which I have told you about: houses, lands, food, and all my blessing (Deuteronomy 28:1-15) beware lest you get puffed up with pride and say, “my might, my wisdom, my abilities have acquired all of these blessings, and you forget the Lord your God.”* It is God who has blessed us, not we ourselves. The Lord would have us to be reminded of this fact.

Humility is basically reliance upon God! It is not cowering on the ground, weeping, and wailing, etc. It is being obedient to the Word of God before any of our desires. Humility is getting under God’s control in every area of our lives.

A New Testament example is that of the Pharisee and the Publican. (Luke 18:10-14) The Pharisee had his arms raised and he spoke to God praising himself. *“I thank you, God, That I am not like that other man (publican) over there. I am doing this and that, yes, God, I am so wonderful!”* The other fellow was standing over in the corner with his head bowed. Out of his mouth came these words, *“God, be merciful to me a sinner.”* Jesus went on to say, *“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that*

humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Verse 14. another Example: Luke 14:8-11.

There are three ways in which we can come under God’s authority or humble ourselves before God and be pleasing to God.

The first way is to confess our sin to God. Sin is anything that separates us from God. Whatever is not done as a response to faith is sin. (Romans 14:23) It could be the things of this world getting before God. It could be us relying on ourselves for our daily affairs, rather than trusting God. It could be unbelief. If you have not received Jesus into your heart as Lord, it could simply be that you are in a condition separated from God, and need to turn to God and receive Jesus before you can have God’s life.

God has given to us ways to get right with Him through Jesus’ blood. IN the James 4 passage, we remember that God is telling us that if we are laughing and rejoicing, while our life is not right with God because of sin actions and words in our life, then it would be better for us to be crying and sorrowful for what is happening in our life. At that point, we do not have the life which God intends for us because we are out of fellowship with Him. (1st John 6-7) However, the fact of God is that we can humble ourselves before God and say, *“Father God, in Jesus’ name, I need Your life. I need to be right with You. I need You to direct my life.”* Then yield yourself to God.

If we as believers, have an area of our lives where we are disobedient to God, then we need to ask God to forgive us and stop being disobedient. (1st John 1:9) For instance, it is very easy at times to get so caught up in the affairs of this life that we put God in the back seat. Sometimes we can get so busy scurrying around that we get into more strife and grief and things build up inside us and pressure mounts and then we blow up at everyone around. Why does this happen? Because we need to bring areas of our life into God’s plan and stop giving the Devil opportunity. We need to confess to God our sin of putting other priorities before Him.

The first way to get under God’s authority or humble ourselves before Him is to confess our need for Him and to yield our life to Him. If there is an area of our life where we are disobedient to God’s Word, we need to acknowledge our sin. Sin is very bustle. For instance, I had planted some grass in my back yard. Before long all kinds of little grass shoots were sprouting up all over my back yard. I began to take great pride in my grass.

Day after day went by as I watered the grass three or four times a day. I was really excited about how fast and full the grass was growing. It was looking good! One day, our dogs jumped over the fence that was keeping them out of this newly seeded area. The ripped out a big section of the yard. When I saw it, I yelled at my wife for letting the dogs in there. (She did not have anything to do with it, but she was a likely suspect to blame. We always think somebody has to be blamed!) When I settled down, it became clear to me that I had yelled at my wife and wanted to knock the dogs out over something as dumb as some common grass!! But was it so “common” to me? No, I had allowed the grass to become an idol in my life. It is simple how this can happen.

God would call this idolatry because I was putting the grass before Him and my family. Anything that becomes a source of pressure or strife needs to be looked at seriously. We need to examine our attitude because we have placed something before God. Humility would say, “Father, forgive me for putting that grass before You! I give You that grass.” I was trying to keep that grass for myself and I was very proud of it. As soon as I gave that grass to God, I was freed from the bondage, strife, and stress about the whole situation! It was really exciting what God then turned around and did with His grass. The entire area that had been torn out by my 150 pound dog, within two weeks had all grown back in. Praise the Lord!

The second way that we can humble ourselves before God is through prayer. Anytime we are praying we are recognizing the fact that we need God. Now it is interesting and I always have to laugh at myself because when I was younger in the Lord, the only times I would go to the Lord was when I needed something. The more I am growing in the Lord each day, the more I am seeing the importance of and how wonderful it is to come into the presence of God all day long. It is exciting being with God!

I am starting to see that I can do nothing, but my God can do everything and He is telling me, “*Ask so that your joy is full.*” (John 14:13-14, and 16:23-24) As we grow to understand that, instead of us stewing and fretting and worrying and trying to make things happen on our own, we humble ourselves before God by getting before Him in prayer and commit our way to God. Then I am going to ask Him to take control and thank Him that the matter is taken care of and His peace is surrounding me. (Philippians 4:6-7) It is only God’s wisdom and ability that can make anything happen for my good and the sooner I realize this the better. Then God is free to bless me,

my family, neighborhood, church, business, and His Body throughout the world. The third way to humble ourselves before God is to be obedient to His Word. We are to do what God has said to do in any given situation, rather than what we may feel that we should do. I believe this is what Jesus is saying when He says, *“Not everyone who calls to me Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that does the will of my heavenly Father!”* (Matthew 7:21)

Doubting God’s Word is an abomination to God. As we are doing and acting contrary to God’s Word in a situation, we are actually setting ourselves up as “God.” God’s perfect will and blessing is not able to flow to us when we are in a state of disobedience. *“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. IN all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”* (Proverbs 3:5-6) Read Philippians 2:1-11.

Jesus is our example. As Jesus was obedient to do what God said to do, obedient even to the point of death for us that we might be right with God as we receive Jesus as Lord, then the Father God exalted Him to the highest position in heaven and earth. Jesus Christ is Lord! *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”* (1st Peter 5:6)

There is a real lesson for us here. It says that as we humble ourselves by becoming obedient to God and the desire of our heart is to be pleasing to God in every way, in the same way the Heavenly Father is going to lift us up and exalt us in His time. This is important. IN 1st Corinthians 3:6-7, we understand why this is so important. Many times we can be running around trying to build little “kingdoms” here in this earth by our own strength. God gives us perspective here. God is the One who gives us increase in our lives in all areas. God is the One responsible for making things happen. Our part is to do what God tells us to do and then God will direct us and deal with our situations.

In Corinth the people were getting excited about people and what people were doing. Paul tells them, *“for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who Apollos, but ministries by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos*

watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” (1st Corinthians 3:3-7) “and these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1st Corinthians 4:6-7)

We cannot be looking at ourselves and what we are doing as being so wonderful and so unique. Why? According to God’s Word, apart from Him we are nothing, but in God we are everything. (John 15:4-5) *“Except the Lord build the house, they that labor, labor in vain, ...It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for He gives His beloved sleep.” (Psalm 127:1-2)*

Jesus has come to show us this fact. Paul is telling us the same thing. Men are nothing, but it is God who gives the increase. Jesus humbled Himself and washed the feet of the disciples while telling them, *“He who would be great in the Kingdom of God must become the servant of all.”* Are we willing to become a servant to all? *“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:6-8)*

Paul was one of the most elite of his society. A man who had everything going for him culturally, intellectually, etc. Yet, this man of God said that all of these things he was going to count as loss for the sake of knowing Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection. (See Philippians 3:4-15) All of our abilities are not worth anything unless they are yielded to the Spirit of God! I have found that my mind and body, if not yielded to God, can actually hinder me from ministering in the Spirit of God. I would rather put aside all my strengths and have the Holy Spirit minister than to try to deal with any situation by my ability. God’s people receive God’s best as we get

ourselves out of the way! “*The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility.*” (Proverbs 15:33)

Chapter 3

QUALITY OF GOD – GOODNESS

All of God's provision for us comes from His love for us, His Goodness. The Word of God has much to say to us concerning God's goodness. *“My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.”* (Proverbs 4:20-22)

As we keep our eyes upon God's Word, not letting it depart from us, then the goodness and prosperity of God will flow towards us. As soon as we let the Word of God drop from sight, we begin to look at the situations, circumstances, things that are going to hinder our walk with the Lord. However, as we continue to hear the Word of God, faith continues to work. This is why we encourage you to read God's Word out loud. As you are reading, delight in what you are hearing. Confess it with your mouth. Speaking God's Word will help you to keep God's word in the center of your eyes and thoughts. The word of God is alive!

“How great is your goodness which You have stored up for them that fear (reverence) You, which You bestow in the sight of men who take refuge in You.” (Psalm 31:19)

God wants to move in goodness towards us! We need to study to find out what God has for us in Jesus and then we need to think upon what we find out.

“Since ancient times no one has heard nor ear has perceived, nor eye has seen any God besides You, Who acts on behalf of them who wait for Him.” (Isaiah 64:4)

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (1st Corinthians 2:9-10)

There are three parts of man: spirit, soul (mind), and body. As we take hold of what God's word says, our spirit or inner man is being strengthened. As we meditate or think on God's word, our mind begins to be renewed and the body will profit as a result. God's word is actually medicine to our bodies. (Proverbs 4:22)

God's goodness flows towards each of the three areas of man! *“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth in Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”* (John 3:13-18)

God's first provision out of His goodness towards us is eternal life. God wants us to be right with Him. Jesus Christ is God's provision that whoever believes in Jesus and receives Jesus into their heart as Lord has eternal life. People are seeking eternal life in many ways, but God says the only provision He has given for eternal life is through Jesus. *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man comes to the Father, but by Me.”* (John 14:6, Acts 4:12)

All the other promises of God's goodness for us are based on us having received God's life through Jesus Christ. As a child of God, we now are heirs to all the other promises which are ours through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:3) Apart from Jesus we cannot have the rest of God's promises. In Jesus all the promises of God's goodness are “yes” to us. (2nd Corinthians 1:20)

“Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:4-5)

In the Hebrew, the terms incorrectly translated “grief” and “sorrow” are actually translated “sickness” and “pain” respectively. Jesus at the cross actually also took away our sickness, disease and pain. God in His goodness provided for us more than spiritual healing at the cross. He also provided healing for body and mind! The blood of Jesus actually heals our diseases.

God has in His goodness provided for us spiritually, mentally, and physically! *“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.”* (Isaiah 26:3-4)

God will keep us in perfect peace as we keep our minds stayed on Him by thinking on His word. Here is provision now for our emotions and minds. This is exciting! There is actually no more need for us as God’s children to worry or fear as we think on who is our Heavenly Father. We no longer need to be depressed or anxious, or confused. Jesus Christ has freed us from these things to have God’s peace.

“Rejoice in the lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Philippians 4:4-8)

In other words, keep your thoughts on the things of God, rejoice in God, His life, and goodness. Do not spend time focusing on things that are contrary to God’s word (situations, problems, people). No matter how impossible situations may appear to be – God is Greater! And the exciting thing is that God is in us, if we have received Jesus as our Lord. (1st John 4:4) We do not need to worry anymore. Jesus is Lord! He is in us. We give the situation to Him. We cast our own cares on Him for He cares for us. (1st Peter 5:7) For in spite of what we see or hear we believe God is in control because He loves us and he has given to us His word! Praise God!

God in His Goodness also has for us many more physical blessings. See: Deuteronomy 28:1-15.

“and He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lighting fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:18-20)

There is an enemy – Satan. His desire is to keep from us all the blessings of God. Jesus says, *“The thief (Satan) has come to steal, kill and destroy, but I have come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly.”* (John 10:10) In God’s goodness, God has given to us authority over Satan in the Name of Jesus. Satan cannot steal what God has for us unless we let him. As we learn to act on God’s authority, God’s abundance and goodness is able to flow to us and we will be a blessed people because our God is blessed, great, good, and He is the One Who is moving in our behalf! I thank God with you that this is a fact of God! God’s goodness is ours as part of our inheritance in Jesus Christ. (Galatians 3:13-14; Ephesians 1:3)

“for this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:9-14)

Chapter 4

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S GOODNESS

THANKFULNESS

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” (Ephesians 3:20-21)

As we are reverencing the Lord, obedient to Him, walking with God in His word, He is going to teach us wisdom. WE are going to know the ways of God, and as we know the ways of God, God is going to bless us. Humility comes before honor. (Proverbs 15:33) We need to acknowledge the basic fact that God is the One responsible for all the wonderful things that are happening in our lives. God is the author of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2) God is the One who is working a good and perfect work in us. (Philippians 1:6) Every good and perfect gift comes to us from God. (James 1:17)

As we acknowledge God, the love of God is rising up within us, even this moment. We are beginning to enter into a realm of worship and praise as we think upon how good God is to us and how He is in control of our lives as we yield ourselves to Him. If there is an area that is out of line with God, we want to give it to Him that we might be forgiven. We rest confident that the blood of Jesus has forgiven us for everything that we might do that is apart from God. It is just a matter of us asking and God is faithful to forgive and to cleanse it away. (1st John 1:9)

Like yourselves, I am so thankful to God for His goodness towards His people. The more we walk with God and grow in His word the more thankful we become because we know that God is the One Who has set us free. God is the One Who has given us life. God is the One Who has forgiven us and taken away our guilt. God is the One Who has blessed us as we seek Him with health, provision, protection, and every blessing. (Matthew 6:33) As we trust in the Lord and lean not to our own understanding, committing our way to the Lord, He directs our paths.

(Proverbs 3:5-6) Blessing upon blessing flows upon us as Deuteronomy 28 talks about until we are overtaken by God's blessings as we are seeking to be obedient to God.

This is exciting, because we can be so thankful because God loves us and is right here with us. Let us take a look at Psalm 118. *"Give thanks unto the Lord' for He is good: because His mercy (love) endureth forever. Let Israel now say, that His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Aaron say, that His mercy endureth forever. Let them know that fear (reverence) the Lord say, that His mercy endureth forever. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place."* (Verse 1-5)

In any situation that we are in, God is able and willing to set us free from all the power of the evil one who has come to steal, kill and destroy us. All we need to do is call upon the Lord and He will set us free.

Verse 14 – *"The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation."* The more we trust God with our lives, the more thankful we become because we know that our salvation and our life is only because of God's love in Jesus Christ.

Verse 15-16 – *"The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord has done valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly."* That is the shout that is coming from my heart and yours. The Lord has done mighty things! As we think upon the mighty things which God has done in our behalf, it builds hope and confidence within us that just as our God has done it before, He will do it again. (Romans 5:1-6) God is good! As we walk with Him, and honor and praise Him, God is moving in our lives!

Verse 17 – *"I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord."* I am fully convinced that the power of God is able to move in our behalf. God is able and willing to save us in our situations, as we are right before Him, and we will proclaim what the Lord has done. Now if God has done a work in our lives, we need to say so! (Psalm 107:2) Let the world know what God has done for you and rejoice and be glad in Him.

Verse 19-29 – *"Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise Thee: for You have heard me, and art become my*

salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. (Jesus is Lord! Glory to His Name!) This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech You, O Lord, O Lord, I beseech You, send now prosperity (success). Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed You out of the house of the Lord. (Lift up your hearts now and praise Him!) God is the Lord, which has showed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. (We are coming to God with our sacrifice of praise.) (Hebrews 13:15) You are my God and I will praise You; You are my God and I will exalt You. O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy (love) endureth forever."

God's love is moving towards us right now. It will never cease to move towards us. We do not deserve this love and goodness. Many times people do not like hearing this fact, because they want to feel worthy. However, we need to understand that we are not worthy on our own and that it is only through Jesus Christ that God in His love has made us worthy. We are worthy, not because of what we have done, but because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. We are special. We are important because God is in us. Think upon this fact. Let our thoughts be lifted to God, for greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world. (1st John 4:4)

We are not poor, weak, miserable, or wretched any longer because God is in us. We have a reason to be thankful! God loves us!

Selfishness is actually ungratefulness. As we think upon ourselves – what we want, need, etc. and revolve our world around ourselves, selfishness is predominant within us. The result of selfishness is ungratefulness. We are not able to give thanks to God. Have you ever had all kinds of blessings come from God and then have a problem come into your life and you began to grumble and complain? Grumbling and complaining is a sign that we have some wrong attitudes toward God. See Philippians 2:14-16, 1st Corinthians 10:3-12. Selfishness has set in. We are looking at ourselves and having a pity-party – “Poor me – woe is me!” God says, “Ask forgiveness – turn to Me – let the grumbling cease and let the thanksgiving arise in your heart!”

As we start to do this, an attitude of praise develops within us. “Yes, Lord, how could I ever think that. You have blessed me so well. I have so much

to thank You for. Forgive me and I thank You for forgiveness in Jesus Name. I give You the praise and glory that You are lifting me about my situation.”

A thankful heart is what receives God’s blessing. Turn to Luke 17:11-19. Ten lepers come to Jesus. Wanting to be free from the disease that afflicted them, they called to Jesus, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” Jesus said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.” They took off at a run to see the priest, and were healed as they went. (Note: As they acted on what Jesus said, they were healed on the way. They did not see it immediately.) One of them, upon looking at himself, noticed that he was healed. Turning around he ran back to Jesus shouting, “Thank You, Lord!” and Jesus asking him said, “Where are the others? Were there not ten who were healed? Where are the other nine?” Only one came back to give God glory and thanks. All ten received their healing, but only one gave thanks.

This incident really shows how easy it is for us to be blessed of God and then turn back to the world and go our way, instead of dedicating ourselves to God. Praise God! We are going to seek to maintain a thankful heart to God!

We want to understand this fact that the measure of thankfulness in our heart toward God is going to be the measure of love which we share with the people around us.

There is an interesting account in God’s word that declares this truth. God says that His word is spirit and it is life. (John 6:63) Every time we are in God’s word, God is going to teach us something that is going to help us – sometimes rebuke, sometimes encouragement, etc. Read Luke 7:36-50.

This woman knew that she was a sinner. She knew that she was living a life that was not pleasing to God. In Jesus she saw the life, hope and love of God. She turned to Jesus for life. With a thankful heart, she humbled herself weeping and anointing Him with precious perfume. This woman reached out in love to God, knowing that she was forgiven. The more she knew that she was forgiven, the more thankful she became. And Jesus said, “The one who has been forgiven much is going to love much.” As we realize how much we have been forgiven, then we are going to love much.

As we understand how important it is that Jesus gave His life for us that we might be right with God and come to understand, “Yes, I was so far from God that I could no longer come to Him. Yet God in His love reached out to me and saved me! Therefore, I am a new creature, old things are passed away, and God has made me new! (See 2nd Corinthians 5:17-21) I am a righteous child of God, not a sinner!”

We may not have been living a life like this woman, however the word of God says no one is right with God and all need to receive Jesus for life and forgiveness. As we begin to grow to appreciate how great God’s love is towards us, then we are able to reach out and accept and love others as God has reached to us.

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”
(Hebrews 13:15-16)

How thankful are we for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ? If we are thankful, love is going to flow from our hearts towards others. We are going to be able and willing to love the person that we before could not tolerate.

“Father, I thank You that I can call You Father. I am so thankful that You love me just the way I am and I am so thankful for what You have done for me, in Jesus’ name by His blood.”

We are going to give praise to God with our lips and we are going to say, “Thank You” and give our love to God by our actions as we share with others what God has done for us and by giving to others of God’s abundance to us. We are truly a blessed people for God is with us.

As we exhibit goodness to others, then we are going to see the fact of God’s love flowing through us to touch someone else. People often come to us asking the question, “How can I be an effective witness?” We respond, “By loving God’s people through word and deed.”

See Galatians 6:9-10 – *“and let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”*

There have been times when I was ministering to God's people and I would slip and think, "O Lord, when are your people going to come around, and shape up, and be able to stand and believe for the things of You!" And God would bring this scripture to mind about not growing weary of well-doing for in the proper time we shall reap a harvest if we do not give up. If we stop doing good to the people and sit back saying, "I've done enough!" – understand this – that person is not going to receive any benefit. We are the point of contact for the love of God. As the love of God continues to go out through us, there will eventually be a point where we are going to reap a harvest. We will see their lives changed. If we would simply continue to love, as God has patiently love us, not growing weary, then we will see that person be blessed of god. They then receive and we reap a harvest as a result.

"therefore, as we have opportunity let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Verse 10

The thankfulness and love in our hearts to God will then bless others as well.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." (Colossians 3:17)

This section then continues into the household relationships of the family and how they are to be submitting to and honoring one another, in the love of God. Everything that we are doing, saying, thinking we are doing as a thankful response to the love of god in Jesus Christ. God has given to us the ability and desire to be free in our relationships with one another. Not doing it to seek fulfillment or recognition but because God has fulfilled us and all our expectations! We are now freely able to love each other because God in His goodness has supplied all our needs and loves us.

It is out of thankfulness to god that we now love others. If someone does not say, "Thank you" to us or acknowledge what we did, we do not get offended because we are doing it for God. We want them to thank God, not us!

Yes, we are beginning to understand God's goodness, so we can say, "Yes, Lord, I thank You for the privilege to love my Dad, Mom, brothers and sisters, husband or wife, children, neighbors, church people, enemies, Your people throughout the world (saved or not yet), and I am doing and saying

for You because I want You to receive glory because I am so thankful to You. I want to love Your people.

I praise God that God, even now, is stirring within you a desire to love His people as He is loving you. I thank God for the thankfulness in your hearts towards Him for His Goodness!

Chapter 5

QUALITY OF GOD – FORGIVENESS AND MERCY

“Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O Lord, if You should mark iniquity, who shall stand. But there is forgiveness with You that You may be feared (reverenced). I wait on the Lord, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope.” (Psalm 130:1-5)

Read Psalm 103.

This book is intended to help us to lift our thoughts to think upon the Lord’s goodness and about how God’s forgiveness overrides all that we may do to fall short of God. The term in the Greek for sin means “to miss the mark.” It is just as if we were to take a bow and shoot an arrow which missed the target. This is what sin is defined to be. Anything that misses the mark; which separates us from God’s loved fellowship is sin.

The love of God goes beyond our shortcomings, our faults, beyond anything that we can do, going beyond to give to us life. In the gospel of John there is an account of a woman with whom Jesus dealt. She was caught red-handed in the act of adultery. In the Old Testament, they stoned to death people who committed adultery. They did not mess around with or excuse injustices against God.

The Pharisees brought this girl to Jesus in hopes of catching Jesus in a trap to find fault with Him. Jesus, writing on the ground with His finger, did not even look up at the Pharisees as they talked to Him about this woman. Jesus continued to write. As He wrote, He spoke. (when Jesus speaks, conviction is brought upon those who hear because we do not hear ordinary words, but life-giving words given by the direction of the Holy Spirit of God. The power of God flows when Jesus speaks. This is why Jesus says, *“My words are spirit and life.”* (John 6:63) Life comes to those who hear.)

This woman was standing there awaiting judgment for her sin, as Jesus spoke to the mob, *“Let him who is without sin cast the first stone!”* From

the eldest to the youngest, dropping their rocks, one by one they left until it was Jesus and the girl by themselves. The conviction of God came upon everyone of their hearts that they were all guilty before God. The older ones realized this first because of the experience of years trying to be pleasing to God but failing because they could not keep the Law perfectly as the Law demanded. The younger, more impetuous, and excitable left after seeing the ones of age, wisdom, and experience seeking God could not any longer justify their behavior in the face of Jesus' calling them to self-examination before God. Haughty, proud judgment has no place in God's plan.

Jesus turning attention to the woman says, "*Woman, where are your accusers?*" she replies, "Lord, they are all gone>" Jesus speaking in the new order of God says to her, "*Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more!*" In other words, the Lord Jesus was telling her, "*Your sin has separated you from God, but I am not here to condemn you but to give you life. Take the life which I now give to you freely, and do not turn back to live like you once did. You are a new creature, old things are passed away and all things are new. (2nd Corinthians 5:17) Take the freedom that I give to you from god and live in that freedom, not to go against God's principles any longer, but to now live for God.*" God gave her opportunity to change from being an adulterous to being a child of God.

The woman left Jesus rejoicing because he or she who the Lord has set free is free indeed! (John 8:36)

The Lord tells us about Jesus in the book of Isaiah. (Isaiah 53:1-12) In the New Testament of the Bible, Phillip was sent by God to a fellow who was reading in this particular section of God's word. Phillip asked him, "*Do you understand what you are reading?*" See Acts 8:26-40. the man replied, "*How can I unless someone explains it. Who is this talking about? I do not understand who this is that took all these transgressions on himself? Who is this one who gave life to the people?*"

Phillip replied, "*this one who has brought life to us all is Jesus Christ!*" Salvation is found through no one else for there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." (Isaiah 44:22)

The Lord took away our offences against Himself. God now tells us,
“Return to me! For I have paid the price for you to have life with me.”

“I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” (Isaiah 43:25)

Praise God! God remembers our sins no more! Jesus Christ has paid the price for our separation from God. We can be sons and daughters of God through the blood of Jesus which has enabled us to come boldly into God’s presence. I have the boldness of God because I know that upon the basis of God’s word this life is mine. I thank God for the privilege to share this truth with you, so that you also can take the life which God has given in His love, forgiveness, and mercy.

It is important that we understand that Jesus Christ had to die for us because we were all separated from God. Separation from God is not dependant upon the actions that we may or may not do. For instance, I may think, “That guy is a murderer! That guy is a child molester! That girl is a child abuser! They are sinners!, but I do not do such things!”

Separation from God is not based on what people do. True, what people do tells what is in their hearts. It is because everyone’s heart is wrong before God that Jesus Christ had to die for us. God’s word tells us that there is none that does good, no not one. See Romans 3:10-28. IN other words, apart from Jesus, all of us were unable to stand before God and be accepted on the basis of our works. Jesus took our separation from God and gave to us His right standing with God. (2nd Corinthians 5:21)

Because of Jesus’ blood, we may now receive that right standing by asking God to forgive us for our separation, and then ask Jesus to come into our hearts to be our Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10) and then be baptized in water (Romans 6:3-4)

I want to share with you something that is very important! Because there are people in this world who are acting out their separation from God and they need to come to grips with the fact that no matter how great their sin is, no matter how far apart from God their life-style is, God in His love has provided a way back to life in Jesus Christ.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our god.” (1st Corinthians 6:9-11)

I do not care what your life-style is right now. The love of God in Jesus Christ has extended to you already the forgiveness of your sins. Jesus has paid the price for your separation from God’s life.

God is saying to you and me, “Turn to Me and receive My life.” As Jesus told the woman caught in adultery, “Turn now, I do not condemn you. I have forgiven you and given to you life.” Jesus is saying to us, as He said to her, “Do not continue to live apart from God. You are forgiven! I have given to you the ability and power to rejoice in Me and have my life because I have set you free to love My Heavenly Father. You are free! You are free to love God now!”

Thank you, Jesus! Thank you, Jesus!

One of the greatest things that we can now be doing is to experience the freedom which God has given to us, and that freedom is found as we get into God’s word. (John 8:31-32) As we study, think upon, and do God’s word, the more we will experience in our lives the abundance which Jesus has come to bring. See Mark 4:20-25, especially the Amplified Version.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the atonement.” (Romans 5:6-11)

No matter what we have done in our past life, no matter what we are doing right now, the love of God is reaching out to you and me. God is saying,

“My Son has died to make you right with Me. Receive My life and forgiveness. You will then have the ability to live for Me through Jesus Christ.”

Life eternal is not based on our works or our goodness. It is based on the fact that God in His love for us has stepped out and said while we were still enemies, “You are My son! You are My child! Come into the inheritance I have for you.” I am excited about what Jesus Christ has done for us to set us free!

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God...” (2nd Corinthians 5:17-18)

The fact of God is this: We are new creatures, because of the blood of Jesus, as we invite Jesus to come into our lives to be our Lord and Savior.

“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2nd Corinthians 5:21)

Forgiveness is available to us no matter how far we may be running away from God. God in His love is still reaching out to us. God is saying to us, *“I will forgive your sins. I have already forgiven your sins. Just acknowledge the fact that you need Me and what I have provided for you in Jesus Christ, My Son. Receive My life. Confess My Son. Say with your mouth, Jesus Christ is my Lord and that you believe in your heart He is risen from the dead. Then thank Me for making you My child.”*

David after having lusted after another man’s wife, committed adultery. Trying to cover his sin, he lied and then had the husband killed so that he could marry the woman who was now with child because of him. Following all this, David wrote Psalm 32. Also see Psalm 51.

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” (Psalm 32:1-4)

Unconfessed sin or actions within our lives produces guilt. You may or you may not believe that there is a God. However, I can guarantee you that within your heart there is something that is telling you, “That is right, that is wrong!”

David in his heart knew at this point, that his actions were wrong before God. He knew God and yet he had gone apart from God. What the unconfessed sin was actually doing within him was literally affecting his health. He grew to be physically and emotionally weighed down.

“I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” (Psalm 32:5)

As soon as David, a believer, acknowledged his sin to God, God forgave him! (1st John 1:9)

“For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. I will instruct Thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.” (Psalm 32:6-11)

Chapter 6

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S FORGIVENESS

It is a wonderful fact of God to know that we are forgiven and have the life of God within us. God has made us right with Himself through Jesus.

“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 1:16-20)

The Lord is telling us that we are to come and reason with Him. Although our sins are as “scarlet” they shall be as white as snow. The term for “scarlet” in the Hebrew is not talking about “redness.” Scarlet is a dye that was used in their time which when it was put into the material, it could not be removed. God is telling us here that no matter how ingrained in us our sins are so that it would appear that they could not be removed from us, God’s ability will flow in us to forgive us and cleanse us. As we turn to God, acknowledging our separation and need, God will forgive us! If we choose to not turn to God, we cannot receive His forgiveness! *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:14-15)*

The event which is being spoken about here is that the children of Israel had rebelled against God and sought after their own ways, putting up idols of their own choosing instead of loving God. As a result of their rebellion against God, a plague of serpents was sent. However, God in His love and mercy had given a way to life for the people. God told Moses that he should set a brazen serpent up on a pole. Whoever would look to the snake on the pole would be healed from the deadly snake bite and life. Many people did not look to God’s provision for life and they died. God in His mercy had

given opportunity for life, yet by many it was not received. However, many did look to God's provision and were given life and forgiveness as they were obedient by faith to do what God had said to do to receive His provision of life – look to the serpent. In the same way, God has now said that whoever looks to the Lord Jesus will receive eternal life and forgiveness, healing and every blessing from God. No matter what we have done in our past, God will forgive us as we repent turning away from our separation, asking God to forgive us and Jesus to come into our life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth in Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:16-18)

God does not condemn anyone. Those who have not received Jesus, have condemned themselves.

In 1st John 1:9, we find that God has given a provision to believers in Jesus who fall short in keeping holy God's commandments.

“If we are faithful to confess (acknowledge) our sins to God, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

In other words, as we acknowledge our pride, doubt, gossip, jealousy, envy, strife, bitterness, fears, unforgiveness, etc. to God, God will forgive us and cleanse us as though we had never ever sinned. From the moment we call to God for forgiveness (be specific if possible), the blood of Jesus covers us and forgives us our sins. If we would go to God after we had asked forgiveness, He would say, “I do not know what you are talking about – what sin?” God forgives, forgets, and cleanses! Praise His Holy Name!

A fellow off the street came to us one time who had been a bombardier during the war. As he related his story, tears flowed from his eyes. Apparently, he had dropped bombs on a school killing hundreds of innocent children. As he talked, his face was all wretched up and you could see the grief and intensity of the agony which he was going through. This was a needless bombing because they were just dumping their bombs to get rid of them before they went home. Later, he found out that it was a school, not a

factory that he had dropped the bombs on. For thirty-plus years, this man had been living with this guilt in his heart. What drove him in to see us was that he had just driven by a school.

Normally, what he would have done was to go to a bar to get drunk. However, this time he said he was driven to come to this church. (God has a wonderful way of leading those who are seeking to a point of help.)

We began to share with him the promises of God that *“if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse from all unrighteousness.”* (1st John 1:9)

As we shared the word of God, God’s word began to minister to his heart. God began to set him free. The man replied, “Is it really true? Can I really believe that? All those children were killed! Can I really believe that God would forgive me and love me even after what I have done?”

This man began to cry as the release of joy by God’s Spirit overwhelmed him. He knew that God had forgiven him and loved him. He knew that God had cleansed him the moment he had asked for forgiveness.

The problem that he had been dealing with for all those years was that he had not forgiven himself. The Holy Spirit instructed us to have him ask forgiveness, and this time forgive himself.

Many people are running around with burdens of guilt. We must understand that once we have asked God to forgive us, He has forgiven us and it is off the record. We do not need to carry the guilt any longer. Satan is the accuser and condemner. We must not allow the enemy to steal the freedom and forgiveness Jesus has provided and God has given!

When this man walked out of the office that day, he knew that he was forgiven by God and that he had forgiven himself. The blood of Jesus had set him free.

God says, *“If you continue in My words then are you My disciples indeed and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”* (John 8:31-32) Freedom comes from the word of God as we receive it into our heart and say what God says. That man was saying as he left, “I am forgiven and God has set me free!”

Before we are able to forgive others, we need to understand the greatness of the fact that God has forgiven us. It is because we are forgiven by the blood of Jesus that we now have the ability to forgive one another. Once we have forgiven ourselves as God has forgiven us, and we know we stand right before God, then are we able to forgive one another. As we understand that Jesus was made sin or separated from God for us that we might be made right with God, then we understand that, “yes, my place is to forgive others as God has forgiven me.”

This is an exciting truth! It sets us free. As I understand that I am forgiven, I am able to forgive others. Read: Matthew 18:21-35.

Peter thought forgiving his brother seven times was really doing good. Jesus expanded it out to 490 times. Many times we might think, “Now I can forgive my husband (wife, etc.) for 490 times. I have kept track and we are up to 490 times. One more time and that’s it. It is all over! No more forgiveness!”

That is not what is being talked about!!! God’s forgiveness goes beyond! We cannot simply keep a list and check it twice to keep a record of wrongs done to us so we can reach 490 times of forgiveness, thinking, “One more and I get out!” Love keeps no record of wrongs. (1st Corinthians 13:4-8)

No, God is saying you cannot hold bitterness, unforgiveness, resentment against anyone, period. It is unheard of for one of God’s children. Why? – Because God has forgiven us! This is what this account is all about. God wants us to forgive no matter what the other person has done – no matter how many times they have wronged us this way. God wants us to forgive as we are forgiven.

Understand this: our nature since we asked Jesus into our hearts is love and forgiveness. We have the nature of God who is in us. God wants us to stay free so that we can forgive one another. We stay free because we forgive one another.

If God were to come, and 490 times that person had committed us wrong and we had forgiven 490 times, and they sinned against us again, how many sins would that person have committed against us? If we had forgiven them 490 times for 490 wrongs, then there would only be the present sin on the

record. Once we would forgive them for that sin, we would go back to “O” again. IN other words, if we are forgiving the way God has forgiven us when we ask forgiveness, then we will never go past “one” wrong on the record and as soon as we forgive that one, we go back to “zero.” It is impossible for us to ever get to “490” sins against us. It is unfair to dredge up “dirt” from ten years back, which has been forgiven and should be forgotten, like God has done with us. This is the point which Jesus was making to Peter. Read: Matthew 6:12-14.

God says, “Forgive as we are forgiven.” If we do not forgive, we are not forgiven either. To have the life of God ourselves, there is no choice, but to forgive in our hearts. Unforgiveness gives opportunity to Satan to bring anger, hostility and strife into our lives. Unforgiveness has been proven medically to affect the bone’s marrow, making people sick. Many people are running around today with various diseases because they are carrying unforgiveness and bitterness in their hearts which has not been given to God. We cannot allow ourselves to be destroyed by the evil one because we do not choose to be obedient to do what God says, “Forgive as you are forgiven!”

As we forgive, a release comes into our being and a joy returns to our life. We will only know this joy when we obey God’s word and forgive. This is the same type of joy which came into our heart when we received Jesus into our life as Lord and Savior. David remarked, “*Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation.*” (Psalm 51:12) When we are in right fellowship with God, knowing our sin is forgiven, then God’s joy and life flows from us. See: Psalm 51.

“For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shown no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.” (James 2:13)

In other words, if we are not willing to show that same mercy towards others which God has shown towards us, to be willing to forgive, going the extra mile, God says that we will not be shown mercy when the judgment comes for us. Read: Mark 11:25-26.

This promise comes right after one of the most powerful prayer-faith scriptures in the Bible. If we are not doing what this scripture is saying, the “power” promise in verses 22-24 will not go into effect. If we have unforgiveness in our heart, when we are speaking to God, moving into

existence the power and presence of God to move the situation (mountain), God says nothing will happen until we remove the unforgiveness in our heart. Before we pray to remove the mountain we must remove all strife and unforgiveness, and then pray expecting to receive! The power-promise will not go into effect until this cleansing and submission to God is done.

If you are like me, we want that power-promise to work. God says it will work when we learn how to forgive and love. “...*but faith which worketh by love.*” (Galatians 6:6)

Jesus hanging on the cross for us cries to God, “*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*” (Luke 23:34) Jesus was giving His life for us! The forgiveness which Jesus spoke and His blood supplied has brought life to be available to all people. To those who have received Jesus’ testimony, the life now enters. (John 1:12)

The love of God is confronting us right now. How can we not forgive others, when God has forgiven us? It is interesting that in the one situation where the disciples say to Jesus, “*Lord, increase our faith.*” (Luke 17:1-6) The context is dealing with Jesus just having taught on forgiveness. The disciples recognized, “*We need more faith to forgive these unloving people.*”

We have the ability to forgive because we have been forgiven! Jesus Christ has set us free to love and forgive. No bondage of Satan and self, from which unforgiveness comes, can hold us down. We love to forgive because we are like our Heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:43-48)

Stephen, when the people were ready to throw rocks at him to kill him for telling them about Jesus, as the rocks were flying at him, looked up to heaven and cried with a loud voice, “*Father, do not lay this sin against their charge! Forgive them!*” (Acts 7:60) And when he had said this, he died. Stephen did not call down God’s judgment on them. He said, “I love them Father! Forgive them! I want them to have life and that is why I shared with them the love of Jesus. They did not want to hear it, but I know Your love will take root in them by what I said. Enable them to have Your life by forgiving them.”

“If anyone sees his brother (fellow-believer) commit a sin which does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to them

whose sin does not lead to death, there is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that.” (1st John 5:16)

We can set our fellow believers free by asking God to forgive them. It is easy at that point to rise up in judgment. “Oh, look at them! They are sinning!” God is telling us here not to condemn them, but rather to pray for them that God will forgive them and grant them repentance to life. See 2nd Timothy 2:24-26. God promises He will give them life. God will enable them to get out of the snare of the evil one that they are in, “opposing themselves.” God will help them to see the error of their ways and to turn back to God for forgiveness.

Understand, we, by the Spirit of God, have the ability to set them free by our prayers, love, and caring for them enough to not let the Devil have them. This is what being a “minister of reconciliation” (2nd Corinthians 5:17-21) is all about. Bringing the love of God to this world so they know that God loves them and wants all people to share in His love.

The only way that I can forgive is to remember that I have been forgiven. The only way that I can care that much about my brother and my sister is to remember how great God’s love and forgiveness is towards me.

Understand, You and I are children of God. We cannot afford to have any unforgiveness or bitterness in our hearts towards anyone. We would encourage you, if you have unforgiveness towards _____. I pray Your blessing on them now. I thank You that You are enabling me to love them as I am loved and forgiven. In Jesus’ name. I thank You for freeing me from the bondage of Satan!”

I love you and I thank God for what He is doing in our lives through Jesus’ blood and name!

Chapter 7

GOD'S QUALITY – PROTECTION

God has a heavenly protection service available to us. He wants to care for his people and keep us from every evil. Read Psalm 91.

This is God's promise for us. I delight in this word of God because God has something very important for us to get into our spirit and our understanding.

In the Old Testament there is an account about a fellow named Elisha. See 2nd Kings 6:8-23. He was a prophet of God. An entire nation tried to capture Elisha, thinking that if they could get the "man of God" who was thwarting all their plans for conquest before they manifested, then they would have the victory over Israel.

The army came against the village where Elisha was living. Picture for a moment, thousands and thousands of troops surrounding the village. They were camped ready for the attack the next morning. IN the morning, Elisha's servant went out to get water from the well. Looking up around the village, to his dismay, he sees the city surrounded by horses and chariots of the enemy. Fear strikes him. Dropping his water bucket he runs in to tell Elisha, crying, "What shall we do! We are in trouble!" Elisha replies, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." (The servant probably was wondering at this point, "What are you talking about? All I see for miles are enemy soldiers!")

Elisha prays, "Lord, open his eyes so that he can see the real reality of the situation. The Lord opens the servant's eyes and seeing into the spiritual realm (the real reality), he sees the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire (the army of God) round about Elisha!

The reality of the situation is that God's protection was available to Elisha, God's man. We want to praise God for the faith that the same provision of God's protection is available to us as God's people. Our families are protected by God.

It says in God's word that the angels are ministering servants which are sent by God to watch over those who are heirs to salvation. (Hebrews 1:14)

These angels are sent to protect, help, and aid us. We cannot see them with our natural eye. However, they are present at all times.

As we look into God's word, we begin to see all of what God has available for us in His plan. We can now say, "Yes, I am protected by God!"

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." (Psalm 34:7)

God wants to and will protect those who are righteous. Who is righteous? *"For He hath made Him (Jesus Christ) to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."* (2nd Corinthians 5:21) God makes us righteous as we receive Jesus as Lord. We at that moment become heirs to all that God has for us. (Ephesians 1:3)

Protection is part of our inheritance. As we then live in obedience to God's word, we then continue to experience God's protection. Many have perished because of lack of knowledge in this area. (Hosea 4:6) They either do not know about activating God's protection or they may have put themselves outside of the Lord's protection covering through disobedience to His word and negligence of applying His word.

If we would meditate upon Psalm 91, we would find God's will concerning His protection. We find here that God is our fortress. A fortress protects those who are inside. To receive God's protection we must be inside His care. We stay inside the fortress by being obedient to God's word. When God says to forgive, we forgive. When God says do not worry, we do not worry.

As we think on the fact that as we are in God's protection nothing can harm us, confidence and victory arise in us. NO evil or any plague can come near us or have any effect upon us. (Verse 10) You might be thinking, "Well, I have sickness in my family." According to God's word, (check it out for yourself), it says we do not need to have any evil or plague from Satan. It will try to get us, but will have no effect, if we act on God's word. Read Psalm 91:5-7.

"...but it shall not come near you!" (Verse 7) this is God's protection and provision. It is available to us. Are we taking advantage of His protection? Are we understanding that we do not need to be fearful about anything

because God is our protector? In verses 9 and 10 it says, *“Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.”*

Verses 11 and 12 – *“For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways, They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”*

This is what God’s word says! Every word of God is true. His protection is available to us as we walk in obedience to His word. We need to claim it and act upon it. I cannot be saying, “I’m protected” and running around putting 3 or 4 locks on the doors. This is not protection. This kind of behavior is fear. God is saying, *“Relax in Me and I will send forth My angels to protect you. Claim My word, speak My word and My protection goes into effect for you.”* Read Psalm 91:1-7.

As we start to speak out that “God is our refuge and strength, my God in whom I trust,” faith begins to rise up inside us. There is nothing to fear. God is our refuge and fortress. We are in His hands and care. Read Psalm 91:14-16.

This is God’s promise. As we delight in God and His word, God says, *“Because he loves Me and desires to do My word, I will protect, deliver, and honor him. My Children give praise to me and recognize that I am greater than any situation that they are going to run up against. I am standing with them and they need not fear, no matter what the odds.”*

As we call upon God, God says He will answer and will be with us! God is telling us what He will do. *“I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, I will honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.”* (Verse 16)

God is speaking to us about His protection. Now we may look at the situation and not see any protection (remember Elisha’s servant). Understand this today, if you are a child of God, it is not you alone in the situation, even though it may appear to be so. God is there with you. The moment you call upon Him, the power of His protection goes into effect for you. You can trust God as your protector.

One time I was coming back from a revival and ran into a freak hailstorm. As I looked at the freeway I saw trucks and cars scattered everywhere, not going down the proper lane designations. I decided to take an off-ramp and drive home through the town. Apparently the off-ramp had not been driven on and as soon as I hit the ice patches, my car began to slide. Immediately I put into practice all of my well-learned ice driving expertise, but no matter how I navigated, the car continued to slide. Suddenly I knew that it was out of control. The rear end slid around, and as I was going straight over the bank, I shouted from my spirit at the top of my lungs, "JESUS!" Instantly, it was as if something had sat on the car as it stopped in its tracks in the middle of the slide without hitting any obstacles to slow it down. Needless to say, I began praising God!

The Lord pointed out to me afterward concerning how I had tried to navigate and steer clear on my own strength and ability. He pointed out that He could not help me until from my spirit I cried out the name of Jesus. As soon as I called to God, God was then able to protect and help me!

"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."
(Luke 10:19)

Nothing can harm us when we are dealing with Satan and his demon followers, as we go out in the name of Jesus. The life of God is protecting and shielding us as the blood of Jesus covers us. The enemy will try to come against us to evoke fear. However, we do not need to fear for God is with us. Fear enables Satan to harm us. Faith enables us to overcome by God's power. This is why Jesus again and again tells us, "Fear not, only believer!" Do not talk fear, talk faith!

As we are in obedience to God's word, the protection of God is with us. *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater is He that is in you, than they that are in the world."* (1st John 4:4)

God is greater than Satan. The moment we receive Jesus into our heart, God's protection became available to us. God is in you! As we are acknowledging and praising God, God's power rises to meet the event. God is greater! God is in and with you!

Let's look at Psalm 46.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” (Psalm 46:1-2)

In other words, though the bills overcome us, though the circumstances appear hopeless, we will not fear! Our loved one will not necessarily die. We can turn to the Lord and God wants to give life. We will not fear even though everything appears to be going wrong. As we are praising and thanking God, being obedient to God’s word, we cannot help but succeed. This is God’s promise. (Psalm 1:1-2)

“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted.” (Psalm 46:4-6)

Inflation and shortages are happening. World problems are all around us, but we will not fear for the protection of God is with us. God’s angels surround us. We will not fear no matter what is happening around us because it will not come near us as we continue to praise and thank God. God is looking out for us and our needs!

“The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge (fortress). Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still and know that I am God!: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge (fortress).” (Psalm 46:7-11)

The Lord Almighty is with us! If God be for us who can be against us. (Romans 8:31) God is with us! How can we fear when we start to understand that God is with us! This is one of the most comforting thoughts that we could ever have. God is with us! “Immanuel” – God with us.

Immanuel is another name for the Lord Jesus Christ. We understand that Jesus came into this world in the flesh, like us in every way, going through the same temptations, yet Jesus overcame for us so that we can overcome through Him – Immanuel is Jesus – God with us!

This is why Jesus keeps telling us to not be afraid. Why? Because God is with us! God is telling us, “*I am with you!*” (Hebrews 13:5-6)

Read Romans 8:31-39.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is ours in Jesus Christ. The moment we call upon the Lord Jesus that power and protection is available to us and will begin to work for us. God wants us to be protected under His care because He loves us! God wants us to be still and know that He is God!

Chapter 8

GOD'S QUALITY – PROVISION

“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.”

God provides for His people! We will never have to beg for provision. God is able and wants to give abundantly in our behalf.

“O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear Him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” (Psalm 34:9-10)

As we are seeking the Lord, we will lack for no good thing. Why? Because God is a provider, and He loves to provide for His people. I thank God daily for His provision, as I know you are doing also. How do you think you received your job? God gave it to you. How do we get the food on our table? God gave it to us.

Sure, I went out there and my brow sweat with the labor. However, who got the job? God did! God is our provider and as we are seeking Him, He will provide. God loves us and wants to provide for us.

“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments; For length of days, and long life, and peace (prosperity), shall they add to thee.”

(Note: What brings prosperity? Keeping the commands of God or His words in our heart is going to bring God's provision).

“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honor the Lord with thy substance (wealth), and with

the firstfruits (tithes) of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” (Proverbs 3:1-10)

These are God’s benefits and provision for us who are doing His word. As we are honoring God first with the provision which we have, acknowledging Him in all our ways, God will move to provide in our behalf.

We are not to rely on our own wisdom and knowledge. We are to be trusting God for our provision. As we acknowledge Him or look to Him as the source of direction, then God will direct our paths. We can count on success! (Psalm 1:2-3, Joshua 1:8) We do not have to force things to happen as we go out praising and thanking God, acting on His word. God will open the doors. As we are walking obediently to God’s word witnessing to the world that God is our provider, God will then provide.

It is important that we be managing our affairs in godliness with integrity and honesty. As we seek to maintain the attitude that whatever we are doing, we are doing it to God’s glory, then God will provide.

I get excited when I look at the miracles of God’s provision which are revealed to us in God’s word. We see a fellow named Elijah, a prophet of God, whom God provided for in time of famine by sending birds to feed him. The birds actually brought food to him. God used the birds as messengers of His provision. (1st Kings 17:4-7) This is amazing!

In another account, Elijah comes to a widow who was making some cakes for herself and her son and then they were going to die for lack of food. Elijah says, “Give me the cakes!” In other words, “Give to me your cakes and you will die from starvation.”

No, this was not what the Lord or the prophet had in mind. What he really was saying is this – “You give to me and God will take care of you!” As the woman stepped out in faith giving all that she had to God’s man, the provision of God went into effect for her and they never ran out of food during the length of the famine. God kept filling the flour bin. This is God’s supernatural provision.

I believe today that God is a God of miracles. We who have called upon Him will never lack for any good thing. This is my God. He is a provider

and wants to provide for those who have, in love, set their hearts and minds on Him.

In Exodus, we find the children of Israel being provided manna by God, a form of enriched bread, in the mornings; and in the evenings, God provided quail. God had Moses tap rocks to supply water. This is supernatural provision. We need to understand that these people were wandering around in the forsaken area of the Sinai Peninsula. In an area of little vegetation, God provided for His people supernaturally for forty years. Manna in the morning, quail in the evening, water, sandals did not wear out (see Deuteronomy 8) relied on God for their total provision. This is the God I know and trust! This is the same God who wants to love and care for you also!

God wants to move on the basis of His word in behalf of His people who believe Him at His word and act accordingly. Now do not get me wrong. I am not saying, “Go out and drop your job so that God can provide for you.” Your job is part of God’s provision. I am saying that as we are walking in obedience to God’s word, not being lazy, but believing God as our source of provision, not our job, God will provide for His people. We will never lack for any good thing.

Jesus, as He walked the earth, fed four and five thousand-plus from a few fish and loaves of bread with abundance left over. (John 6:1-13) I am challenging you today to look to a *“God who is able to give far more exceedingly abundantly more than anything that we are able to even ask or think according to the power that works in us.”* (Ephesians 3:20) God is able to provide for us far better than we ever could in all areas of our lives – spiritually, mentally and emotionally, and physically.

If we would begin to look to our God as our provider and understand that His provision is beyond anything we can even think of, then we would never ever have to worry or fear again! Healings and deliverances from demons happened throughout Jesus’ ministry and they are happening today! We are going to see more and more miracles today as we begin to expect God to do more and more. This is a miraculous age we are living in. Jesus will be coming soon! Miracles are happening in the lives of those who are starting to look to God believing that God will do what He says and then acting on His word in quiet assurance and confidence that God is able to provide whatever is necessary for life. God is able and willing to heal! God is able

and willing to make marriages be blessed! God is able and willing to do the impossible in behalf of them that believe! (Mark 9:23)

The disciples were sent out by Jesus. They were instructed to take one coat (not a wardrobe), no wallet and sandals. (Matthew 10:9-10) I believe Jesus sent them out this way deliberately to prove to them that the only one they would have to look to for provision was God. Upon their return, Jesus asked them, *“Did you lack for anything when you went out?”* They joyously responded, *“No, we did not lack!”* (Luke 22:35) They were dependent on God! They did not have to have a whole closet full of clothes, or a freezer full of food, or a whole lot in the bank. God would supply their needs whatever the needs would be!

There is nothing wrong with having a closet full of nice clothing, or a freezer full of food, or a bank account overflowing. However, god is to be the one whom we are relying on and dependent upon for our needs being met. We are not to look to ourselves or our provision on hand, however great or small. We are to look to God to supply our needs.

If the children of Israel had hoarded up manna, it would have spoiled and stunk on the second day. God was teaching His people to rely and depend on Him to supply for them one day at a time. See Deuteronomy 8. There never was a day that God did not supply their needs. We have such a faithful and wonderful God!

Salvation is totally dependent upon God’s provision. Life eternal is only supplied by God. We could not earn it or work for it. We could not have eternal life with God, unless God made it available to us. God in His love supplied us eternal life through Jesus Christ. Our part is to simply receive God’s provision by calling upon the Lord to be saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

It is God who makes the rain to fall, the crops to grow. It is God that is responsible for the abilities that we have, and the jobs we have. It is God who is responsible for everything in our lives that is good. (James 1:17-18) As we acknowledge God, then God moves freely in our behalf. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

All this may be foolishness to the people of the world. The world wants to save and hoard things up thinking, “if I do not have it, so I can see it, there may come a time when I will not have it!” “So they store up gas – gas

shortage – food shortage – etc.” What I have, I must keep for myself,” the world says.

The child of God, however, can give because God is a giver. Even though circumstances may appear to be right, God is a giver and is in control giving abundantly to His people who trust Him. As we give, God freely gives to us. This is what His word says. God will provide. Read Matthew 6:25-34.

God knows our needs better than we know our needs. As we are obedient to God, seeking first the things of God, then God will provide for us. Read Deuteronomy 8:2-6, see also entire chapter.

God wants us dependent solely upon Him – seeking God alone as our source of provision. (Verse 17-18)

When we get all these things and provision is coming in, do not forget who gave it all to you – God! It was not your mighty reason, ability, or maneuvering, or who you know that provided for you. It was God! Acknowledge this fact – God is your provider! God says, *“Don’t forget Me when everything is going well for you.”* Be thankful for what you have whether it is little or much. Thank God for His provision and refuse to grumble and be discontent. As you start to rejoice in God and His word and the promises of God begin to work for you blessing you, and you start to understand, “Yes, God has something else for me,” and as you act on that word, God does what He says. Do not forget – God loves you and is the one responsible for you being blessed, not you.

One time there was a young fellow who was at one of our meetings and he decided to give into God’s work a tithe (10%) of his gross earnings). As he did so, in the next week the Lord provided an apartment for him which just the week before was not available, a raise in his job, and a car came available. God had kept His word as the young man had given in love from an obedient heart. Everything was going quite well for the fellow just like God had promised. (Deuteronomy 8:6-20, Malachi 3:8-12) However, the young man began to think that he was the one responsible for all that had happened. He believed a lie of Satan. The next thing we heard from him was that he had slid into the world, had no desire for God, and the job he had once loved now had become a drudgery. Because he had forgotten who his source of life and provision was this young man had gone back into the

world. We share this with you as a reminder, “*Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall!*” (1st Corinthians 10:12)

God loves you and wants to provide for you. As we continue to obey His word, God’s blessing will continue.

Chapter 9

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S PROVISION

GENEROSITY

In Matthew 6:31-34, the Lord Jesus is telling us not to worry about what we are going to eat, wear, drink, etc. It is after all these things that the unbelievers focus their attention. If our heart is set on God, having Jesus as our Lord, God says that we will never need to worry again about all these things. God has already provided for us in His storehouse.

God proceeds to give to us direction upon how to receive from His storehouse. *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness – and God will supply all our other needs, which He knows better than us.”* (Matthew 6:6) We do not need to worry. Our part is to seek God. God's part is to take care of us. Worry will short out God's provision from coming to us. We need to be thanking and praising God for His abundant provision to us.

If God takes care of the lilies in the fields and the birds in the air, how much more will God take care of us who are the crowning glory of His creation! (Matthew 6:30)

“My God will supply all your needs according to the riches in glory in Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 4:19)

God has already taken care of our needs. He knows our needs even before we ask. (Matthew 6:8) He knows our needs even better than we know our needs and God wants to meet our needs in an abundant way. (Ephesians 3:20) It is then because of God's abundant provision to us that we are then able to generously and cheerfully supply the needs of others.

We need to be content in God's provision, confessing with our mouths, “I do not lack for anything!” (Psalm 23:1) You might be thinking, “But I do not have everything which I need!” Understand, that as your heart is set on God and thanking God that you have whatever it is you need (food, clothes, transportation, job, etc.), God will provide for you. Put your trust in God and never speak about lack and need!

None of God's promises are automatic. God always says, "you do this and I will do this!" We need to understand that God tells us to do certain things to receive His provision. God's nature is generous. God is not a "tightwad." God wants to give abundantly. Since God is in our hearts, it should now be our desire to give thankfully and gratefully abundantly to others from God's provision to me

Let's take a look at the tithe: *"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open to you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts."* (Malachi 3:6-12)

This is God's word and promise to us! Many believers are cutting off God's provision to them. They are greedy and selfish with God's provision, hoarding for themselves, giving to God's ministries the "left-overs" instead of the "first-fruits" which God expects. God calls them "God-robbers!" If we are "robbing" God, how can we expect God to bless us in provision?

Only a thankful heart can give as God has given to us. If your heart is set on the things of the world, to get blessing after blessing for ourselves, then we are going to miss some of the greatest blessings which God has for us. Giving is where the blessing of God comes to us. Jesus says, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* (Acts 20:35)

(We are not asking for you to give into this ministry. The ministry which God has given to us is set up to give out God's word freely. God will take care of us through people who He has led to give into this ministry. We want you to understand this word concerning God's provision so that you can come into the fullness of provision which God has for you and can then give to His ministries.)

God actually says in Malachi 3:8 that you and I are robbing God if we are not giving out of thanks to God, a tithe (10% of the gross income) off the top of our earnings. God wants to bless us! As we do what God says, God promises to open the windows of heaven to pour out His blessing upon us. It comes in many different ways. God provides health, increased goods, stretches what we have, etc.

I know in my own situation, we have found that we have more than people making two or three times more than we do because of God's provision. We even always have extra to give out more as the Lord directs. (There are many "good causes" around. God may not want us to give to them! Give where God directs, after you have prayed!)

God will rebuke the devourer (Satan) and he will not be able to steal from us the other 90%. This will happen as we do what God says to do from a thankful, obedient heart claiming God's promise as we give. After you give, thank God for His promise and tell the devil to take his hands off of what is yours! *"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."* (Proverbs 3:9-10)

God wants us to give to Him, so He then is free to give to us. God does not need us to give to Him. God gave us everything which we have to begin with! What God is saying is, "Set your heart on Me! Praise Me!" The tithe is basically a thank-offering to God for all that He has done for us. God wants to see whether our heart is set on Him as the source of provision for us or upon the world.

"He who is kind to the poor, lends to the Lord and He will repay him for what he has done." (Proverbs 19:17)

If we are giving to the poor, we are loaning to God and God will repay us for what we have done. We do not give with the attitude, "Okay, Lord, I'm giving just like you say-bless me now!" This is true, however do not allow yourself to get into that "bless me" frame of mind. We give because we are so thankful to God for His provision to us and for the opportunity to help our brothers and sisters in their time of need. We are not giving to the poor expecting a great return from God. This will come if our heart is right. We give to the poor because we love God. I challenge you today to give to others because you love them and want them blessed of the Lord also.

“Give and it will be given to you, good measure pressed down, shaken together running over will be given to you. The measure you use (give out), will be given to you.” (Luke 6:38)

This illustration is speaking about if we were to give someone a big grain sack, God will give back to us a grain sack, which is pressed down, shaken, and pressed down some more (like you do with jumping on your garbage can to get as much in as you can!). IN other words, God will give to you a 15 pound grain sack for the five pound one you gave out. This is God’s provision.

Why will God do this? Not so you can hoard it – nor so you can go out and get everything you always wanted to get. But rather so you have more to give out again. This is God’s way of taking care of His people. God can do this through you and I because we are His children. We have God’s nature – love, generosity, forgiveness. We want people to be blessed.

I know that in every situation where people are doing what God says to do out of a thankful heart to God, not seeking rewards for themselves and popularity, but seeking to give glory to God, those people never lack for anything. They are taken care of by God so well that they are able to give and give and give some more. This is God’s nature – to give. This is our nature as God’s children – to give. God and His people are generous.

God supplies His people and His ministries through His people who recognize that all of what belongs to us has come from God. We are stewards of God’s provision to use God’s provision as God directs. Read: 2nd Corinthians 9:6-15.

When we give to the poor, needy, or for a special offering (not the tithe!), we are to decide what we will give or not give. We are not to give if we feel obligated to give. “Oh, here comes the offering plate!” We have freedom to choose what we will give, if anything. Give what is in your heart to give. Give cheerfully, counting it a privilege. We give because we love God and love to bless God’s people and ministries because God has blessed us. Let us look closely at 2nd Corinthians 9:6-15.

Verse 8 – God is able to make us abound, so that we are sufficient in all areas so that we can focus our time, thinking, and abundance on how to help others.

Verse 9-10 – As we are giving out of a cheerful, thankful heart meeting the needs of God’s people, God actually tells us He will give us more seed to sow (word, goods, etc.) to give away so that His people will be blessed.

Verse 11 – *“You will be made rich, so that you can be generous in every occasion.”* God is telling us to give generously, so that His blessing might flow to us. God does not want us to be “tightwads” either. God is generous and wants people blessed.

There are people around you right now of whom there is someone, if you would take a moment to think, who is in need of something you have to give. God is challenging you to meet that need. Prove God’s word in you by giving because you love God and that person.

Verse 12-14 – By giving we not only supply the needs of God’s people, but we are also causing people to give thanks to god. We receive God’s blessing and reward at the day of accounting. Those who have received are able to thank God and pray a blessing on those who gave.

We always want to be a good witness for Jesus. By our giving here is another way in which we can tell and show others about how good and loving God is. Read James 2:14-16.

It is ungodly to see a brother or sister in need of something and to tell them, “I’ll pray for you!” or to say, “God bless you!” and to send them away empty. It is the Godly thing to supply their need and pray for them. What good is it if we have and see others in need, but do not give? Our giving shows that we have faith in God. We could give away all that we had, if God directed us so, and not lack for anything. We are not telling you to give away all that you have. God will supply all our needs! If we are giving to supply someone else’s need, we can be confident that God is looking out for us.

Read 1st John 3:17-18. How can the love of God be in us if we see someone in need, and we do not give. Because we have the love of God in us, we give to people who are in need. I am certain that even as you are reading

this, you are thinking of ministries and people to whom you can be giving. Why? Because you love God and His people. You care!

Read 1st Timothy 6:17-19 – This is speaking to the rich who have great abundance. We are not to put our hope in uncertain riches, but rather in God. We are to be generous, doing good, being willing to share. As we do this we will avoid falling into Satan’s snare of the “deceitfulness of riches” (Mark 4:19), where our heart is set on acquiring and keeping the riches of this world, rather than God. Our hope is to rest in God and not in how much we have in our bank accounts. Everything of this world is going to pass away. Only the word of God will remain, and our faith in Jesus Christ, the source of our life.

It is not the amount of our giving that will make the difference. Many think, “If I give much, then I will get a greater blessing.” True, however, God goes beyond the amount of the giving to look at the heart of the giver. I want you to understand that the only way to give is out of an attitude of love and thankfulness to God.

We also understand that the widow that gave a mite, Jesus says, gave more than all those who were giving large bags of money. She gave all she had to the Lord. The others were giving a small fraction of what they had in their account. For instance, to give \$300 is nothing to a millionaire. However, to someone who does not have much, to give \$300 would truly be a love gift.

Remember the widow who Elijah came to and asked her for the last cakes she had prepared for her and her son before they would die from starvation? As she gave to Elijah the last that she had from the generosity of her heart, God moved in a miraculous way to supply her needs for months and months. The oil cruse and flour bin continued to be filled by God’s provision.

Think on that widow the next time we start to say, “I can’t give. I only have a little left over for myself.” I want to challenge you to allow God to do a miracle in your life, to let you see God’s divine provision where you can give when you do not have anything to give. “What am I going to give?” Give of yourself. Give of your time. Give of your goods. God is going to honor your giving if you are doing it as to the Lord, loving God’s people.

How does God love His people today? He loves them through His people. We are His children. God has given to us the exciting privilege to love His

people because God has first loved us. It takes faith to give not for gain, but because we want God's people blessed, so that they can say, "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. Great is the provision of our God." And if the people do not know Jesus, they are going to say, "There is something different about that person. They care and give even if they do not have that much to give." The people of the world note this difference because the world's way is to look out for one's self and to hoard, gathering more and more for themselves. God's way is to give; understanding that God is providing all our needs.

Many people will receive the Lord as the result of us becoming generous. These people will see God through us. God is generous. God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, (His best) that we might have life. (John 3:16-18)

Chapter 10

GOD'S QUALITY – PRESENCE

One of the many powerful truths which I have found in God's word is the fact that He is present with His people. I find great comfort in this truth as did David as he accounts of God's presence in Psalm 139. I would encourage you to spend some time in Psalm 139 as you think upon this chapter dealing with God's Presence.

David is excited about being in the presence of God, knowing that God knows our innermost thoughts. God knows about what is going to happen before we experience the situations. God knows everything about us. His love is continuing to reach out to touch us. David is delighting in the fact that God is present with him, as we can delight that God is present with us also.

Whether we have received Jesus as Lord and Savior or not, God is present. God is everywhere, unlike the devil who can only be in one place at a time. God is not limited! Whether we are a believer or not, God is still present. The only difference between a believer and an unbeliever is that the believer is a part of the family of God and able to enjoy the presence and blessings of God. What a difference having the life of God makes in one's life!

God's reassuring presence wants to be known urgently and strongly within your heart. God wants to tell us, "I am with you! I am with You!" God is telling you, "I am with you. I am present!"

The implications of God's presence are significant. You cannot run or hide from God's presence. God knows exactly what you are doing, saying, and thinking. We would be the biggest of fools if we would think that we could hide anything from God. God is with us all the time – day in and day out. He knows us better than we will ever know ourselves. God is loving us, wanting us to have all that He has for us, desiring us to rejoice in His presence. For if God be for us who can be against us. (Romans 8:31)

God's presence has moral implications for us. God knows about that lie. God knows about that person we gossiped about. God knows about that

business dealing that was anything but honest. He knows about that person we are spending time with who is not our husband, or our wife. God knows everything about us.

As I think upon this, I begin to realize that changes will happen in my and your life, not because God is a “watch-dog” but because you and I love God and He loves us. In our time together we have better things to do than to violate and forfeit the privilege of enjoying one another’s company.

God knows the bondage that we get ourselves into because of fear and worry. God knows the situation you are in right now. Reaching out to us in His love, God is saying to us, “Look to Me! I can help you.”

As you and I acknowledge God’s presence, confessing our wrong before Him, His presence and fellowship becomes real to us again. Adam and Eve when they had gone against God’s word, ran and hid when God was seeking them out. They did not want God to find them because they knew that what they were doing had separated them from God.

I want you to understand something at this point: God sought them out, as God has sought out everyone of us. God loved them. God loves us. God so loved the world that He sent Jesus to seek us out and to bring us life. God does not want us separated from Himself. God wants us to delight in His presence and to know that He alone is our strength, help, and Comforter.

In the presence of God is fullness of joy and every blessing. (Psalm 16:11) As we think on the fact that God is with us, our minds begin to settle down and rest. We know that since God is with us, we do not need to worry, fear, be confused or despairing any longer. Say it with me, “God is with me!” Immediately as we think upon this fact, “God is with me!”, our spirit starts to rise up within us for we know God is greater! “*Greater is He that is within me than he that is in the world.*” (1st John 4:4) We have the victory because God is with and for us.

Proverbs 16:2 = *All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.*”

God knows exactly why we do what we do. He knows that we do everything for a reason whether we are conscious of that reason or not. We have a motivation. Most always our motivation appears to be right to us, but

God tests our hearts. God looks to see, “Is my child doing this work for Me and for My glory, or is he doing it for himself?” As God sees that we are doing the work to His glory, God gets all excited because He is the One Who enables us to do the work. God is encouraging and helping us to do the things of God. God is doing His work right this moment from within you because that is where He lives. (2nd Corinthians 1:27; Galatians 2:20)

Read Matthew 10:26-39.

God knows all our trials, needs, all our situations. God knows what is needed to make our marriages blessed. God knows what is needed to help a wife respect her husband. God knows what is needed to help the husband love his wife as he loves himself. God knows what is needed to help us honor authority. God knows what is needed for this country.

God knows and is waiting for you to call upon Him so that He can help. Just the presence of God means that people’s needs are going to be met as the people in faith call to God. God loves you and wants to meet your needs!

If we would read in Psalm 46, we would find the Lord telling us to, *“Be still and know that I am God. God is present! God is with us. The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress.”*

In Hebrews 13:5-6, the Lord tells us that He will never leave us or forsake us. The Lord is our helper. God is with me. Think upon this fact of God. God is with me! As we focus our minds upon this fact of God’s presence, even this moment God’s peace is flowing upon you. God is with Me! Thank you Jesus for loving me.

Isaiah 26:3-4 – *“Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.”*

God’s word tells us that as we keep our minds fixed on God, God will keep us from all worry, fear, depression, despair, frustration, confusion, etc., and God will give to us perfect peace as we think on God’s word.

God is with me! He will not forsake me! I am His! Oh, such wonderful truth.

Isaiah 30:15 – *“For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.”*

As we think upon the fact of God that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world, (1st John 4:4) and as we learn how to get quiet before God, (not striving, worrying, fearing, etc.) becoming confident that God is present and in control, then God’s power is able to flow into our homes, jobs, churches, etc. God’s life and power flows when we acknowledge His presence and control. I am convinced that God is willing and able. Why? Because God says so! I also know from experience that God does exactly what He says He will do in behalf of those who believe and do what He says. And the more experience we gain increases hope. See Romans 5:1-6.

God is able to do the impossible and He is right here with you.

God is with us as we go out in His name!

Chapter 11

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S PRESENCE

CONFIDENCE

Sometime I wonder what it would have been like to have been present when Jesus walked on this earth. I wonder what it would have been like to have been sitting on the hillside when Jesus broke a few loaves of bread and divided a few fish amongst the four and 5,000 people. What a wonderful miracle that must have been. I can just imagine what the disciples were thinking when Jesus told them to feed all those people from such meager means.

I wonder what it would have been like to have been there when that storm came up on the sea. Jesus was sleeping soundly in the boat. The boat was not that big. It must have been something to be in that boat as it was sinking to see Jesus stand up and say, "*Peace be still!*" – and to see the storm cease.

It must have really been something to have been out all night fishing and not catch anything then to have Jesus say, "*Throw the lines out again!*" and to see the multitudes of fish breaking the nets.

It must have really been something to have been there when the Lord Jesus told Martha, "*Roll that stone away!*" To see Martha's expression as she responded, "*but Lord – he stinks by now since he has been dead for four days.*" Oh, to hear Jesus' words, "*Did I not tell you if you would just believe you would see a great work of God.*" To see them roll that stone away – To hear the loud shout from Jesus' lips, "*Come forth*" – and to see Lazarus come out of the tomb. It must have been something! Yet, many people still did not believe even though they saw this miracle.

It must really have been something to have been there when Jesus was ministering to the crowds of people being healed and delivered as the demons left the people. "*Take up your bed and walk.*" "*Be it done to you according to your faith.*" Oh, to see the tears of joy as the people were being set free!

Oh, to have seen the glory of God appear on the mountain as Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus. And to be at the cross with Jesus. Later to see the empty tomb and have Jesus appear from nowhere to have them look at His hands and side. It must have really been something to have stood there as Jesus went up into the air eventually being covered by a cloud as He went to the Father.

Jesus has told us in His word, *“I will never leave you or forsake you. I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

I believe the Lord is telling us all right now, “You did not have to be with Me back then because I am here with you now. Lo, I am with you always. I love you. I am here with you.”

We need to understand how important it is that we become God-inside conscious. There was a time when we were weak, miserable, wretched, filled with worries, doubts, inferiorities, etc. However, the moment that Jesus entered into our lives we were new and all old things passed away. (2nd Corinthians 5:21) The old weak self died. In baptism that old self was buried with Christ and God has raised us up a new self. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, so we are to walk again in newness of life. See Romans 6. God tells us that the same power that raised Christ from the dead now lives in us. (Ephesians 3:20 and 1:19-20) *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”* (Galatians 2:20)

Think upon this – we are changed by God. We do not need to think on our own weaknesses. We are to think upon God’s strengths and especially the fact that God now lives in us. God is in you through Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2) It is Jesus who has given to us life. It is Jesus who lives in us. Our life is no longer our own. We belong to God. (2nd Corinthians 5:16, 1st Corinthians 6:19-20) Because God lives in us we are invincible. We can have boldness to do the works of God in Jesus’ name. (John 14:12-14) We can boldly say, “I am not weak or alone. God is with me. We are one with God through Jesus. God is in us. As we walk in obedience to God’s word, we can have the abundant life Jesus promised. As we keep our mind thinking on God in us rather than defeat, we will have victory, peace rather than despair. God is

enabling us to do His will and to bless His people. We do not need to look to ourselves any longer. We can look to God as our source of strength, love, joy, etc.

Think on the things of God. (Philippians 4:8) Think on who is in you – God. In Hebrews 10:19-25, we find that because of the blood of Jesus we can now come to God with full assurance of faith knowing that God has cleansed us by His word. God is true to His word.

You are important. You are a child of God. You have something that is going to bring life to the people who hear it and act upon it. You are going to make a point to be out with unbelievers and believers alike encouraging God's people to draw near to God. You know that what you have to say in going to transform people's lives – Jesus!

Jesus says, "*My words are spirit and life.*" (John 6:63) As you speak His word, changes are going to happen. We do not have to run around trying to convince people with our wisdom. Simply tell the people what you have seen and heard and know to be true. God will bring the conviction on their hearts and change their lives. We can rely upon God to give to us what to say and when to say it. Our part is to study God's word and pray, so the Holy Spirit has something to work with in us.

I know that you are dedicated to God and want to be used of God. I know that you want to hear, do, and share His word loving God's people. I am excited about what God is doing in your heart right now as He is stirring up within you a love for Himself and His people.

Do you understand fully that through Jesus, God has made us one with Himself and given to us a position that is higher than the angels? The position which God has given to us in Jesus Christ is actually seated with Him in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 2:6; 1st Corinthians 6:1-2) With Jesus we are going to judge the angels.

God looks at us as being one with Him. Jesus is the head and we are the body. The life of God now flows through us. It is truly a privilege to be one with God.

Jesus at the cross was separated from God for us so that we could be one with God. Jesus took our place so that He could give us His place of right

standing with God. (2nd Corinthians 5:21) Jesus on the cross, cried out, “*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me.*” IN the prophets, it says that God cannot stand to look on sin. We were separated from God in our nature because we could do nothing pleasing to God. Jesus took our place becoming forsaken by God. God could not look on Jesus at that point.

This is vitally important that we realize this truth. Through Jesus, God will never forsake us now because Jesus’ blood has paid the price for our separation from God. God will never leave us! Even if we were to leave God, God will never leave us. But we are not of those who want to leave God. Being in His presence is too wonderful!

I believe that the torment of Gehenna which will be for the Devil, all fallen angels, and all unbelievers who have not received Jesus as Lord, will be the fact that forever they will be separated from the presence of God. To the contrary, the eternal joy will be in those who will be in the presence of God, face to face, who have received Jesus as their Lord and sought to be faithful and obedient to the word of God. (Revelations 14:12; Revelations 12:17, also read Revelations 20:7 – 22:21)

Chapter 12

QUALITY OF GOD – FAITHFULNESS

Faithfulness is a quality of God which we need to learn to appreciate so that we can love our Heavenly Father in the new way that He loves us.

In 2nd Timothy 2:2, it tells us that we are to commit to faithful people the things of God which we have heard and know to be true. As these people then tell others who are able to teach others the word of God, the faith level in this world is going to rise because the word of God is increasing. Read Psalm 119:89-97.

We find here that God's word is eternal. It must happen just the way God says in behalf of those who believe and act upon God's word. God is true and faithful. This is why it is our delight to meditate upon His word.

As I was thinking upon Psalm 1 awhile back, it came to me that as we are meditating upon God's word day and night everything we will set our hand to do is going to prosper to God's glory. Thinking and acting upon God's word is going to bring success to God's people because God is faithful to perform His word to His glory in behalf of His people. Read Hebrews 10:19-25.

Since Jesus is coming soon, it is important that we be encouraging one another to come together over God's word, to love one another, and to be about God's business. God has stated to us that we can come boldly before the throne of God because of the blood of Jesus given for us on the cross. We can now come to our Heavenly Father and sit upon His lap and talk to Him, love Him, and ask for whatever we desire in the name of Jesus and we will receive because God loves us.

God's word has told us that, "*God is faithful that promised.*" As God has told us something in His word, He will be faithful to perform it as we believe and act upon His word. This is exciting! As we begin to understand more and more about the nature of our Heavenly Father, we will understand that He will never let us down. He will never fail us – because God is faithful to His children. Because God is faithful, He will give to us His life

and his qualities will begin to reveal themselves in us. We will begin to be faithful.

In Hebrews 13:5-6, the Lord is telling us that He will not leave us or forsake us. He is our Helper, so we do not need to be afraid. As we say boldly that the Lord is our Helper, His confidence and love touches us and we are no longer afraid. We will not fail! We can enter with confidence any situation in this life because we know that God is faithful to perform His word. God is faithful to Himself.

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us: If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself.” (2nd Timothy 2:10-13)

God cannot disown Himself. God must remain faithful to Himself. When God gives His word, God will not and cannot change His word. God’s word is eternal. Heaven and earth will pass away but God’s word will never pass away. God means exactly what He says, and because God is faithful, He will do exactly what He says in behalf of them that believe His word.

The children of Israel were called to be God’s chosen people. God remained faithful to them as we find recorded in Exodus and Numbers. The people, however, continued to murmur, grumble, and be unfaithful to God. God still remained faithful towards them. God continued to love them. God will continue to love us, even if we turn our back on Him! God loves us and is faithful towards us.

We note, however, that the children of Israel hardened their hearts against God. They did not want to follow God. They let unbelief get in their way and refused to obey God. God remained faithful to love them. However, they themselves did not enter into God’s promised land because of their own unbelief. We understand today that God did not stop loving them. They stopped loving God and refused to do His word which leads to life and every blessing.

God’s love is continuing to move towards His people daily. However, there will come a time when it will be all over. If we have been found to not be

loving God and our fellowman, we will be lost. God does not desire that this happen. God wants us to have every blessing and His love continues to move towards us. We need to remember that God gives us a choice as to whether we will be faithful to Him, as He is faithful to us.

God never makes us do anything. He does not put us into a vice and squeeze us against our will. God wants us to respond to Him freely. Our Heavenly Father wants a free, loving response on our part towards His faithfulness and love.

In 1st Thessalonians 5:23-24, the Lord is telling us that He is faithful to keep our spirit, soul (mind), and body and to preserve us until His return. God will help us until His return. God will help us until the end, so that He can present us holy and blameless to Himself.

If our heart is open and yielded to God, God Himself is faithful to see to it that we are never going to fail to receive what He has promised us.

In 2nd Thessalonians 3:3, God tells us that He is faithful and will strengthen and protect us from the evil one (Satan). People are running around fearful about what Satan is doing. God's word tells us that God will protect us and strengthen us against Satan. We have nothing to fear because God is faithful to Himself, His word, and us. As we are yielded and obedient to the word of God, seeking first the things of God, we allow God's faithfulness to work in our behalf. God loves us.

If you are concerned about a lack of strength in your life, God says He will strengthen you. God will protect you from Satan and all demonic power.

In Philippians 1:6, I found something that completely set me free. I began to understand that I did not have to try to be a Christian. I did not have to try to be a believer going out in my own strength to do God's work. This verse blessed me so much that I want to share it with you.

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

When I received this word it set me free because I could now be confident of this fact – God has begun a good work in me and it is God who is going to complete His work! It is God who has given to me faith. It is God who is

working in my life to cause me to desire and to do His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:13) God is doing the work in me. All I need to do is be faithful to His word (hearing, reading, and doing) and God will produce the fruit of my new spirit in my life. (Galatians 5:22) I delight to do God's word. It is not a burden, but a privilege and a joy to do what my Heavenly Father has told me to do because I love my Heavenly Father, as I know you do also.

As I work out my own salvation (Philippians 2:12) by being obedient to what God has told me to do, to keep my conscience clear before God, and to not put myself into a place of temptation, then God is faithful to do His perfect work in me. God is the one Who actually gives us the ability to do all this!

Because we have faith in God we are not to be grumbling and complaining. We have God in us doing His perfect work as we submit ourselves to Him. We cannot have it any better! As we hold out the word of life to others, they also come to experience the joy of knowing God's faithfulness.

God only wants us to be faithful to Him as He is faithful to us. God knows that as we are faithful to Him that is when His blessing comes to us. God's faithfulness towards us enables us to be faithful to Him.

One day as I was reading in 1st Corinthians 4:1-5, it came to me that we are servants of Christ entrusted with the truths of God. All that matters is that we are faithful to God. We are not to care about what others may say in the way of criticism or praise. We are not even to judge our own growth in the Lord or whether we are doing all that we are to be doing in God's ministry. We are not to judge or compare ourselves upon what others are doing or not doing either. Someday when we stand before God, He will judge how faithful we were in this life. God will give to us praise at that time.

Because I love God, the desire of my heart is to be faithful. All that God wants from you or me is for us to be faithful to do what He has given us to do. You are to be faithful to do what God has given you to do. Each of us is to be faithful to do our own part. Each of us has been called to be ministers of reconciliation, ambassadors for Christ. As we are faithful to God, God will be faithful to accomplish His plan and purpose for each of our lives.

We are not to be concerned what men say or think about us. We are not to set ourselves up by measuring ourselves by man's standards, judgments, etc. All we are here for is to be faithful to God. When we are seeking to be faithful to God, God will stand with us. Don't criticize yourself! Listen to the Lord encouraging you and loving you on into higher degrees of faithfulness.

"...thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things..." (Matthew 25:23)

Something that I have found helpful is to not strive to be great, as the world and carnal people consider greatness. Do what God has given you to do (as simple and plain as it may appear to you.) God does not look at and measure greatness by the standards of this world!

As one does what God has given us to do, God counts us great in His kingdom. Remember, God is faithful to give the increase as we are faithful to Him. Also, one cannot seek to fulfill a ministry which has not been given to a person to do. (John 3:27) Do not frustrate yourself by trying to be like someone else's ministry. Do what God has given you to do in the way He has given it to you to do. Not everyone has been called to a "world-wide" ministry. (Matthew 28:20) Be faithful to do your part, and work together with other believers and God's vision will be accomplished. Praise the Lord!

Chapter 13

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

LOYALTY

In Galatians 5:22, we find that one of the fruit of our new re-created spirit is faith or in the Greek the actual meaning is “faithfulness.” Just as God is moving faithfully towards us on a daily basis, so the fruit of His working in our hearts is that we will begin to develop in our lives the quality of God known as faithfulness.

I am praising the Lord together with you that God is faithful to us. We can rest in total confidence that the same God who has begun a good work in us will continue to perform and perfect His work in us until the day of Jesus' return. (Philippians 1:6) Praise the Lord!

There are many ways in which we can develop and display this quality of faithfulness. IN this life God has placed us under authorities. These authorities would be God over all, the husband-family; ministers-church; employer-work; government leaders-government.

We understand that involved in a definition of faithfulness is to honor, respect, and to submit to the authorities which God has set over us.

In the Bible there is an example given of a young man named Absalom, the son of David. Absalom displayed qualities which were anything but faithfulness. Being lifted up in pride, Absalom decided to rebel against his dad, the king, and to attempt to take over the kingdom from his dad. Setting up ways to win the people to himself, he attempted to get the people to look to him rather than to David.

Where disloyalty and rebellion are present the power of Satan is working to disrupt and destroy. Rebellion is the first great sin in that it was Satan's sin rooted down in pride as Satan wanted to take over God's position. Rebellion is the result of a heart's desire which is not right before God. See James 4:1-6. Rebellion is equated with witchcraft. (1st Samuel 15:23)

A faithful heart will be submitted to authority. An unfaithful heart is disrespectful, disloyal and rebellious and the end product of unfaithfulness is to attempt to usurp authority from the ones to whom God has given authority.

Absalom was attempting to usurp authority which did not belong to him because his heart was unfaithful. Every day as the people came into the city, he would sit at the gate and attempt to gain the people's confidence. There is a way that you can win people to yourself that is right from the Devil. We are to beware of the flattering tongue. (Proverbs 26:28, 29:5) You can win people to yourself (by the Devil) when you side with and agree with their grievances and problems. Before long people will say, "here's someone I can talk to who really understands me and cares about me!" (We have seen this happen many times with disgruntled husbands or wives. Satan will send someone along with a sympathetic ear and "who really cares and understands" – because they agree with how hard the person has it. The next thing you know we have a case of adultery on our hands!)

Before long, Absalom had gathered a large army to war against his dad. Unable to defeat David's army, Absalom fleeing for his life, became entangled in a tree. Some of David's commanders came along and cut off Absalom's head.

The end product of rebellion is death. People in a state of unfaithfulness (disloyalty and rebellion) often times, feel that they are really helping themselves or others to resolve a situation. Satan will come along and deceive a person in this way to believe it is all right when you are talking to others about an authority of God behind their back. God calls such action sin against God!

It is really interesting how people with discontented and disgruntled feelings will find each other and bind themselves together. The end product of such action is mutual destruction. God's authorities will always prevail and will never be overthrown because God stands behind His authorities.

We need to understand how we can be faithful because it is not our hearts as God's people to be unfaithful, disrespectful, disloyal, and rebellious to God's authorities.

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:26-17)

We cannot be following the Lord and seeking people or things of this world. God wants our undivided allegiance. God wants all our loyalty and honor. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul (mind) and body is the way God’s word reads. God must have all the glory from our lives. God must be the source to Whom we go for every decision, for every action, for every word because as we are obedient to Him, then the blessing of God comes into our lives. As we are letting God direct us and as we trust in Him, and lean not unto our own understanding and acknowledge Him in all our ways, then He will direct our path. That is where we desire to be, walking on the path of God, for that path always leads to God’s total prosperity and blessings.

As we go on here we look at the home situation – what is involved there and what we can submit to God’s authority in the home situation and be faithful to God by doing so. (Read Ephesians 5:21-33) *“submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”*

The wife is called to respect and honor the husband. The husband is called to love the wife as himself. Direction for the children is in Ephesians 6:1-3. *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”* This is God’s order. As we follow God’s order towards His authority for being faithful, God will bless us. Now, if a wife goes around the entire neighborhood telling everyone what a jerk he is, then she is being unfaithful. If a husband is not taking care of his responsibilities to his wife and to his children, then he is being unfaithful. If a child is not honoring and obeying his parents, then the child is being unfaithful.

Malachi 2:14-17 is a real important scripture for us because it really puts some perspective on this day and age where unfaithfulness is running rampant. Husbands are running around on their wives, and wives running around on the husbands. There seems to be just a real lazy and disrespectful attitude towards the principles of God when it comes to these matters. We need to understand that divorce is not of God! He speaks real clearly about

this – that unfaithfulness to the other spouse is totally not of God and this cannot be any clearer than in Malachi 2:14-17.

Concerning areas of the Church, the Lord is telling us to honor the authorities that He has put over us. Hebrews 13:17 actually says, “*to obey them.*” It’s pretty hard work for people nowadays to obey. That’s what God says – in the last days people don’t want to obey. They want to rebel. They want to go anyway but the way that God would have them to go. But God says, in the Church to obey your leaders and submit to their authority. This is something that must be remembered. Authorities in the Church or in all other areas must give an account for what they have done toward you, so obey them that their work will be a joy and not a burden for that would be of no advantage to you. They will have to give a report someday before the Lord, God of Hosts, for how you are growing in the Lord, and what they have shared with you and how you responded to it.

How are you responding to your church authorities – your pastors, your teachers, the prophets and evangelists? How are you responding? Are you honoring them as God would have you to honor them by being obedient to God’s word?

This is the question today – a lot of strife in the Church would be resolved if people would just get right down and follow what God’s word says to do, and obey the leaders as they are sharing God’s word faithfully. This is faithfulness. If they are not sharing God’s word faithfully, continue to honor them; however, do what God’s word says to do. (Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29)
God is the higher authority!

(1st Peter 5:1-4) Here it is calling to the pastors and church leaders not to “lord over” and hold the people in bondage but to be examples for the people, serving God joyfully and faithfully. And by so doing, leading God’s people in the way that God would have them to go. It says here that a faithful pastor or leader in the Church will receive a great blessing from God. It is an exciting fact for you, too, if you are not a pastor or a leader in God’s Church. As you are faithful to follow God’s leadership in His Church, following His leaders as they lead you by God’s word, you are going to share in the same crown that these people will receive. That’s a mighty powerful blessing that’s going out towards you as you are being faithful to God by following His leaders.

Read 1st Corinthians 4:1-4. Paul is saying that all that matters is that he is faithful. Faithful to walk and serve God, and do what God directs him to do. He doesn't even judge himself, he says. Committing his cause to his Father who judges justly, Paul and Jesus determine that all that he is responsible for is to be faithful to God. (1st Peter 2:23)

In employment areas (Ephesians 6:5 – employees/slaves – master/employers), we find that there is a balance that God has given there that God's people have to work together. Now we need to understand that disrespect of authority is disrespect of God. And God's servants cannot afford to have a rebellious attitude in any way. We need to go and do what we are doing wholeheartedly it says here, as if we are serving the Lord, not men. Because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does whether he is a slave or free. This is important to understand that whatever we are doing we are doing it to God's glory and we want to be faithful to God. By being faithful to the authorities that God has put over us, we are being faithful to God.

In government areas, (Read 1st Peter 2:13-17; Titus 3:1-8) how do we relate to our enemies and those who don't get along with us too well? David in 1st Samuel 24:6 is a real good example of how we are to deal with authorities that we cannot get along with and who may even be our enemies.

Background – Saul was after David's life and David here is in a cave with Saul. He has the privilege and full opportunity to take Saul's life. Saul was after his life. And he had been given the opportunity to take Saul's life – to take the life of the authority. Now, let us see then how David responded in that situation towards the king – God's authority, and towards his enemy. We want to understand this because this is very important for us. We see a fact of God that has to be understood. David could have justified this by saying that Saul had lost his anointing and he (David) was anointed king. David was anointed king, but look at how he responded in this situation. *“And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is anointed of the Lord.”* (1st Samuel 24:6)

David here was operating in a principle of faithfulness. He knew God's order, he knew God's plan, even though the anointing was off of King Saul and onto him. He knew he could not violate and do such wickedness against God. He was faithful to that authority that God had put there and even to the

point where he didn't take advantage of what he could have done. He was operating on a higher principle, a higher order, that of God's faithfulness.

Chapter 14

GOD'S INTEGRITY

Read Numbers 23:19. The uncompromising truth of God's presence and faithfulness and promise of this world came into my spirit as I know it is going to come into your spirit right now as we share together. We are taking a look at God's integrity and the fact that when God speaks heaven and earth have got to move. Something has to happen!

Numbers 23:19 – *“God is not a man.”* Men sometimes have a tendency of going to and fro, topsy-turvy, speaking one thing one minute and the next minute changing what they are saying. But it says here: *“God is not a man, that He should lie; nor the son of man that He should repent (change His mind).”* It is very important that we get this into our understanding. As we find a word and a promise from God in His holy word and we start to apply that to our lives, God is not going to change His mind. He is not going to change what He has said and if He has told us something, He is going to do it. *“...hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”* This is God's word. We are talking about God's word. God is not going to lie. He only speaks truth. It is actually impossible for God to lie. As we start to get that inside of us, then as we open up our Bibles and start to look at what God's word and promise says, we begin to get it inside of us and we begin to say, *“My God cannot lie, so has He not said it here and will He not do it? Has He not promised and will He not fulfill?”* He has to do His word. That is the fact of God today that we want to understand – that God has to perform His word.

Now how is it going to be performed? It is going to be performed as I take a hold of it, grow to understand what He says, and then act upon it.

Read: Romans 4:17-25. This is an example of a man such as ourselves who took God's word and acted upon it understanding that it is actually impossible for God to lie. *“Has He not said it and will He not do it, has He not promised and will He not fulfill?”* (Numbers 23:19)

Now then, there are 7,000 plus promises that are intended for God's people if we would take the time to discover them in God's word. To discover them is to grow to understand what God has provided. Understand that God

is not a man that He should lie nor the son of man that He is going to change His mind and take it back. And has He not said it, and will He not do it?

Now, there was a couple that had brought a round-trip ticket from Canada down to Southern California and back to Canada. When they had finished their trip and were about ready to go back home to Canada after their vacation, they went down to the airport and found that the rates had changed. They had to pay more for their ticket. Now we want to understand that this was a completed ticket. It was all paid for and the deal was confirmed and then they had to pay extra.

Now, we want to understand that God today never changes His mind on things. He never adds extra requirements to things other than what He has set down in His word. *“Has He not promised and will He not fulfill?”* He is not going to change His mind.

When you are claiming a word and a promise for your life, whether it be for salvation, to receive the Holy Spirit, for physical healing or mental healing, or mental comfort from stress, to be free from fear or worry, financial needs, or whatever you’re claiming from God, we have to understand that the first step is to find out what He has to say about our need in any given area. This is the first step, to discover His word what God has to say about what He has provided for us.

The second step then is to take that word and to get it inside us and to understand that *“has God not said it and will He not do it, has He not promised and will He not fulfill.”* In other words, we must take that word and put some faith out upon it.

This is the second step to put faith out upon it. As we begin to understand that it is impossible for God to lie, faith increases within us. Now, a lot of people are running around praying, *“God increase my faith.”* That’s not what we are saying. When we say faith increases, what we are saying is that the faith actually at that point activates within us. It ignites within us. This is important to understand – that you have, if you have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, been given the measure of faith. You have all the faith you need to move the mountains, according to Jesus Christ. You have the faith, it is a matter of activating or igniting it.

As you start to get the word and promise of God inside of you, you start to understand that God is faithful and He is true and He is not a liar and He can only speak the truth, then that ignites your faith on that promise. We begin to realize that by His stripes you were healed. My God has supplied all my needs according to the riches in Glory in Christ Jesus. If we would confess with our mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in our hearts that He has risen from the dead, we will be saved!

I know for a fact today, that when I stand before God, He is not going to say, *"I don't know you!"* Why? Because He has told me in His word that if I receive Jesus Christ into my heart as my Lord and Savior and I confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ is my Lord and I believe in my heart that He has risen from the dead, God's promise is that I will be saved! As I push on and press forward in obedience to His word and am faithful to death, I know for a fact that when I stand before the Lord God of this Universe, the Creator of all, the Master of all, He is not going to say, *"I don't know you."* He's going to say, *"come into the mansion that I've prepared for you, my son."*

Because I know His word is true and He is faithful to perform His word and He is not going to say, *"Well, that's the way I did it last year or 20 years ago."* God operates in the same way today as from the beginning. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever! The word of God is eternal and the principle of God says, *"I am true to you, because I am true to My word and as you act upon My word, My word goes into effect for you."* When the Lord spoke up within me one day, this truth came inside of me.

Many times people say the Lord told me this – the Lord told me that. What I am actually saying at this point is something came up inside of me as I was meditating upon that scripture in Numbers 23:19. It said, *"it's impossible that the impossible not happen when you act upon My word."* Let that truth speak to your heart also! *"it's impossible that the impossible not happen when you and I act upon God's word."* In other words, the situation that seems to be so impossible for us, maybe unsaved loved ones or any situation and everything appears so bleak and so bad. God is actually saying an impossible situation, (the situation we figure is so impossible in our man's understanding, with our puny mind's understanding) God is actually saying that situation is possible!

It is impossible that the impossible situation not happen when you act on God's word. It's got to happen! Has God not said it and will He not do it?

Has He not promised and will He not fulfill? As I am searching the Scriptures, finding God's word and promise for my situation for my need, and starting to act upon that word, then it is impossible that it not happen. It must happen. This is God's word. This is God's promise and it must happen. I got so excited when I came to that understanding, that it has to happen because God is true to His word.

In Romans 4:17-25 it is speaking about Abraham and what he did when he got God's word and promise. The Mighty God spoke into a situation. He called things that be not (the situation that appeared to be not) as if it was and what happened? It became. This is the kind of God we have. As we are not looking at the situations but are looking at the Word of God, and the promise of God, and we're starting to speak the Word of God into the situation, we are actually calling the power of God down to move in our behalf. God calls things that be not as though they are and then they happen. That's faith. Looking at a situation that appears to be totally impossible. Speaking forth God's word and then acting upon it. This is making the impossible possible because God is able to move in behalf of them that believe.

As we understand that truth, we begin to act on the Word. Abraham, against all hope, hoped and believed and hope came as he saw God had a better way for him in the situation. God can do it. God is able and willing and so hope grows up. I want you to know today, that God is able to give you eternal life. God is able to fill you with His presence, with His power to free you from fear, worry, confusion, and doubt, and every horrible thing. God is able to move in your behalf. God is able to heal you physically, and spiritually. God is able to heal your mind and your emotions. He is able to help us to forgive. God is able! This is important to know because it builds hope within us.

Without hope, faith has nothing to hold onto and nothing will happen. It says here that against all hope, Abraham in hope believed even though the situation appeared to be hopeless. Here he was 90 some years old and Sarah was about as old and Sarah was barren. It was impossible for them to have children but God had given them a promise that they were going to be the parents of a great nation. That was God's promise. It would have appeared impossible by what the facts would say, but Abraham in hope believed God. He believed God's Word and became the father of many nations, just as it had been promised to him.

Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead. It says in another translation, that he did not consider his body. He looked beyond his body. He looked beyond the physical situation that appeared to be. He looked beyond and looked to God and His word. God's word was the truth. It (God's word) was the reality, not what Abraham was seeing, not what he considered in his own body or with his own mind. What he saw or sensed was not the reality. What was really the reality was what God said – *“has He not said it, will He not do it, and has He not promised and will He not fulfill?”*

God will keep His word in behalf of them that believe, as we believe we receive it. God's word is true but it is not doing me any good unless I receive it. This is important – you and I have to receive God's word for it to be ours. Receiving from God is faith. That's how we receive from God.

I want you to know today, you don't have to conjure up that faith to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. God already has given you all the faith you need. What we need to do now is think upon the thoughts of God and His works and His promises in His word. As we think on those things and we start to act accordingly, that is when the power of God starts to move in your behalf and we are set free.

That is what Abraham did. It says here in Romans 4:20 – *“Yet he did not waver through unbelief – regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised.”* This is exciting because Abraham was not considering the situation. He was considering God's word and God's promise and as he did that, it says here the promise of God strengthened him in his faith and he gave glory to God.

I do not know what your situation is at this point. But, I want you to know today, God knows what your situation is. God knows exactly what is going on in your heart and in your life at this time. I want you to be strengthened in the faith right now and to know as you give glory, praise and thanks to God, that God is greater than the situation and God is greater than your need. I want you to understand today that God is going to move in your behalf. It says here that Abraham was fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised.

Abraham was fully persuaded, not half way but fully persuaded that, *“has He not said, and will He not do, has He not promised, and will He not fulfill.”* God will do it – and Abraham put his faith out there on that fact. God’s word was the substance of his being the father of a great nation even when the situation appeared to be contrary. Now this is why it was credited to him as righteousness. The words that were credited to him were written not for him alone, but also for us to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe on Him, Who was raised from the dead. Jesus Christ our Lord was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification, or for us being declared not guilty before God. Jesus has made us right with God. This is exciting because God’s word is telling us here, that this principle that Abraham acted upon, was not just for him only, but it is for us today.

Many people are running around today saying, “well I do not know what the will of God is for my life.” Well, I will challenge you today to understand, that God’s will for your life and mine is obedience to His word. And as we start to search His word for His promises and search the Scriptures to study and to show ourselves workmen, approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of Truth, that’s when things are going to happen in our lives and we are going to walk abundantly because our God is an abundant provider. God is life, the total essence of life. The total essence of immortality, or perfection, of holiness, that’s who our God is. When He says something to us, He means exactly what He says.

Far be it from me to call God a liar but that is what I am doing if I am not acting on His word as though it’s true. If, when He said, *“by His stripes I am healed,”* and I’m running around moaning and groaning about how sick and how horrible I feel, I’m actually calling God a liar at that point. I’m just using that as an example, but it’s true. He says, *“by His stripes you were healed.”* Check it out in 1st Peter 2:24.

That is a promise of God. If you did not know it was there – it is for you! But I want to key into the fact that God wants to move in your behalf to do the impossible. Our God is a great God! He is a miracle God! He is a loving God! The greatest miracle that God has done for us is in sending Jesus Christ to die for us that we might be free to receive His life. God knew that we had no way of receiving it apart from Him coming to us. And that life is available today, abundantly. Jesus says, *“I’ve come that you might have life and have it abundantly.”* (John 10:10)

Hebrews 6:12-20 is a real important section of Scripture dealing again with the certainty of God's promises to us. *"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."* (Hebrews 6:12)

Many people have become lazy in their walk with God and they are not acting upon God's promises. As a result, they don't have the promises actively working in their lives. They don't have the victory that Jesus has promised. Victory is ours but I want to challenge you today – do not be lazy in your walk with God. Act upon His word because it is impossible for Him to lie. I want you and God wants you to have all that He has for you in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 8:13 and following – when God made His promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for Him to swear by God swore by Himself, saying, *"I will surely bless you and give many descendents. So after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised."*

Now note that – *"and so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised."* Many believers fall down because they do not wait patiently on, *"has not God said and will He not do, has He not promised and will He not fulfill?"* We run around thinking that maybe He is not going to do it because He is not doing it right when we think it needs to be done. Now I want you to understand that impatience is a sign that our faith is wavering. We are thinking that we do not have it. But I want you to understand today that as you get inside of you that, *"ha God not said it, and will He not do it; has He not promised it and will He not fulfill,"* and then you put the promise of God for your situation into effect and you act upon it, you can wait forever! You can wait forever because you know you have it!

Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His promises very clear to the heirs of what was promised, He confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that by these two unchangeable things we will be led to take hold of the hope offered to us and be greatly encouraged. God made an oath with Himself. Now that is truly exciting, because it is impossible for God to lie. We can be greatly encouraged that we have this hope as an anchor for the soul – firm and secure because Jesus Christ has fulfilled the word of God for us. Note that

God made an oath with Himself to keep His word for you. That's His word. That's His promise. It cannot change. Get hold of God's word today, for your need. Start looking for what God has to say about your situation and then understand that it is impossible for God to lie!

Chapter 15

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S INTEGRITY TRUTHFULNESS

There is a need for integrity and honesty within the Body of Christ of which you are a part. We understand that in God's word in Numbers 23:19 that God is not a man that He should lie.

Jesus Christ is the answer to our every situation because all the promises of God are found "yes" in Him. (2nd Corinthians 1:19) He is the answer. He alone is the one in whom all the promises of God are fulfilled and made available to us. The fact of God today is that God cannot lie. It is impossible for Him to lie. As we start to understand that our nature now in Jesus in God's nature, we need to start to understand the importance of the fact that we need not lie any longer since we are new creatures and everything else has changed.

It says in Proverbs 16:2 – *"All the ways of man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits."* IN other words, all of our thinking, actions, thoughts, and words may seem right to us but God looks at the motivation of the heart. I may feel justified that I can have something towards my brother or my sister because they have done something to me. So I feel justified and think I am correct. I can think that I am right and am doing the right thing. See, many times we think we are doing the right thing in situations but God actually searches out and looks at the motivation of our heart, as to why we are doing what we are doing.

Many people are doing all kinds of good works (giving to the poor, doing this and doing that). God, however, is looking at the motivation of the heart. Now it would appear that it may be a wonderful deed that we are doing but God looks at why we are doing what we are doing. Are we looking for recognition from people or are we looking for recognition from Him? Do you want people to pat you on the back, and say, "Oh boy, that Johnny is such a wonderful fellow – he is so good! He does all these wonderful things." Or are you looking for your motivation as being to receive praise from God for God's love for you. The motivation of heart is what God looks at and concerns Himself with.

We want to understand here that a man's ways may seem right to us at the time. We may feel that we are doing the right thing. But, we have to make sure that our motivation lives up to what God has told us to be our motivation. Are we right before God in what we are doing?

“There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Proverbs 16:25) Now this could be carried over in many ways to the fact that many people today believe that they don't need the Lord Jesus Christ. They don't believe that they need what He has to offer because they feel that they are quite all right in themselves and it would seem to be right to them in their ways, but in the end it leads to eternal death. The only way to God is through Jesus Christ.

Jesus says, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life (light) and to no man comes to the Father but by Me.”* So it may appear that we don't need Him, but the end product is death. Many people who have confessed their need of a Savior and have received Jesus into their heart then think that they can go on leading a life that is apart from God – living as the people in the world. It may appear to be right to them. “Well, I am saved. I'm a child of god, so I can go on and lie, cheat, gossip, and do all kinds of bad things to my wife (or to my husband). I can be disobedient to my parents. I can do all these things. I'm all right. After all, I'm saved.”

The word of God says that in the end the wages of sin is death. This way that we think is right, leads to death. We may say, “but my Aunt did these horrible things to me or my cousin, or my neighbor did these things so I don't care to be around them anymore.” The word of God would say something different about that whole thing.

We must get some understanding that our relationships must be the way God would have them to be! It is not what a person has done to us, but what we are doing to them. IF they have done us wrong, God tells us to go to them between them and us alone and work it out. Then God will take care of the situation as we are obedient. God's blessing flows as we are obedient to Him. We cannot afford to have anything hidden in our hearts. Because it is not really hidden. God knows what is going on.

Read Ephesians 4:17-52. This section has to do with those of us who have received the Lord Jesus into our hearts and how we are not to be living.

Note: The mind is the area in which the renewal has to be done by us as God's people. God is the One Who is enabling that to happen as we put ourselves in a position to be in His word. We are then to be obedient to His word. It does not do us any good if we hear God's word and then do not do it or respond to it. We are to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:25 – We need to stop anger and bitterness, resentment, and unforgiveness right before it starts to mushroom. Otherwise the devil will have opportunity. We deal with demon warfare and one of the ways they come is through us opening up an opportunity by being disobedient to God's word.

Read Ephesians 4:28-32, and 5:1-10.

I really like that last part of Ephesians 5:10. That is your and my responsibility to find out what pleases the Lord. As we are in God's word, we are finding out what is pleasing to our Heavenly Father. Now it goes on, that we need to understand that there is a great judgment that God has on dishonesty and lying. We need to understand the importance of this today – that as God is faithful to His word and there is integrity right down the line in His actions and His dealings towards us, in the same way we are to have integrity in our actions in dealing towards one another!

We need to understand that there are several examples that are given in Scripture about how greatly God is concerned about this matter that we be faithful, that we be honest, that we be obedient to what God says to do.

In Joshua 6:17-18, we see an account there of a situation that was happening at Jericho. Remember they walked around the walls once each day for seven days and the seventh day they walked around seven times, shouting out and the walls came tumbling down. That's the account. Now, what we want to look at is the fact that God had given orders to Joshua and the Children of Israel, that nothing was to be taken out of that city. It was all to be condemned because it was all an abomination to God. In Joshua 6:17-18 – we see those instructions *“And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make*

yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.” (Joshua 6:17-18)

So we see that all that was in the city was to be given to the Lord. Now what happens? He goes on in Joshua 7:1, that a fellow named Achan took different things from Jericho and in verses 11-12 we see the results of what happened. In the meantime, after Jericho, the children of Israel had an encounter with another army and they figured this would be an easy victory; they would just take them easily since there were just a few of them. They walked into the battle and were cut down and badly defeated.

Joshua went before the Lord and repented and the Lord showed him that there had been an abomination of dishonesty within the camp of Israel. In verses 11-12 we find that Israel had sinned, *“They had violated my covenant which I commanded them...”* IN other words, what God was telling them was that they were “in heap big trouble.” They had lied, cheated, they had deceived, they had gone against His principles and the end product of that was that they were outside of His protection and they were in trouble.

We need to understand that if we are cheating in business, lying to and deceiving our neighbor or in our business or whatever we are doing, we cannot expect to prosper. We cannot expect God’s blessing in our lives. It does not work that way. If we practice deceit in our doings, we are going to bring destruction on ourselves, our homes, and our business. It is important for us to start to understand this. It says in verses 15 and 25 that they burned and stoned Achan and his family and destroyed all he had as possessions. They did not mess around with people who violated God’s word.

In the same way, God today is not going to mess around with people who are being disobedient to His word. We need to be conscientious. If we, as God’s people intend to live in the blessing, prosperity and the provision of God, we must begin to start to shape up. We must start to stop the lying, the cheating, and the deceiving and walk in obedience to God with integrity and honesty in our actions.

Let me show you why this is important. See Acts 5:1-5. Ananias and Sapphira were struck down as Peter was shown by the discerning of the Spirit that they were lying. They were not lying to men. They were lying to God. If we are lying to one another, we are actually lying to God! Because we are God’s children, God’s people, and God’s blessing in life resides in

us, we need to understand that God knows everything that is going on. So we are not fooling anyone, but ourselves. We may think we are fooling someone else but we are actually only fooling ourselves.

I have several final points I want to share in this chapter to emphasize the importance of us, as God's people, speaking the truth.

If we want to be a more effective witness, we need to learn to speak the truth for witnessing purposes. See 1st Peter 2:11-12.

If you want to be an effective witness it makes it real clear what we have to do.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may be your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1st Peter 2:11-12)

In other words, as we are keeping ourselves in integrity and honesty – even the world is going to stand up and take note and say, *“These people are truthful. They are not talking out of both sides of their mouths. What they say, they mean.”*

As we begin to get honest with integrity in our actions and dealings toward one another and cut out the deceiving, then the world is going to see this and they are going to say, *“those people are different!”* Why? Because the world operates by lying, cheating and deceiving. Speaking one thing one moment to one person and turning around the next and saying something different to another so that they can get gain from it – that is the way the world operates.

We are different. We belong to God. We operate like God operates.

Secondly, we want to be honest and of integrity so we will have favor with God and with all men. This is a real exciting little verse – *“My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments; For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine*

heart; So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.” (Proverbs 3:1-4)

As we let love, faithfulness, honesty and integrity operate in our actions, deeds, words, and everything that we are doing, we will have favor of a good name in the sight of God and man. This is the second reason why we as God’s people need to be truthful and honest in our dealings.

The third reason is that we are “*new creatures.*” Take a look at Romans 12:9-21. We will start to understand the fact that we are new and what we are to be doing now because we are new. I’m not going to share all of this with you but I would like you, for your own reference, to have that passage. That’s Romans 12:19-21. Just a part of it that shows our difference is that “*Love must be sincere, hate what is evil, cling to what is good, be devoted to one another in brotherly love, honor one another, above yourselves, never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor in serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer, share with God’s people who are in need, and practice hospitality.*”

Here is where the difference starts to come. You can go on for yourself in that Scripture but this just points out to not be overcome by evil but to overcome evil with good. The way that we as God’s people respond is different from the way the people of the world respond because you and I are “new creatures” and our life is different in our word and our dealings.

Can people say of you today, that your dealings are with the integrity of God just as if God, Himself, were dealing with them? It is a wonderful thing if they can! I believe they can as we start to understand who we are in Jesus.

Fourth, is that openness to God is developed as we remain in truthfulness, not deceiving people or ourselves. (Luke 8:15)

We want to be good soil, to be open to God. Our openness to God is what is going to yield an abundant harvest in our lives and people are going to be saying, “These people are God’s people” and we are going to grow in God’s word. You cannot be having lying, deception and cheating in your heart, and expect to be good soil for the Holy Spirit to minister in your life. I know your desire is to be open and yielded to God. Openness, and being yielded to God produces abundant fruit. But, the only way that we can

receive what God has to give to us is if we keep the channel open. We cannot be clogging up the pipes by lying and deception.

It says in Proverbs 28:13, *“he that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”* Something that is also helpful to us – we want to be open to God as we do not lie about what is going on.

Remember we cannot lie to God, but as we are open to Him, confessing areas of ourselves that are out of line, God’s mercy and His forgiveness will then follow. However, if we are stopping that flow by not acknowledging to God things that need to be acknowledged then His blessing cannot come and we cannot grow one bit further in the Lord.

The fifth point is found in Mark 11:22-24 and Matthey 18:18. This is dealing with the words that we speak. *“therefore whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have what you ask for that you receive it and you will have it.”*

“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18) Powerful promises of God. Powerful – casting down of diseases, sickness, and problems of every kind. We speak to them. We want to understand to expect God to honor His promise to us that what we say at that point is going to happen, and if all the rest of the time we are saying lies or half-truths, and slander, the promise will not work. We cannot expect it to work because God is Truth and so the truth of God must start coming out of our mouths all the time.

Chapter 16

GOD'S KINGDOM

In this chapter we are going to be taking a look at God's kingdom and what is involved in God's Kingdom. We will discuss where the kingdom is and what God will have us to be doing as His people. We want to acquire some understanding concerning Jesus and how the people of the world operated with Jesus. They saw Jesus coming and they wanted to make Him a king. They wanted to give Him a kingdom. As we note, Satan also told Jesus, *"I'll give you all of this,"* as he was laying out the world before Jesus, showing all the splendor and all the majesty and all the glory of this world. Satan told Jesus, *"Jesus, I'll give You all this if You just bow down and serve me."* And we note that the people also of Jesus' day wanted to make Jesus a king when they saw in Him wonderful qualities to meet all of their needs – healing all the sick, feeding the 5,000, etc. Jesus could do anything. They wanted to make Him their king.

Jesus started to share why He really had come and started to get spiritual with the people and told them that His kingdom was not of this world, and then the people started to leave Him. He had thousands of people following after Him, but as soon as He got right down to what He was really here for – to bring life to the people, not in this world necessarily – but eternally to make them right with God, the people left. The people left. The people left and He looked at His disciples one day and said, *"Are you too, going to leave?"* And, when He got right down to it – what He came for and where His kingdom was to be, which was different from the expectations of the people, the people left Him.

Now, before Pilate, Jesus was asked the question, *"Are You a king? Are You a king of the Jews?"* And Jesus said to him, *"You said so!"* Jesus, again and again reinforced the fact that His kingdom was not of this world! *"If it were, I could have called down legions of angels to move in my behalf."* But His kingdom was not of this world.

Let us understand that many times when a person is talking and saying the kind of thing that people want to hear then the person is popular, they get recognition, fame, and money and everything else comes their way. However, as soon as people start saying things that people do not want to

hear but which is really going to set people free, that is when people begin to not be liked. In the same way, it says in God's word, "*Woe unto you when all men speak well of you for so they do of the false prophets.*" We want to understand today that God's kingdom may not be what you are thinking of it as being.

We want to examine some of God's word so do not close it off. Do not shut your eyes, see what God has to say, and let God minister to your heart.

Where is the kingdom of God? Jesus says, "*The kingdom of God is within you.*" It is not around you at this time. It's within you; that's where the kingdom of God is. You and I who have received Jesus into our hearts as Lord and Savior are in this world but not of it. We don't belong to it. We belong to a world apart from this place. Seated with Christ in the heavenlies, that is our position. We belong in God's kingdom and God's kingdom is not here in this world.

Jesus, when He was speaking to a man that came to Him and wanted to follow after Him, said to him, "*The foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.*" What does this say to our desire to seek after big mansions and to build big kingdoms here in this world? Jesus was saying to a person that was to follow Him, that wanted to follow Him, and He was calling him to the cost of discipleship, "*The birds have nests and foxes have holed but I don't have any place to lay My head.*" Jesus was not building up a big kingdom for Himself in this world, in this life. He was about His Father's business, seeking to be pleasing to His Heavenly Father. He did not lack for anything but we note He wasn't building up any big kingdom for Himself.

Some may say, "*Yes, but Jesus rode on a donkey. That was the Cadillac of His day.*" Let us get some perspective on this truth. That is true – Jesus did ride on a donkey. But, we want to understand that was for one moment of one day He rode on that donkey. Why did Jesus ride on that donkey at that point as He entered into Jerusalem? He entered in as king. Yes, but it was to fulfill prophecy!

Most of the time Jesus walked. He depended solely upon His Father for everything. He was not seeking to acquire wealth for Himself or to build any kingdom for Himself in this world. Jesus was simply being pleasing to His Father; doing what His Father told Him to do, saying what His Father

told Him to do, saying what His Father told Him to say, knowing and understanding that He was on a mission and that His kingdom was not here in this world so it was futile for Him to build up a kingdom in this world. He could have, but He did not build His kingdom here. We know that everything He said and everything He did was pleasing to His Heavenly Father so it was not pleasing to His Heavenly Father for Him to be building up a big kingdom in this world because He was not of this world. He was in this world about a mission for God, but not of this world.

As Jesus' kingdom is not here, so our kingdom is not here. Jesus, as our example, chose not to build a material, earthly kingdom. His purpose was to be about His Father's business, setting God's people free. We must seek to follow His example fulfilling what God has told us to do, understanding that we are in this world but not of this world. Jesus speaks of this in His prayer in John 17. He says we are in the world, but we are not of the world and He prays that His Father would keep us from the evil of this world as we bring forth God's word in this place.

Let us take a look at James 4:1-4. I am a prosperity preacher. I believe in all of God's word. I believe in all of His divine prosperity principles and I believe that God wants to bless His people abundantly. But there is an attitude today that God would have us to understand. The more I meditate upon these things in God's word the firmer the conviction gets in my heart that we need to be doing that which is pleasing to our Heavenly Father.

Let us get back to James 4:1-4. *“From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”*

James is talking to believers and these are strong words. Friendship with this world; seeking after the values, attitudes and things of this world, God is actually telling us is to be at war with Him! It is also what is causing envy and jealousy and strife among God's people.

Let us also look at 1st John 2:15-17. *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not*

in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

Let us look at this closely. God wants us to be pleasing to Him, not seeking things of this world that are going to pass away. We are not building a kingdom that is going to be here but building a kingdom that is going to last forever understanding our place in that kingdom and to be pleasing to God when we enter into His kingdom.

Read 1st Timothy 6:3-14. God is here telling us to avoid those who think that gain is a measure of one's godliness. Stay away from them. They are not true who think godliness is a means to financial gain. (verse 5) The qualities that God wants us seeking are eternal qualities that will bless others here and will enable us to have reward in heaven where no moth or rust or anything else can corrupt. That is where our true kingdom is. We need to be working the works of God in this world so that when we enter into God's kingdom someday we are going to be blessed there as well. For we know, there in God's kingdom is eternal blessing.

Let us also look at Hebrews 13:5-6. God cannot approve of “Seek-a-blessing” Christianity which is out to get blessings for oneself. God cannot approve of that kind of thinking because it is selfish. It is looking for one's own interests and motives and one's own blessing.

The purpose of God is always to give, to minister to others, to meet the needs of God's people. “Seek-a-blessing” Christianity where people are fitting around from one group to another seeking to be blessed, God cannot approve of this. There is nothing wrong with going and hearing God's word and being blessed. But, when that is our sole interest and our whole world revolves around that, then there is something wrong with our spiritual walk. We are not being pleasing to our Heavenly Father because we are not acting upon who we are. It is one thing to feed on God's word, and I challenge you to feed on God's word for it is Life, but it is another thing to be a doer of the word.

Let us look again at Hebrews 13:5-6. We find what is pleasing to God and what is our purpose. These verses deal with the fact that God is our Helper. *“he will never leave us nor forsake us, that He is with us always even to the*

end of the age.” Then we want to jump to verse 8 and following: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle for the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. (Jesus has made us holy through His own blood.) Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here (in this world) have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

We do not have an enduring kingdom here in this world and we are not to be setting up an enduring kingdom in this world. It says here that we are looking for the city that is to come, for the kingdom that is to come where we are going to live with God forever and ever in total peace and total joy.

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”

That is the whole desire of our hearts – to be pleasing to God. What is it that is pleasing to God? It says here, offering up praise and then verse 16, *“Do not forget to do good and share with others for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”* This is exciting! Let us remember that it is one thing to be delighting in the word of God and be feeding on the word of God, and it is another thing to be doing it. Now, I do not want my spiritual walk to be so caught up in feeding myself that I get so bloated and so far that I am not able to do what is pleasing to God. I challenge you today to be the same way. I believe God is exhorting us to be pleasing to Him.

What now is pleasing to Him? (James 1:27) *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”* Notice two things here about religion that are pleasing to God — Looking out for the orphans and for the widows, and keeping ourselves unpolluted (unspotted) by the world (the values and things of the world, not setting our thoughts and hearts upon those things but upon God).

Isaiah 58 tells us what else is pleasing to God. (Read: Isaiah 58:6-14) God is concerned, not about us being blessed, but He is concerned about us being a blessing to others because He has already blessed us. I do not need any longer to seek to build a kingdom in this world to satisfy my own needs, my own wants, my own desires; because according to God's word the moment I receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, I gave up rights to myself and God became my Master, my Lord and I love Him for it. There is no finer way to go.

He is saying, *"I have called you, my son, I've called you and I've called my people to be ambassadors for Christ, to be ministers of reconciliation."* That means bringing the people of God together with God because God in Jesus has come and loved us and given Himself for us that we might be together with God. That is our purpose – to move in the way Jesus moved, to set the oppressed free, to look out for the needs of God's people. We are not to be so busy about what we are doing, growing, learning, etc., but remember that you and I have a purpose to minister to others. We have a ministry, everyone of us that God has given to us. He has given us the power to fulfill it and He wants us to get about that ministry.

When was the last time we met someone else's need? Now go beyond that. When was the last time that we were actually looking out for somebody so that we could meet their need? When was the last time we laid hands on the sick, believing God that they would recover? When was the last time that we spoke a good word of encouragement to someone who was down? When was the last time that we shared a promise of God to lift someone to believe for the things of Him? When was the last time that we shared the love of Jesus?

I am not asking these questions to lay any guilt on anyone. The word says, though, to examine yourselves to see whether we are in Christ. Are we doing what God has set down that we are to be doing in this life? Are we seeking to be a blessing as God has intended us to be to others, letting His love flow freely through us to touch someone else?

The kingdom of God is within you, as you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. You and I belong to another world. But, while we are in this world God has given us a mission. We have a ministry to let His love touch someone else. Through word and deed we are to share the love of God by being witnesses for Him.

Search today to find out, *“How can I be about my Father’s business? Is there someone in my neighborhood I need to be reaching with the love of God? Is there someone in my family that I need to be reaching with the love of God? Is there someone in a nursing home that needs to be touched by the love of God?”* We go into many nursing homes and there are people there that are needing the comfort of someone reassuring them of the presence of God with them; that He will not leave them or forsake them and that He is with them always, even to the end of the age.

Things are going full cycle. This world began with nothing. God spoke and this world came into existence. God gave Adam dominion at that point, rulership, authority over that world. But, Adam separated himself from God. God now, in Jesus Christ, has come back to this world to save the people of this world. But, the kingdom of God is not in this world which is going to pass away. The day is coming soon when it is going to be consumed. Then God is going to establish a new heaven and a new earth wherein you and I are going to live with Him forever.

How many other people do we know around us that need Jesus?

Chapter 17

MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S KINGDOM

KINGDOM AMBASSADORS

I oftentimes wonder what our purpose is here in this life? Why are we here? What are we to be doing? God's word gave me the answers. There it says that as sons of God, we need to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, to be doing what Jesus was to be doing here in this earth and what He wants to be doing among the people. Jesus Christ is our example and He is the One we are to follow.

When I learned this, I started searching to find out what the Scriptures said about Jesus. What did He do in this world? What was His relationship to the world, and to His Father? What did He do in His ministry?

I discovered in Luke 4:18 something that is really helpful to us. It says there, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."*

This helped me to start to understand some things. This was why the Spirit of the Lord was on Jesus – to preach good news to the poor, to those who are lost, to let life shine to them, to speak hope to them, to speak faith to them so that they might turn to God; to release the oppressed. It says in Acts 10:38 that Jesus *"went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him."*

This was an exciting thing to start to understand. Jesus did not seek to build a kingdom in this world. He did not seek fame and recognition for Himself, nor to build up a big empire for Himself. He was on a mission to bring God's love into this world. That is why Jesus came – to show us Who God really is, and then to give His life for us that we might be able to receive that life that God has given, that God has provided. I now started to see some important things for myself, and for you as God's people.

This world is running full cycle. It began with nothing and God spoke, the world became. The world went on and the world fell away from God. This is why Jesus came – to provide a new way for this world, a new life for you and for me. He came to give life, to provide it for us because this world that we now know and understand to be “*the world*” is not going to last very long. It’s going to pass away. There are many, many instances that are happening today around this world that are happening according to the fulfillment of God’s word. Scripture says that these things will happen as a sign in the last days. This world is passing away. All of its economic structure and political structure is beginning to crumble.

What is going to last? God’s word! Things are going full cycle. “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” (John 1:1) Who is the Word? Jesus Christ. And it says that the cycle is not yet complete. This world will perish and pass away, and then God will establish a new kingdom; a new heaven and a new earth in which we, as God’s people, are going to reign as princes and kings. We are going to have a place there in God’s eternal kingdom.

This world is not our home. Our place is seated in this new kingdom that God has established. But we have a ministry, a mission in this world as Jesus had a ministry. What is that ministry? What is that mission? To set the people free, that they might turn to God for life and that they might see that life and be saved. Then, that we need to love one another. That’s our purpose here. That is our ministry. That is our mission.

In Hebrews 13:8 I found something very interesting. I find that I run across all kinds of good things in God’s word. It says here, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, wherefore they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.*”

This is the way it was done in the Old Testament. Now in the New Testament – “*Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*” In other words, God’s people have to start

understanding that we are not setting up a kingdom in this world. This world is not our home. We do not have an enduring city here. This is not where we belong. We belong with God in the new kingdom to come.

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”
(Hebrews 13:15-16)

This is important for us to begin to understand. Jesus is our example. He was in this world but He did not belong to it. He did not operate by the values and the standards of this world. He operated by a higher source, a higher power that we know was His Heavenly Father. He operated as an ambassador for God, doing and saying the perfect will of the Heavenly Father that we might have life. That is our purpose now; to be in this world, ambassadors for God.

Ephesians 1:12 God tells us, *“That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.”* We were created to be to the Praise of our Father’s glory. Now we are in this world but we do not belong to it. It is important that we understand that. We operate on new principles and those principles are laid right here in God’s word.

Ephesians 2:4-10 gives us some understanding concerning our place and what we are to be involved in as far as what God has done for us. Read Ephesians 2:4-10 and especially verse 10. *“for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* We were actually created by God to do His works in this world. His works are faith works. Wherever there is true faith in God; works will follow, love will follow, mercy will follow, and justice will follow. This is God’s plan. This is God’s way.

Let us now take a look at 2nd Corinthians 5:14-21. This is speaking about us again and what our purpose is here. *“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.”* In other words, we are not to live to build ourselves a big kingdom here in this world but for Him (the Father God). We are to live for Him.

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” Here it says we are of a new order, sons of god. *“...Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”*

In other words, God actually drew the people to Himself, through Jesus Christ, giving life. Now it goes on here as we start to see our place and to what God has called us. *“...And hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* In other words, we are to now share about what God has done in His love with this world, through our words and deeds.

Going now to verse 20, *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”* That means, get right with God so that you can be used of God. So, if there is anything in your heart that is not pleasing to God, at this point give it up. Get rid of it. Cleanse your heart before God and let Him use you to his glory. The blessing then goes to you as you are faithful and obedient to God. God loves you and wants to bless you.

Verse 21 tells us, *“For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”* IN other words, that we might have right standing with God. This is exciting. God has called each of us. You and me, to a ministry to share His love in this world. That is our purpose. That is our calling. That is why we are here in this world – so that others can be saved and receive the life that God has for them.

That is our purpose. Have you been about that purpose lately?

Let us now look at 1st Peter 2:9-10. We are going to learn some exciting things about who we are in the Lord Jesus Christ and what our purpose is since we are not new creatures. I get all excited when I get into God’s word about these things because there is such wonderful truth for us. You do not need to ever wonder again about where you are going or where you have come from because God give clarity. God gives truth!

We are going to find here what God has to say about us. It says here, *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”*

We are a chosen people, chosen by God in Jesus. For what purpose are we belonging to God? It says, that you may declare (speak it out) the praises of Him who called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light. Now verse 10 tells us, *“Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”*

Our calling in this life is to give praise and glory to God. To let others know who our God is – love, forgiveness, mercy, freedom to really experience true life; the abundance that comes, the joy and peace that comes from doing what God says.

Something else, you only know that joy and that peace and that freedom when you start to be obedient to what God says to do. That is when that freedom comes – freedom that you do not know until you become obedient. Freedom you do not know until you give of yourself to someone else as God has given Himself for us.

Matthew 5:13-16 tells us some other interesting things about who we are. It says here, *“Ye are the salt of the earth.”* (This is Jesus speaking) *“But if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”*

Here it says we are preservatives in this world. That is what salt is for. When a believer walks into a room, the power of God moves into that room to preserve people. As you speak forth the love of God, people come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior and they are saved. We are light, it says. Jesus says He is the Light of the world and now He is saying that we are the light of the world because we share the same light. We are one with God and the same light of God flows through us. Now remember, we are

not *the* light but a reflection of the light. As we reflect out that light because Jesus Christ is in us, that light then shines through us. People in darkness may not like us but they will come to know truth through us as we love and they will give praise to god.

At first they may not like you and you may lose many friends when you receive Jesus. But do not count that a loss. God is going to turn their hearts to receive His life, through you, because He loves you and you are His ambassador.

Philippians 2:12-16 tells us we are as shining lights (starts), holding forth the word of life. As we speak the word of life to others, they receive the life of god. Your presence can influence situations. Because you have God as your source, the impossible is able to happen through you believing God. It says that for men it is impossible that people be saved but nothing is impossible with God. Remember who is in you. God is in you!

When you claim someone for the Lord Jesus Christ and you share the love of God with them, start treating them as the best Christian that ever walked the earth because they are claimed and they are God's. Your faith is going to bring them to the point where they are going to receive the life of God as you share His word and they hear it. The word of God says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. You are going to see mighty results – guaranteed! Read: Matthew 5:43-48.

Let us understand here also, that as a minister of reconciliation, bringing people to know how much God loves them, we are going to be watched. We are going to be watched very closely by the people who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ at this point. And we are going to have to understand something here. We need to begin to concentrate on the fact that we are a new creature. We do not have to act the way we used to act in selfishness, bitterness and unforgiveness, strife and anger. We do not have to be that way any longer. That is not you! That is not me! We are brand new! God has set us free.

It is exciting what God is doing in our lives as we begin to understand who we really are. If we are really ministers of reconciliation and ambassadors for Christ, then we cannot afford to be running around stirring up strife, stirring up bitterness, anger, talking gossip, running around slandering

people, sowing seeds of discord. We cannot afford to be doing those things any more.

A minister of reconciliation is working to bring things together, not working to separate and divide. Separation and division comes from the pit of hell. We, as God's people, must start to understand some things. We are God's ministers to bring people to know the love of God, so the love of God must be going through us.

It says, "*Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall inherit the earth.*" God's wisdom is peace and unity, not division, strife and confusion. So we need to start to bring ourselves into the understanding that we do not have to act the way we used to any longer. We are brand new!

Look at this exciting word that Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:38 and following. "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:*" (One may think, they got me, I have a right to get them.) "*But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*"

If someone is doing us wrong and we start to resist them, what do you have? If they insult us and we insult them back, we will have a big fight on our hands. That is what we will have. This just leads to more and more confusion, and more and more strife. But as we start to understand that we belong to God, we are a child of God. When someone is doing us wrong, it is not our place any longer to do them back. Why? God's word says that, "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, thus saith the Lord.*" What are we to do? It says, if our enemy hungers, we are to feed him. If he is thirsty, give him a drink. If someone is doing something wrong to us, we are to give him to God. Pray a blessing for him and free him to receive the life of God. At that point God's love flows into that situation and you can actually save that person. You can actually save them by loving as Christ loved us. While we were yet enemies of God, (God was not our enemy, we were His enemy) Christ died for us. I think upon that all the time. I share that all the time because that is the motivation to help me to love and forgive. God loves me. I know God loves me!

There is something about the Devil that we need to understand. He is going to try to get us into strife. He is going to try to get us angry. He is going to try to get us bitter. But as we just sit there and pray in the Spirit and praise God, there is no way that evil can get you down. You are covered by the protection of God. You do not have to defend yourself. God is defending you.

Evil will destroy itself, burning itself out. As my wife shares with me and I share with her, we cannot very well argue with someone who will not argue back. We may get frustrated and angry but if that person comes to you and puts their arms around you and gives you a big hug and loves you praying in the Spirit, that anger fades away fast. We do not want to give Satan an opportunity! This is what the Lord Jesus Christ is saying here in Matthew 5.

Verse 43 – *“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies.”* He is giving us some directions here as to what to do. *“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”*

Sometimes that really galls you when you think someone is “using” you. God wants us to pray for them and we can set them free. You are on top of it. You have the victory. If they take your coat, give them your shirt, too. Why? God is the supplier of your needs. God is our Supplier and our Source. We can get plenty of other ones from Him, so give it all ways and praise God for you have the victory. This is exciting!

It says here, *“Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”* We truly show that we are His children as we at the way God acts towards us. *“...For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”*

The sun does not shine only on the good people, but on the evil too. And He sends His rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. *“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*

You and I are God's children. We belong to a higher order. We need to reach out so others will know of the love of God. We have been given a very high calling, a special place – sons and daughters of the Most High God! I know right now, the power of God is available to you in Jesus. Believe it! God is in you! You are His special workmanship created to glorify Him by working His works in this world.

Chapter 18

AUTHORITY OF GOD

It never ceases to amaze me how much God has in His Holy word for you and for me that we might have abundant life. I just rejoice in the opportunity to open up that Word and just be fed a little bit more. God has so much there for us and it is just a matter of studying to show oneself approved unto God and rightly dividing the Word of Truth. It brings life. Jesus says His Word is spirit and life. So the more we think upon it and live in it and do it, the more abundantly our life is blessed.

Psalm 147 – tells us why there is none like God. He alone is the author of authority. God alone is the Lord of this universe. Let us take a look at Romans 11:33-36. Every time I start to think of myself as running the show I reflect on these verses.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory forever.”

Let us go over that verse 36 again. *“For from God, and through God and to God are all things: to God be the glory forever.”* This is exciting as we reflect upon these things because we can begin to put things into proper perspective. God alone is Lord – god alone – Not me, not you, not anyone else. God alone is Lord. God alone is to be directing our lives.

Job 38-42, is a real interesting section. Those last few chapters of Job are a blessing to us because they show God coming to Job and start to put some perspective on things as they really are. In Job 38-42, God is showing Job who really is the Lord. And, He was showing to Job that it was not Job. He is showing to us today, you are not the ones calling the shots. *“I alone am God.”*

In the early part of Creation, Satan challenged God’s authority. This was the sin of Satan. He tried to set himself up as God. He wanted to be above God. He wanted to call the shots. Satan was defeated and cast out of heaven onto

this earth. He was defeated because God alone is God. God alone is the power of the universe. Anyone who challenges that authority is cast down. This is why God says to us, humble yourselves before Him because He gives grace to the humble but the proud He resists.

Pride always comes before the fall. Pride is when one is setting up himself as authority rather than looking to God as being the only authority. Satan challenged God and this was the spirit of lawlessness or rebellion that entered into the world.

It says in the Old Testament that rebellion is equated with witchcraft. Any rebellion is equated with witchcraft. It is a sin, a horrible thing, because it violates God's eternal principles and it is an idol we set up, where we set ourselves up before God. God will not have anything to do with anything or anyone being put up before Him.

Satan came to Eve with that same spirit of lawlessness and rebellion and challenged God's authority and God's word. Satan said to Eve, *"Is it really true that God has told you you cannot eat from that tree? Is it true?"* IN other words, he was challenging the authority of God's word. Certainly he knew what God had told Eve was true. He was challenging that authority and trying to get Eve to challenge that authority, which Eve did, and she ate of that tree giving disobedience to God's command. The result was the fall of mankind.

God's word alone is the law of the universe. Man can set up his ways and his things but they will all fall short because God's law alone is the law of the universe. God alone has the authority to do these things. That is what He was coming to Job with – who are you to challenge Me? Job was in a state of spiritual pride, for which he later repented. (Job 42)

As Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, Pilate told Jesus – *"Don't you know, Jesus, that I have the authority over your life or your death at this point?"* Jesus looked at Pilate and said, *"Don't you know that you would not have any authority except the Heavenly Father had given it to you."* In other words, the only reason on this earth men have authority is because God has given that authority here in this world. God alone is the author of authority.

Let us take a look at Romans 13:1-7. it is important for us to understand that all authority that exists here in this world comes from God. Because God is

the only One that has authority over everything. These verses are going to be real helpful to us as we start to understand that God has established authority – in the governments, in the home through the husband, wherever you are working through the employer, and in the churches God has set down authority (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers.)

This is made clear in Romans 13:1 and following. This is to counter any rebellion or lawlessness which is of the enemy. *“Let every soul be subject unto the high powers. For there is no power but God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”*

This is God’s word. *“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.”* Now, it is very important that we understand this as meaning conscience towards God, because God has set down the authority that exists whether they are good or evil. All positions of authority are controlled by God, and authority is going to work our good as we obey God.

“For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due: custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.” (Romans 13:6-7)

This word of God is real clear that we are to obey the authorities that exist because only God has the right to establish authority in this earth. Jesus’ entire life was under authority. As He Himself said, *“The works that I do are not My works, they are the Father doing the works through Me.”* In other words, *“I’m the one you see doing them but it is under the authority of the Father God who has given Me the works to do.”* I’m being obedient is what He is saying. *“And I (Jesus) don’t say anything that isn’t under authority to what My Heavenly Father has told Me to say.”* Jesus’ entire life was under authority, to the authority that exists – His Father God. We need to understand this. Jesus is our example and he was under authority.

In Matthew 7:29 we also see that the people recognized that Jesus had some authority. This is very interesting because they are saying that *“He taught them as one having authority.”* That was different from the other religious teachers of His day. The people knew that what He said was true. They knew that there was something else going in this man that what met the eye. They knew that he represented a higher power. And, they knew that he represented God. They knew that when Jesus spoke, the power of God was going to move because He was sent from God. He had authority, and just by the words He spoke they knew this man was not like any other man. He had authority from God.

We understand that this authority was also a challenge. The religious authorities of his day challenged his authority saying, *“What authority do you speak this in?”* Jesus, in many cases answered them back with another question. He would move them around into a position where they saw the authority was His. He said that it came from His Heavenly Father. It came from God. Whether they believed what he said or not, he said to them, *“Prove Me by the works that I do.”* In other words, *“My words are not empty words but what I say happens because God is honoring it. God is working with Me confirming the Word that I speak, with signs and wonders following.”*

We understand that the people of Jesus’ day knew there was authority. We see a perfect example in the Bible. It is about a centurion, a Roman army official, who came to Jesus in Matthew 8:6 and following. We learn much about authority here as we understand that this man was under authority and he recognized this authority.

Look at what he says to Jesus when he comes. (Matthew 8:8) *“The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.”*

Let us understand that this centurion, this roman, this Gentile, recognized that this man Jesus was called of God and operated in God’s authority. IN the same authority that operated in his life as a soldier, he recognized Jesus was operating under and that Jesus was under an authority far greater. And so, all Jesus had to do was speak the word and the power of God would

perform the works. This is exciting. There was authority given to Jesus by the Heavenly Father. Let us take a look at Matthew 28:18, *“All power (authority) is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.”* Jesus recognized that all authority in heaven and earth belonged to Him to use. The power of God would flow when Jesus spoke the Word.

Look at what Jesus goes on to say to us in the next verse – *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations.”* Jesus calls us who believe upon His name to now go in the authority which He has (and which all heaven and earth is moving under) because the Father God has given that authority to Jesus that in the name of Jesus all power in heaven and earth will move. Jesus now is saying, *“You have the authority in My name to go out to speak My word to set My people free, and to let them know about the love of God.”* Jesus has given us that authority.

Luke 10:18-20. Jesus is speaking to us, *“I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”*

As a child of God we desire to walk in obedience to God’s Word and to be under authority. Obedience and authority go hand in hand. As we are obedient to the authority, God blesses. It says here, that God has given us ability over all the power of the evil one and nothing can harm us. We are to rejoice that our names are written in heaven. The name of Jesus has set us free.

This is God’s word speaking to us. He is bringing life to us. He is saying, *“The same authority,”* Jesus speaking, *“that I have from My Heavenly Father, I now give to you so you can move in the same way that I have moved in this world, doing even greater works than I do, that the Father may receive glory through the son.”* (John 14:12-14)

The apostles, when they were confronted by the authorities of their day, said to them, *“We must obey God rather than men.”* Now that is pretty strong. Were they disobeying the authorities God had set down? No. They were calling on, at that point, a higher authority – God Himself. Because the authorities that existed were telling them, *“You cannot speak any longer in*

the name of Jesus. You cannot go out and preach about the love of God any longer. You have to shut your mouths.”

The authorities were telling them these things. But the apostles recognized, *“We must obey God rather than men.”* When men start taking authority in their own hands and start violating God’s Word and God’s principles by moving in their own way and in their own time to accomplish things, rejecting the principles of God, standing against the principles of God, at that point, those men have overstepped their authority. This is important to understand.

We must call upon the higher authority that exists – God. Now, what does that mean? That means that we stand for God’s principles no matter what. However, we still respect and honor the authorities. The appeal to the authorities to do what is godly calls them to move in the way of god, submit themselves to God, that everyone may be blessed. We then take the consequences that come, whatever they may be.

Many people have lost their lives and are losing their lives because they stand up and will not renounce Jesus Christ as their Lord. Praise God, I pray with you today that god continues to give them faith to stand for the things of God. That they not reject the life that god has for them. Their witness is our witness. We need to stand upon God’s word and obey God rather than men. However, that does not give us the right to have a spirit of rebelliousness.

In 2nd Timothy 3:1 and following we see something that is very important because we are in these last days and look at what is happening in these last days. *“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”*

These are signs of the last days. There is going to be a godlessness. There is going to be rebelliousness, lawlessness. Wives will not want to submit to their husbands. Problems will happen between employer-employee relationships because people do not want to respond to authority. It is

already happening in schools. Things are happening where the children are rebellious to the teachers and towards their parents at home. But we are not to be concerned because we are going to be obedient to God's word. We are going to honor authority as from God. God will bless us as a result of this.

We understand that God alone is the authority that exists. As I am honoring government officials, and I am praying for them, I am believing God to move. God is moving. God is honoring our prayer. As husbands and wives are moving in proper relationship, husbands understanding their authority does not come from themselves, it comes from God, and they are submissive to God, then things are going to happen in the family. As wives are reverencing their husbands and honoring their husbands as to the Lord, then things are going to happen. Children, as they are obedient to the parents, enable things to happen.

We understand here, that God wants us to respond to Him. We are responding to Him when we respond to His authorities in this world in the proper way. We want to understand that man is accountable to God. Whether you recognize it or not you and I are accountable to God for the way we respond to Him and His authorities.

Job when he was confronted, responded and said, *"I have spoken about things that I did not understand, they were too great for me. I talked about things that I knew nothing about. And now, Lord God of hosts, I humble myself before You, and I respond in obedience and repentance."* (Chapter 42) God is calling us today to follow His Word to do what He says. We are to honor His authority and authorities.

Chapter 19

RESPONSE TO GOD'S AUTHORITY

AUTHORITY OF BELIEVER

In this chapter we are going to be taking a look at the authority of the believer. We want to understand that God is the author of all authority. God is the only one who has authority and so He is the only one who can give authority. Look at Ephesians 1:17 and following. This is a prayer that Paul prayed for God's people. *"I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know Him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you; the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead; and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realm; far above all rule and authority, power and dominion and every title that can be given. Not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under His feet (that is Jesus' feet) and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church which is His body; the fullness of Him who fills every thing in every way."*

The prayer of God through Paul was that the church might know:

1. What is the hope of their calling.
2. What is the inheritance that is ours in Jesus Christ and what God has provided for us.
3. That we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power in behalf of them that believe.

We understand here that all authority comes from God. And according to these passages, it is saying that God has given authority to the Lord Jesus Christ and we are His people, His body; He is the head. We are the body. Everything else is under our feet. This is how it works. God has now given authority to His people to use His name. We are to work His works in this world.

We want to share with you some scriptures that will be a real blessing to you as you start to understand the authority that God has given to you so you can begin to take your place in God's activity and God's work in this world.

Look at Philippians 2:5-11 saying here about Jesus, *"Your attitude should be the same of that as Christ Jesus, who being in the nature of God, did not consider equality to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient unto death; even death on a cross. Therefore, now God exalted Him, (Jesus) to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and in earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father."*

In other words, after Jesus died for us on that cross, the power of God raised Him from the dead and the name of Jesus was exalted above every name by the Father God, that in the name of Jesus all authority in heaven and earth rests.

Look at Colossians 1:12-14. *"Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light; for He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the son He loves in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation."*

In other words, the moment we received Jesus into our hearts, God moved us out of the kingdom of darkness under the power of Satan and all his rule and all his power. He actually moved us into His own kingdom, through the forgiveness of sins provided by the blood of Jesus Christ.

People always say that Satan has so much power and so much authority. But what God is actually saying is that the moment you receive Jesus, that power was all broken off of your life. He actually does not have any more power. The enemy has no power over your life unless you let him; because you now belong to the kingdom of God.

Colossians 2:15 brings out another important truth for us. (Verse 14 and 15) *"Having canceled the written code with it's regulations that was against us, (this is what Jesus did for us on the cross) and that stood opposed to us, He*

took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them triumphing over them by the cross.”

In other words, at the cross, the power of Satan was broken when the blood of Jesus went forth; Satan had lost his power completely. He was stripped of it by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was defeated. As soon as that blood was shed, his hold over mankind was lost. And then Jesus was raised from the dead and the power of God set Him free to proclaim victory over all the captives.

We need to understand this fact that God has already stripped the power and authority of the lord of this world, Satan. And, he has no authority any longer over us, God’s people. We have established two facts now:

1. The enemy has no more power over God’s people any longer. He has no power in this world any longer, unless we allow it to happen. This has to be established. He has no power unless we allow him to have it over us. However, he still has power over unbelievers. (2nd Corinthians 4:3-4)
2. The Father God established the name of Jesus above all names and all authority in heaven and earth rests in the name of Jesus.

Let us take a look at what happened with Jesus in regards to that authority. Look at Matthew 28:18 and following. *“then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* Now we have established that fact. *“Therefore, now, (the Lord Jesus speaking to us), go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you, and surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age.”*

We are establishing some principals that Jesus has stated that He has been given all authority and now He has told us to go. To go. In what name? In the name of Jesus. (Matthew 10:1) Jesus is speaking to His disciples. Even at this point, we understand that Jesus was operating under the power of God Himself in the perfect will of His Heavenly Father. And even while He walked on earth, He was in the process of training people to carry on the work of the ministry, to win this world to God. And here in Matthew 10:1,

we see that authority was given to the disciples. *“And He called His twelve disciples to Him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to cure every kind of disease and sickness.”* That authority was given to set people free and the authority rested in the name of Jesus.

Look at Luke 10:18 and following. Jesus speaking, *“He replied, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all of the power of the enemy – Satan. Nothing will harm you, however, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*

We find here that the Lord Jesus is establishing the fact of God that authority has been given to us as God’s people, as His believers, to overcome all of the power of the Evil One, and nothing can harm us; as we are under the blood of Jesus, under the protection of God, nothing can harm us as we are in obedience to God’s word.

We need to understand that this is not authority over people that has been given to us. No, it is talking about authority over demons, sickness and disease and over all the power of Satan, has been given. But it does not give me the right to run rough-shod over somebody else. No, that is not what it is talking about here. It is authority over all the power of Satan to set people free. This is exciting! A real important truth for God’s people today. Let us take it seriously and just grasp all that you can here out of God’s word.

John 14:12-14. Jesus speaking. *“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father and I will do whatever you ask in My name; that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name and I will do it.”*

In that precious name of Jesus all authority in heaven and earth rests. When we speak forth in the name of Jesus, the power of God is going to flow into the situation to set people free and Satan cannot do anything about it. He has to let go as we speak forth in the name of Jesus.

Matthew 18:18. *“I tell you the truth, (Jesus speaking to us) whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”* And it goes into a prayer promise then; but the point of God here is that whatever we bind on earth is going to be bound in

heaven. If we bind the power of Satan in any situation here on earth, the power of the Father God in the name of Jesus is moving in our behalf to set people free, right there in heaven the power is moving. The power of God is given to us to use in the name of Jesus.

If we are not using the name of Jesus, no one is going to be set free. The power of God though is available it says here. And we can also loose people from the bondage of the enemy by speaking forgiveness in the situation. We have that ability. That is what it says. We are God's representatives and God's ambassadors in the name of Jesus.

We want to understand that the blood of Jesus paid the price to set mankind free. And that authority that we have been given rests in the name of Jesus. I delight in speaking that name, because I know every time I speak that name, the power of God is flowing in the name of Jesus. It is flowing into your life, into your home, into your situations. In the name of Jesus we are speaking life to you, God's people, to set you free, so that you might set others free.

We are God's representatives. We are God's ambassadors and He has given to us His calling, the anointing of His Spirit the authority of the name of Jesus, and the sword, the Word of God, to go forth and set people free.

I want to share with you today, an account of my first encounter with demons. Where I actually saw for the first time the power of God moving to set an individual free. (We have experienced many encounters since that time.) This will bless your heart. The demons spoke out to us through this individual. They were speaking to us, but they were not talking to us, they were talking to Jesus.

They thought we were Jesus. Now this is a blessing to God's people. Because as we go out in the name of Jesus, the demons do not see us. They see Jesus, and they actually spoke it out. They thought we were Jesus. Why? Well, because they saw us in the same light as God sees us, through Jesus' blood. They saw Jesus. And as we went in the name of Jesus, we represented Jesus; the power of God flowing and they were fearing and they were trembling because they know the power of God and they know they have no place to stand where the power of God is present. (John 14:12-14) This person had one of these demons in her and it was trying to take her over. I am going to just summarize what happened as we get to the

encounter itself. At that time, I did not know anything about these things. I knew the Bible talked about demons, but I had never ever ran across one, and I would not have recognized one if I saw one! Let alone what to do with the thing. But this was my encounter so that God could teach me how to deal with them so that I can teach you.

I flew up from down south, as I understood in my spirit that there was something tremendously wrong. There was something tremendously wrong and it was something supernatural that was harassing the person at that point. The Lord had shown me that whatever it was had to go. He knew what it was, but I did not really. I just had heard about these things. As I walked into the room where the person was present, it was her that was talking to me and she related to me how on Wednesday (IU was up there on Saturday) she had received a desire in her heart to be set free. She knew that she needed to be delivered and so she called out. She cried out to God to set her free. The Word of God tells us that whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Whenever a person desires to call out and to have that bondage of Satan broken off their life, to be delivered from whatever it is that has them in bondage, the power of God is going to start to flow. That was Wednesday that she called out. On Saturday was when we finally arrived. She told me, as she lay there on the bed, that the night before on Friday night, that as she understood it, her dad had come (but we understand that once a person dies, they await the judgment).

It was really an angel of God that was coming to her at that point and was ministering to her. And the angel said to her, *“My daughter, your Lord would have you to be with Him, but you can’t come the way you are. He is going to set you free.”* That was God’s message to her. And she was recounting this to me as she lay on the bed.

We talked for a while and I did not have any understanding at that point. There did not appear to be anything that was wrong. But I had been told about how she was having severe headaches starting to come on her right side and she was recounting to me about this thing she called *“Beth.”* This was what the demon called itself at that point. So we laid our hands on the right side of her forehead there and no sooner had we done that and started to pray a blessing in the name of Jesus, that her body just started to rack, and her face started to contort and she kind of started to twitch and contort all

over. The next thing I knew these steel eyes were looking at me. It was just like they talk about seeing daggers. Well, whatever was looking at me was seeing daggers and I knew it was not the person anymore. It started to call out and cry out to me and say, *“I hate you, I hate you,. I know why you have come. But I am not going to leave. I belong here. You don’t. I’m the one who has made her strong. I am not going to leave. I know why you have come but I am not going to leave.”*

A demon, we have to understand is not about to leave the place where it is inhabiting. The thing had fully manifested at this point as I called out the name of Jesus and pleaded the blood over her. I started to pray in the Spirit. This is the importance of praying in the Spirit of God. We are not using carnal weapons, but the power of God to start to move. I started to pray in the Spirit (tongues) and this thing started to laugh and then it started to cry and then it started to shriek and it started to holler; and then it started to call out, *“I am not going to leave. I am not going to leave. And if I do leave, I am going to take her with me.”*

First it started to say that it was protecting her and it was trying to defend her, trying to make me out the baddie. It tried to move me away from what God had sent me there for – to set her free in the name of Jesus. And the power of God started to move up within me and I started to speak against that demon in the name of Jesus, *“You foul spirit, you come out of her in the name of Jesus.”*

At that point the thing started to shriek and holler again, and then it got real quiet. Then it started to say, *“Okay, okay, I’ll leave, open the window, open the window. I’ll leave.”* And I thought, *“Oh, my goodness what’s going on here?”*

I didn’t know what to do! But the power of God filled the room, and the Bible talks about the glory of the Lord, and when that came into the room, there was a cloud present around the tabernacle and that cloud actually came into the room where we were. And the power of God and the anointing of God just filled that place. And I didn’t know what to do! I was just so excited and confident about my God and what He was doing, I was just praising the Lord.

I did not know at that point, what to do with the spirits. And the power of God spoke through me and He told that demon, *“Beth, foul spirit, in the*

name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, you come out of her and you go to the dry place.”

At that point, I did not even know what a dry place was. Later the Lord taught me about the dry place. This is where the spirits go when they are removed, and they wander around there seeking for rest but they can't find any, so they come back later. (Our *Satan's Defeat* book goes into this matter.)

At this point, there was a total peace that flowed into that room, and the woman's face started to contort again and her whole body started to contort and then there was nothing but a stillness in the room. And her face began to glow, and what came into my spirit was what happened as the angels of the Lord were there ministering and the glory of the Lord shown round about them. That is what was about the woman at that point as she was set free by the power of God.

Before this time she had all kinds of sicknesses and diseases in her body. Afterwards she got up and she went to the toilet and all kinds of green garbage came out of her and it turned black and later that week all kinds of mucous flowed out of her as God was cleansing her body. We started to understand that the power of God had flowed into her and touched her. She was totally set free. The demon was trying to starve her out and trying to deceive her and trying to kill her.

The power of God set her free, and afterwards the headaches were gone. I was sitting there at the edge of the bed just bawling and crying and just praising and thanking God for a wonderful work that He had done there, and she asked me, *“Randy, what is wrong?”* And I told her, *“god has set you free.”*

Then she was hungry and her headache was gone, she was thirsty. That is when she went into the bathroom and all of this garbage came out of her and later on, all the diseases and things that had been afflicting her body were found to be all removed from her. These demons were what were making much of her sickness, and this we have run into many times since then. These demons bring sickness and disease with them.

I can share many accounts since that time. I just wanted to share this one with you because it is so vivid and so blessed to me, because that is where

God taught me about demons and how to start to deal with them; and I knew that my God was great, and He is able to set people free. He is doing that every day. We are seeing people set free by the power of God. It is available to us in the name of Jesus Christ.

I am excited about the fact that God is able to set you free too. He is able to move. He is able to move through you, as you learn to use the name of Jesus and understand that these things the Bible calls demons are subject to you in Jesus' name. It says in Ephesians 6 that we do not fight against flesh and blood or people; but we are fighting against the principalities, the powers of darkness. Principalities and powers of darkness that are from Satan. We must start to understand this, that God has given us weapons. He has given us authority. This is what I encourage you to do... get into God's Word and know what is yours so that you can speak against Satan like Jesus spoke against the devil when He was tempted. He spoke out, "*It is written*" ...and then He said, "*get behind Me.*"

As we learn to submit ourselves to God; to be obedient to His Word and then to resist the devil, the power of God Himself is going to move in the name of Jesus. And I can guarantee on the basis of God's word, that Satan has got to flee, as in terror. (James 4:7)

No demon in hell can stand against the name of Jesus and the authority that God has given to us in that name. And understanding that it says, "*Behold, I have given to you authority over serpents and scorpions and over all of the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means harm you.*" There was no way that that demon could touch me at that point. Because I was protected by the power of God in the name of Jesus and by the blood of Jesus. It could not do any harm to me. It can not do any harm to you.

But it goes on in that verse there that I am sharing from, Luke 10:19-20, "*rejoice not in the fact that these demons have to go but rejoice because your name is written in the Book of Life.*" That is an exciting fact of God. I know my name is written in the Book of Life. As you have received Jesus into your heart, you can rest confident that your name is written in the Book of Life also.

Chapter 20

GOD'S WISDOM

“Do not deceive yourselves, if any one of you thinks he is wise, by the standards of this age, he should become a fool so that he may become wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight.” (1st Corinthians 3:18-19)

So we understand here that man often laughs at God's ways of doing things, and God laughs at man's ways of doing things. But we understand that the wisdom of God is far above anything that man can even begin to imagine or think. But God in His way chooses things that are foolishness to man, that His wisdom might be increased among the people.

We are going to look at several examples from God's word that will show God's way of doing things, and how funny they appear to man.

The first one we want to look at is Noah. We want to visualize a man building a big huge boat out in the middle of the desert. Where I come from is the same kind of country as where Noah was from. There is nothing out there as far as water goes and it is just bleak and barren as far as countryside. Noah is out there and he is tapping and hammering away and he is building this boat out in the middle of the desert, and the people are coming by and they are looking at him and they are laughing at him.

Noah was instructed by the Lord to build this boat out in the desert because a great flood was going to come. The people of the day were laughing and mocking at Noah and just making a lot of fun of him, but he continued to build the boat in obedience to God's word. The people continued to taunt him and laugh at him. Then as he finished building the boat, he started bringing in all these animals. Then the people really started laughing and they were telling Noah, *“what are you trying to do, build a zoo out here in the desert?”*

They were laughing at him and having a good time. But one day the rains started to come down from the heavens and the water started to come up from the ground and the people began to start to think. Especially as the water started to creep up to their ankles, and up to their knees, up to their

waist. They started having to carry their little ones. They started to climb on top of their houses. They started to claw and scrape over one another trying to get up the mountainside and they were calling to Noah, *“Noah, let us into the boat.”* But it was too late, for the boat had already been sealed.

None of the people had repented of their ways or returned to God. This was the message that Noah had brought all of this time. *“Turn from your ways and turn to God. Look to God for His life.”* None of the people would have anything to do with that, and they would not have anything to do with his boat until it was too late for them. They were not laughing anymore as Noah floated away and they all died from drowning in the water.

What man considered his wisdom, was foolishness to God; and what God considered His wisdom was foolish to man. Because man did not turn to God, he was lost.

Another example: We look at the children of Israel, and we see them wandering around in an area of about 150 miles across for 40 years. Because of their willful disobedience to God, and their murmuring, grumbling, griping and complaining, they did not enter into the Promised Land, and they wandered around for 40 years in this small area.

Now we need to understand, that when they left Egypt there were over 600,000 men, let alone women and children and cattle, sheep and the whole works. They wandered around in this area for all that time, and God supplied for them. Now they could not figure out how God was going to supply, but God supplied. Out of His wisdom, He tapped rocks and water came out. He provided what they called manna, a form of bread in the morning, and quail in the evening. God constantly supplied His people in ways that they could not understand. Man’s wisdom was foolishness to God and God’s wisdom was foolish to man. God was looking for obedient people who relied on Him. (Deuteronomy 8:1-6)

Now we take a look at Gideon, a servant of the Lord. We find a lot of different things in the way that God fought battles, and it was not at all the way man would think of. God one time in fighting His battles, chose his army with Gideon, by telling him to watch how the people went down to drink out of the river. Those who went down and kind of put their faces in the water and drank that way, they were chosen. Now this sounds really strange. Out of a couple of thousand men, God narrowed His army down to

three hundred men, and then they went against an army of quite a few thousand to fight the battle.

How did they go into the battle? They went into the battle with a bunch of jugs and a bunch of lights (torches), and clanging things. This is how they went into battle. The Lord routed the enemy. We see a lot of really funny things when we look at the way God went into battle.

There was a fellow named Jehosaphat in the Old Testament, and he was king of Israel. And a big army came against Israel; thousands and thousands of troops. They were outnumbered – way outnumbered, and they did not know how they were going to make it. And the Lord told Jehosaphat to gather the people with their instruments, harps and gongs, cymbals and to go into battle and put the singers and the praisers out in front of the army.

To man, this sounds totally ridiculous. It really is a funny way to fight a battle. This was God's way, and as they were obedient to do what God said, what happened? They marched into battle and here comes the other army against them, and this other army was probably just laughing away because coming against them were all these people praising and singing to the Lord.

And what happened? That is what we are interested in – the results. As the people praised the Lord, marching into the battle, God routed the enemy. This is God's way of fighting a battle. God's wisdom is man's foolishness. Man laughed at that until the enemy was defeated. But Jehosaphat was obedient to God and he did it God's way, believing that God had a better way to do things than he could think of. God had told him "*the battle is not yours it belongs to me.*" Jehosaphat simply did what God told him to do.

Jericho is another wonderful example of God's battle plans. They went into Jericho. God instructed them to march around the city one time each day for seven days; and on the seventh day to march around seven times. They did it. The first six days they were to march around not saying a word. They were obedient. On the seventh day they marched around seven times and then they were told to give a shout. And when the children of Israel gave that shout, the power of God crumbled the walls of Jericho!

Now you can image what the people of Jericho were doing all this time, watching this army just walk around one time, once a day. How all these people were probably laughing at them wondering, "*Well, how are you*

going to get in? Do you think you're going to get in by walking around?" They were probably making all kinds of fun and mocking at the people of God at that point.

But the people of God were obedient to God. They did not care what the people of the world thought. They just sought to be pleasing to God, to do things God's way, and what happened? The walls came crumbling down. The children of Israel took over the city of Jericho by the power of God.

Take a look at baptism. There is a wonderful example of something that is foolishness to the people of the world, because they do not understand God's ways and God's wisdom. In baptism, the person goes out and gets into the water, stands there and someone prays over him in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and then down under the water they go. They come back up and out of the water.

To man, that sounds kind of dumb, but when you understand God's principles upon which baptism is based, you see that God is actually burying us with Christ at that point, and then raising us up as Christ was raised from the dead, so we are to walk in newness of life. And what is happening is the outward sign of what happened on the inside of us the moment we received Jesus as our Lord. God made us new creatures. Old things passed away, all things are made new, and all things are of God. A wonderful example of God's wisdom, man's foolishness. Man laughs at it, but God blesses through it.

The Lord's supper is the same thing. In the early days of the church, the people of the world thought that the believers were actually eating people! And they made mock of that and they thought that was horrible. But you see, they did not understand what God was doing. As we share in the Lord's supper, we are sharing in the true body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not eating the body and blood the way the people of the world thought. It is a spiritual gift, a part of God's wisdom for us to proclaim the Lord's death until He returns; and God blesses us as we share in His supper, prepared for us.

These are several of the things that the people of the world do not understand, nor can they understand, until they have come into God's kingdom and are filled with the Spirit of God.

Another thing might be what the Bible calls the “*Laying on of hands.*” That is where we put hands on people in the name of Jesus and God heals or blesses people in this way. The world thinks that is ridiculous. They say, “*How can anything happen that way?*” Well, all we know is that you lay hands on somebody that is sick and they will recover. (Mark 16:18)

This is God’s way. God actually flows. His power actually flows as we put hands on people in the name of Jesus, and God heals them. God is the healer and He says our part is just to be obedient and lay hands, pray the prayer of faith, and God heals. That is God’s wisdom and man’s foolishness. Man does not understand.

Praying in the Spirit is another thing that the world and many believers do not understand. But when we pray in the spirit (tongues) it is an operation of the Spirit of God. Our mind, it says in 1st Corinthians 14:14, is unfruitful. It is unproductive. Man’s mind and man’s understanding does not understand this operation, because it is a spiritual gift coming right out of our new spirit. The minute we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, God gave us a new spirit. Now when we pray in the spirit, our spirit prays, but our understanding and mind is unfruitful, so we do not understand what is going on.

But God’s word says that we are edified, charged up, and He says that we are talking secrets and mysteries that the Father God understands. (1st Corinthians 14:2-4) But man does not understand and that is why we are not speaking to man but God.

Praying in the spirit, to man, is foolishness. Praying in the spirit, to God, is God’s wisdom and He understands. Those who are obedient to God will receive God’s blessing.

Another incident in the Bible was about a fellow named Naaman, who came to Elisha. Naaman had leprosy all over his body. Someone told him that if he went to Elisha, God would heal him. So he went to Elisha. Naaman was a great ruler, seeking his healing. He was told to go wash in the river Jordan and he would be healed. Now Naaman thought to himself, “*I have a lot cleaner rivers over where I come from. Why should I go wash in some muddy old river?*”

He went away thinking that Elisha was crazy and this was dumb, and why should I do it. Why should I follow him? So he was going back. He fully intended to go home without his healing. He was not going to be obedient to what Elisha told him to do.

He had a servant though who was wise, and said, *“Naaman, what have you got to lose? Why don’t you do as the man of God said and see what happens?”*

So, he was obedient at that point, probably reluctantly, but he did it. He went and washed in the river Jordan, and the moment he did so, God healed him of his leprosy.

Now this was foolishness to Naaman, but it was God’s wisdom. And as he was obedient and became obedient... he received God’s results. You know it does not matter whether we are obedient at first or whether we get obedient, as long as we are obedient, God will move. Naaman became obedient and was healed by the power of God.

Look at 1st Corinthians 1:18 and following. It says here, *“for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wise, the intelligence of the intelligent, I will frustrate them. Where is the wise man, where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has God not made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through it’s wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached, to save those who believed. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. But to those who God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than man’s wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength. Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were influential, not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things in the world to shame the wise. God chose the lowly things of this world, and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God. That is our righteousness, our holiness*

and our redemption. Therefore, it is written, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Now the cross of Jesus, where Jesus shed His blood for you and for me, is foolishness to the world. They do not understand what some guy giving his life for the rest of the world is going to do. But in the case of Jesus, Jesus was perfect in every way. He was the perfect sacrifice for you and me. He had to shed His blood because we could not have the life of God, for we were apart from God. But Christ, in God’s wisdom, was obedient to God and He gave His life for us that we might not have to die eternally.

This is God’s promise. It is foolishness to the world, but God, in His wisdom did it this way, that we might be right with Him. And then the power of God confirmed His Word that this was His way and He raised Jesus up from the dead. It is the resurrection of Christ that we now preach because it is the power of God to save you. What Jesus did on the cross was confirmed by His resurrection, and the power of God is here to save us. It is here to make us right with Him.

We want you to understand that the love of God is reaching to you right now. Now Naaman thought it was foolishness to go and wash in the river, but when he got obedient and he did it, the life of God flowed into his body and he was healed.

In the same way, God is calling to us today, saying, *“My wisdom is going to set you free.”* Now you may think it is foolishness and you may not understand the need for it, but He is saying to us, *“Understand that I want you to have My life and I have provided the way to it. The only way to it is through my Son, Jesus. Jesus says I am the way, the Truth and the Life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.”*

The Word of God tells us that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. If we confess with our mouth, proclaim it before men, that Jesus Christ is our Lord, and we believe in our hearts He has risen from the dead, God’s promise is that we will be saved. This is His promise. This is His way to that life. To simply receive what Jesus Christ has done for us on that cross. Praise God it is available to us today.

What God is concerned about is not the way in which He approaches things or wants us to do things. No matter how foolish. God is not concerned

about the way things are to be done. What God is concerned about is whether we are obedient to Him, to receive His life. That is what God is concerned about today – obedience.

Are you and I willing to take God at His word, just as He says it? And to simply step out in the childlike faith and say, *“I believe You, Lord. I believe that what you have told me is true, and I want to do what you have told me to do. I thank You, Lord today, Your life is available to me abundantly, right now, through Jesus Christ. I call upon the name of the Lord right now; Father, I recognize that there was a reason why Jesus had to die on that cross. It was because I was separated from You. According to Your Word, I understand this and I understand Your word to be true; and I thank You for giving Your Son for me. Come into my life Lord Jesus, come into my life. I confess Jesus Christ as Lord with my mouth and I believe in my heart that He is risen from the dead. I thank You Lord right now, that I am your child by the blood of Jesus. Now I do not understand this operation or why it was done the way You did it, but Father God, I thank You. In Your wisdom that is far beyond mine, You know what You are doing, and I just want to do and respond the way you tell me. So I thank You, Lord, right now, according to your Word and promise, that I am Your child.*

This is the same way that we claim all the blessings from God: obedience. Do not ask questions out of your mind at this point. Take God’s word as true. His wisdom is going to bring life into your situation. And then respond the way God says to respond and God will bring life. He will bring every blessing to you. That is His promise.

Understand also, that Jesus Christ is coming. Coming back to take you and I to be with Himself. A wonderful work of God. God is saying it to us. It is true. He is coming soon. I challenge you today to respond to His life in Jesus Christ. God is calling us, *“Be obedient like children that I might bless you today, till My Son returns.”*

Chapter 21

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WISDOM

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

When you start to go through God's word, you find that there are more and more things that you never really spent too much time thinking about. Many things that will bring real life as we start to apply them. This is not just some book. These words on these pages are Spirit and they are Life; and they will bring life to our situations.

That is why, when we were led to start this ministry the Lord just wanted us to share the Word of God. Just put out the word of God, to keep it in front of the eyes of His people, so that they might be encouraged when they need encouragements. So that they might be rebuked or disciplined by the Word when they need discipline, so they might grow. And that is why we are sharing most of the time just straight out of the Word. We want you to have what God's thoughts are rather than our own.

We want to share with you concerning faith and obedience, and the relationship of faith and obedience and how they work together. IN Deuteronomy 28, obedience always resulted in blessings. And there are many blessings listed there in Deuteronomy 28 that you might take a look at on your own, and to understand some of God's provisions. We just want to point out that blessing came with obedience; cursing came with disobedience.

In James 2:14-26, we find some very interesting things here concerning how faith and obedience work together. *“What good is it my brothers, if a man claims to have faith, but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fit, but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, You have faith, I have deeds. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good. Even the demons believe that, and they shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that*

faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?"

You see, his faith and his actions were working together. Now this is very important for us. His faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, *"Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. And he was called God's friend. You see that a person was justified by what he does and not by faith alone."* (James 2:21-24) Now this is a wild statement, because the whole purpose of the Reformation was based on the fact that we are justified by faith, apart from the works of the law. What that was saying was that we could not in any way earn our way to heaven. It was only by the grace of God, and we received it through faith in Jesus Christ.

Now this passage says, *"You see, that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone."* What he is getting at here now, is not a contradiction. It is a saying that if a person is really saved; has really made a commitment of their life to Jesus, then there are going to be works that follow. This is an important fact for us today. *"In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."* (James 2:25-26)

Faith and obedience, according to this section of Scripture, actually go together. They go together. They work hand in hand. I cannot say I have faith if there are no actions and works that tell you that I have faith. If there are no works that follow, there is probably no faith that is present.

In John 14:15 and 21 we discover something else. The Lord Jesus is speaking to us here about the relationship of faith and love and works. *"If you love Me you will obey what I command."* Then verse 21 *"Whoever has my commands and obeys them he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by my Father and I too will love him and show Myself to him."* So in other words, Jesus was making a direct correlation between if we love God and if we have faith in God, then there is going to be some obedience involved. There is going to be some action involved. We cannot say we love God and hate our neighbor. It does not work together. It does not operate that way. We must be consistent. If we love God, then obedience

will follow. There will be a direct relationship between us having faith in God, and action works that follow as a result.

We understand here that faith is actually the evidence of reality of something that is unseen at this point. Faith is the evidence of reality that is unseen to us at this point. Now we understand here, that we cannot see God, except He reveal Himself. Nobody has seen God's face it says in God's Word. Yet we believe He is. Well, as the Scripture says, so do the devils. They fear and tremble. But that is not enough; to believe that there is a God. We must receive that God. And He has given the way through Jesus Christ. Now we have faith, that in Jesus Christ, we are saved; as we have confessed and acted at that point, saying, "*Jesus Christ is my Lord and in my heart. He is risen from the dead;*" we actually received what God has provided as His free gift. The Word of God says that confession is made to salvation. If I do not confess with my mouth that "*Jesus is Lord,*" then I am not saved. That is the way it works.

Hebrews 11:1 and following. Here is where we get the meaning and definition of what faith is. This is an exciting chapter. I believe that every believer should spend some time looking through it.

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." This is what the ancients were commended for. Now look through this at how faith operated with action and obedience. *"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."* In other words, there was nothing. God spoke. Something happened. He spoke by faith because there was not anything present then.

Many times today we speak by faith. We do not see any evidence. But the faith, it says here, is actually the substance of what we are hoping for and it is actually the evidence of what we do not yet see. Now when it materializes for us, we do not need faith any longer, because we have it. But in the meantime, we say, *"By faith, I know I am saved."* Well, I will not know I am in the presence of God until I am in the presence of god. But by faith, I know right now, I am saved. It will become a reality for me after I die or when Jesus returns; which ever comes first. Now the Word goes on giving us quite a few different examples of people who operated by faith.

By faith, Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offerings. By faith he still speaks even though he is dead. We understand that Abel offered up a living sacrifice, which was the offering that God had intended to be vegetables, fruit of the ground, which was not what God had asked for. Abel was blessed. Cain was not. We understand that faith involves obedience. Abel was blessed because he was obedient to do what God said to do in the way that God said to do it.

By faith, Enoch was taken from this life so that he did not experience death. He could not be found because God had taken him away. For before he was taken he was commended as one who pleased God. What pleased God about Enoch? Faith. Here is how we see it; *“and without faith, (Hebrews 11:6) it is impossible to please God. Because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”* That is the God we have. He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him, by faith; claiming His promise, acting upon it, speaking it out, saying *“I’ve got it in Jesus name,”* and then acting like it.

By faith, Abraham, when he was called to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, he obeyed and he went. Look at this. He did not know where he was going. What was the factor that put him over? *“By faith (Hebrews 11:9) he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country. He lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob who were heirs with him of the same promise; for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”*

He was looking forward to life with God forever. But we understand here that he went out, not even knowing where he was going, simply because God said, *“Go.”* There it is. He was obedient. The mark of a person who has faith is obedience. They will do what God says to do. They may not understand why they are doing it or what for or where they are going, but they do it. They go when God says *“go.”* They jump when God says *“jump.”* That is the kind of person who is going to be blessed of the Lord.

Now we could go through many other examples here that are given, and I want to just encourage you to do that on your own, here in Hebrews 11. It is an exciting chapter.

We find by faith the walls of Jericho fell down after the people had marched around them seven days. (verse 30)

Verse 29 talks about the Red Sea and how the people just walked right out there. God opened it up and they walked out.

They walked around Jericho. The dumbest thing in the world one would think as a way to fight an army. But as they walked around in obedience to God, the walls fell down.

The key here in every situation that is listed in Hebrews 11 is that the people did what God said to do; and then they got the results. By faith they acted and then they got the results. They saw the results.

This is the way that we need to start looking at ourselves. We need to start developing within us, such a God consciousness, an awareness, that as we are obedient to God's Word, then results must happen. Many times we are going to step out, and by faith, receive something and not see any physical manifestation at that point. But God says, *"If it is promised in My Word, you have it."* You have it. Act upon it now.

Verse 39 and following there, *"These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us, so that only together with us would they be made perfect."*

We understand that God is the author and the perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2) Jesus Christ is the one who is shaping our lives. As we begin to act in faith in obedience to His Word, that is when we are going to see results.

For salvation, we understand that confession was made to salvation. Faith is how we receive from God. Now everything from God comes from the unknown – in that, we do not see God. We do not see any of His blessings, any of His benefits. They first originate in the spirit realm. This is Hebrews 11:3. Then they come into this physical realm that we see. This is how it happens. We understand here though, that we have to be able to receive from the spiritual realm. And we receive from God, by faith, and then we speak it with our mouth and we act upon it. And the action is what determines whether we really have it or not.

In James 4:17 it says, *“To know to do good and not do it is sin.”* If we really have faith, and we see needs around us; and we may think, *“Well, I don’t have enough to cover it,”* understand that, *“Yes, you do!”* God has enough to cover it! You are His ambassador. God will cover it through you and you will be taken care of. Faith involves action.

Abraham and Sarah received a promise that in old age they would have a child. God fulfilled that promise. But let me tell you this. That was no supernatural birth. Those people who were over 100 years old had intercourse, that they might have that child. They acted upon God’s promise and they believed that God was going to make a fruitful womb and a fruitful child would come forth in fulfillment of the promise. (Romans 4:17-25)

When the prayer of faith is done for healing, a lot of people right away look, to see what happened – to see whether they received healing or not. That is a mistake. The Word of God says, *“When you pray, believe you have received the things you asked and don’t doubt, you will have what you are asking for. You will see it.”* (Mark 11:24) So what am I going to do at that point? It still hurts. God says, *“Thank and praise Me that you have your healing and it will manifest itself in your body.”*

God does not operate on a time schedule or framework like we do. God does not work that way. God operates without time, but He operates by faith, and it will happen. It has to happen. This is God’s Word. This is God’s promise. It happens the moment we pray, and we will see the results.

If you have a need that needs to be met, God can meet those needs. Understand, once you pray, it says, *“Believe that you receive the things you ask. Do not doubt and you will have what you say.”* So at that point, what do you do? You step out and say, *“Father God, I thank You right now in Jesus name that I receive. I receive what I need, and I thank You Lord for it.”* Then, go about your business. Thank and praise God and it will come.

The Lord showed me a little example. Like most examples, they are imperfect to a degree, but He was showing me about a catalogue and how we are to picture whatever it is we are believing God for according to His Word and promise. Not to consume upon our own lusts but to use for Him and for His glory. He taught me to picture that picture of whatever it is that we are believing God for. Start to get it in your visual eye. This is like

getting it in your spirit eye. Start to see whatever it is you are believing God for.

We had a situation where a fellow had been crippled for a long period of time. He began to believe that *“Yes, God does heal people.”* Then he began to believe that *“God could heal me.”* Then he began to believe that *“God will heal me.”* Then he began to believe that *“God has already healed me.”* According to 1st Peter 2:24, *“By His stripes you were healed.”*

He began to see himself walking and standing. Now there were very few bones in his pelvis any longer. They had taken out a lot of the bones. Structurally, he was not able to stand, by medical standards. But this man, I want you to understand, began to see himself walking; and then this man began to stand bearing his own weight. Next step – to walk. People would say, *“Well, if he is healed, he would be out walking and running.”* Understand that according to God’s word, he was healed the moment the prayer of faith was done. But a lot of times we have to get some Word built into us to receive that healing. And as we grow in understanding and as we start to visualize and see, then that starts to set things in motion. That is a faith operation – a spirit operation. He started to see things happening with himself. Then he placed the order. When you see that picture there and it looks so good, then you place the order.

We place our order by praying to God. Say, *“Father God, in the name of Jesus, I ask that You would give me healing in that situation.”* He placed his order and the power of God began to manifest in his body.

Now understand that this has happened over a period of time. There has been time involved here. He had to get from the point where he was not believing in anything, to the point where he was believing God that he is healed. So what happens? The order went out. He started going around telling everybody that he was healed. Praise God! He was still in a wheelchair, but telling people that he was healed. Now to the world that sounds absurd. You know you look at him and he is still crippled, but on the basis of God’s Word and promise he was healed. That was God’s Word, and he was seeing himself that way. He was actually watching people walk. We always kind of kidded him about that. *“Watch who you’re watching walk. You want to get the right walk.”* He was modeling himself at that point, learning how to walk by watching people.

In the catalogue he had seen the picture. He had seen himself walking. Placed the order. Placed it to the Lord. And then he was telling people what he had ordered. Now, don't you do that? When you buy something from the catalogue, don't you run around showing people in the catalogue, "*this is what I have coming, this is what I have. This is mine. This is exactly what I have right here.*" In the same way, this man was showing people what he had. Now he did not have it right there. You did not see it in him. You do not see the goods when you are showing them the catalogue either. You do not have those goods sitting right there. You are showing them a picture. You are showing them what is coming.

I fully believe that in the time ahead, that man is going to be walking. We are going to see the manifestation, as he continues to act on the Word of God. We have seen this principle of God work countless times. It is true.

If I ordered a refrigerator from the catalogue, I would not go out and order again and again and again. Otherwise I might as well open up an appliance shop. I do not see it at that point, but it is coming. It is on the way. I have it. I know I have it, so I do not need to run around asking again and again to receive it. Because I have one. Now if I do order 12 times, then I have twelve of them coming – twelve refrigerators. What am I going to do with them?

If you need one healing for your body, ask one time and receive it. Thank Him that it is done. This is an important lesson for us – a very important lesson.

God's word says to "*Act then, in obedience.*" If I have a new refrigerator then I am going to go out and start to get rid of the old one and I am going to start to clean up around there and to get the floor all spick and span and move the thing in. I am going to get action involved because it is coming. And I have it. I already have it. It is on it's way. It is a matter of just receiving it.

This applies to anything – anything from God. You find a promise in God's word and that is where it begins. You claim that promise. If you are believing God for loved ones to be saved, you claim that promise. He has given many promises in His Word. You can claim your entire household. You can move mountains in the name of Jesus. You can break the power of the enemy off f them, so that they are able to receive the life of God. You

can claim them. You speak that prayer forth. You say, *“Father, in the name of Jesus, I claim my loved ones. I claim them all to be saved, to receive life, and I thank You Father God right now that every one of them is saved and able to receive that salvation>”* And you go about your business.

Now, what would be the action step at that point? The action step would be to treat them as though they are saved. Why? God calls things that be not as though they are. And what happens? They become. (Romans 4:17) This is God’s promise. It has to happen. And as I love them and as I go about my business, that is my action step. I am treating them just like any other believer.

Love them. That is how we are to be treating other believers; loving them, encouraging them, provoking each other to love and good works. And as we are doing that with one another, you can count on it, that person is just going to fall in to line, as you are telling them, *“How Godly you are, I thank the Lord for you, my husband. I thank the Lord for you, my wife. I thank the Lord for you, my child. I thank the Lord for you, my neighbor, because I am grateful as to what God is doing in your life.”*

Now am I lying? No. Not according to God’s Word. I am speaking the truth. It may not show right now, but that person starts to understand, *“yeah, they are thanking God for me. They are treating me like I am a believer.”* What is going to happen? Before long they are going to say, *“Yes, I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord and I am excited about what God has done in my life.”* And you are going to see them one by one, they are all going to come in. Every last one of them.

But here is an action step that needs to be involved. Obedience. My part is to love them – to encourage them – to speak God’s word when questions are asked. And they will receive. You can count on it. That is God’s promise. Thank You Jesus. He says, *“When you pray, believe you have received the things you ask and you will see it.”* (Mark 11:24) Understand that. Action is always involved. When God says to do something, do it!

Chapter 22

LOVE – RESPONSE TO GOD’S PLAN OF LIFE

I was just thinking the other day how wonderful it is to be one of god’s children; and the Love of God, how great it is. It is moving towards us every day. I was thinking about how faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. As I heard about how much God loves me in Jesus, that Jesus gave His own life for us that we might be set free, that touched my heart. The Love of God started to minister to me the fact that I was set free. I was His child.

As I think upon that every day since I received Jesus into my heart as my Lord and Savior, I come to a new awareness that I am a new creature. I do not belong in this world any longer. I am not a part of this world. But I have a purpose here. A purpose to share about the Love of God and how great that love is for me and for you. That is why I am alive today, to share about that love that god has for us.

Let us look at how we are to love one another as God has first loved us. Romans 10:9-10 *“That if we confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is our Lord and that if we believe in our heart that He is risen from the dead, we will be saved.”* That is God’s promise. People wonder all the time, *“How do I receive this life that God has for me? How can I receive the Love of God?”*

Those two verses tell us quite simply that if you confess with mouth, speak it out that *“Jesus Christ is my Lord,* “ and if you believe in your heart that He is risen form the dead, then you will be saved. That is God’s promise. You can have full assurance about that. That is God’s promise to you in Jesus Christ.

Look then at what happens, once we confess that with our mouths, it says in 2nd Corinthians 5:17 *“that if any be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away and everything is made new.”* In other words, all the weaknesses and the frailties and the separation from God is removed.

We actually stand before God as being holy. This is the only way that we can be God's children is if we are holy. Because God is holy, and Jesus' blood is what has paid the price for us that we might be holy – that we might be right with God. This is exciting! This is who we are after we have invited Jesus to come into our hearts and said with our mouth, "*Jesus Christ is my Lord.*"

The Word of God also tells us in John 1:12 that "*To as many as received Him, Jesus, he gave power to become the Sons of God.*" IN other words, God Himself actually makes us His sons and His daughters as we receive Jesus into our heart. Now understand that this life is provided and God went out of His way to provide it because we need it.

Many people are running around and they do not think that they need God. According to God's Word, which is true, He says that "*Heaven and earth is going to pass away, but My Word is not going to pass away.*" And God in His Love saw the need for us to have life with Him, because we had lost that life a long time before many of us even came on the scene. Life with God was lost. God had to provide a way for us to have that life back. And that way is simply by receiving Jesus into our lives.

God has given that way; it is a gift. All we need to do is receive it. Why did God do that for us? Because He loves us. God is total Love. We want to understand that the moment we receive Jesus into our heart, it said that we are made a new creature and that old creature passed away. That old creature wanted to serve itself. It wanted to satisfy it's own lusts and it's own pleasures and to do it's own thing. But God, in His Love, gave us a new and a better way.

The moment we receive Jesus into our heart, we stopped being in a state of rebellion and strife with God. We stopped being an enemy of God, and God actually made us His children. So in the same way, God's nature also went into us. Because God is Love, our new nature is to love, to forgive, to not hold grudges, to not be in strife and rebellion towards our brothers and sisters. It is to show forth the God whom we know to be true. That is the purpose of our life. We are created by God to give glory to God and to love His people.

As we understand that God is Love, and our new nature is Love, God is going to give us a new perspective as to how we are to deal with one

another. Now, when we receive Jesus into our heart, our spirit was what was changed. There are three parts of man; a spirit, a mind and a body. Our spirit was changed and made alive to God.

Many people wonder, *“Why do I still have these problems? If I am a new creature, why do I still have this problem of forgiving this brother over here or loving my husband and honoring my husband, or loving my wife as myself? Why do I still have these problems?”*

We need to understand the reason we still have these problems is because of this mind and this body. If we would let our mind and body run their own course, they would lead us to the pit of hell. Our mind and body do not desire to walk with God. The spirit does. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And so the flesh needs to be brought under control of the spirit.

This is why we spend time in God’s Word. It says we need to renew our mind. We overcome the flesh by doing what God says rather than what we feel. We need to start to renew our minds so that we can start to find out what God’s way of operation is.

Now our new spirit knows God’s way of operation, but our mind does not. That is why we need to start to go into God’s Word over and over and over, thinking upon what God’s way is, so that we are then able to be who we are. In other words, we have been given a place by the Lord God of Hosts and His sons. Now, He says, *“Act like it.”* And that is where it comes down to knowing what God says so that we can then do it. Because we love our Heavenly Father, we now want to do what He says because we are His children.

Look at 1st Corinthians 13:1-8, especially key into verses 4 and following: *“Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always hopes, always perseveres and Love never fails.”*

This Love that is being talked about here is God’s Love. God’s perfect Love. We have it in us as we receive Jesus into our heart. We are able to be patient. We are able to be kind. We are able to not be envious of others, but rather rejoicing in what they have, as God has blessed them.

We are not boastful about ourselves or proud about ourselves and what we are doing. Why? We recognize that everything we are doing is done to the Glory of God. Who we are is because God has made us. Understand that God made you just the way you are. You are a blessing to Him. He wants to flow through you and love others through you. It says here that *“Love never fails.”*

Then verse 13, *“Now these three remain, faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is Love.”*

I used to think, when I was younger in the Lord, that faith was the greatest of these things. I could not ever understand what this passage was talking about. *“Faith, hope and Love, and the greatest of these is Love.”* I always thought that faith was the greatest, because without faith, it was impossible for me to please God. (Hebrews 11:6) And it was impossible for me to walk with God and to Love God and even receive God.

I want to share a testimony with you about one night when I was in St. Louis and the Lord started ministering to my heart. I had just come back from a party about two or three in the morning. I had nothing prepared for the services the next day. I had not spent any time thinking upon those things or preparing, like a true servant of God would spend time before the Lord.

At that point I was just kind of thinking, *“Well, I’ll just make it all right.”* I had a mess of other priorities, and my pride was really puffed up in myself. I have always been blessed. Everything I ever set my hand to do has been blessed and it has prospered.

I was running the seminary’s activities for the student body. I was a mainstay on the ball team and working in a church. I was doing all kinds of wonderful things. I was doing many godly things. Sometimes even the godly things we do, we can be doing for ourselves rather than for God.

But that night the Lord showed me that my priorities were out of line. As I sat and was quiet as I came back from that party (I was a little bit exhausted; it was two or three in the morning), the Lord just would not let me go to sleep.

I got up and I sat there and I just thought. As I thought, the Holy Spirit started to minister to me. Inside of me was a quietness and then a small voice started to speak up inside of me and it was telling me at that point, *“Randy, where am I in your life? I know you want to be used of Me, but I can’t use you the way you are. You have to get some things re-arranged.”*

He just asked me, *“Where am I in your life?”* And I started to think and examine myself and I started to see that I had eight or nine other things before my God. And He showed me that He was the one responsible for all the blessings that had happened in my life.

Do you know that I would run around telling people that, but I really did not think it in my heart. I thought I was the one responsible. And He started to show me a little bit about this passage too. That if it was not for His Love coming first to me in Jesus Christ; if it was not for Him sending His Son to die on that cross for me in His Love, I would not even have any faith. There would be no reason for faith. There would be nothing to receive from God.

If it was not for Him coming first in His Love, I would not have any reason for hope. There would be no hope. I would have been lost – forever – totally separated from God. This is what He began to show to me; that Love – God’s Love first coming to me is what enabled me to have all the blessings that I had in my life.

I had received Jesus at an early age, but I did not always recognize God as being the source of my life. I was blessed – blessed abundantly. God had His hand on me. But I needed to understand some things about love and about faith and about hope, and about many things. I needed to learn how to rely upon God as being my source. And I am still learning.

I challenge you today to look at your life. Examine your priorities. As our priorities begin to get in line with God then God’s love is going to increase within us. As I begin to get my eyes off of myself and what I am doing, and I start to look out for others as more important than myself, then God is going to minister through me and through you.

Colossians 3 is a book that I have found to be a real help in my life as I started to desire and seek God’s truths concerning how I was to live as one of His children. This is going to be a real blessing to you.

“since then you have been raised with Christ, set your heart on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above. Not on earthly things.”

At times I would get so busy scurrying around trying to do all these different things that I was involved in, that I did not spend time with my Heavenly Father in prayer and in His Word. I started to see that *“Boy, I’m not going anyplace.”* Because I had set my mind on things of this world rather than on things of God.

I wanted to be recognized. I will flat out say it. I wanted to be recognized by people. And I was. And that was part of the problem. People were standing up and taking note. I had glory coming every place. Everywhere I went ever thing prospered and people were taking note and I was enjoying it.

But then God started to minister to me and said that I was raised with Christ. I am not here in this world to get fame and recognition any longer. I am here to serve God. And I started to see that as we set our hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God and we start to set our minds on the things above and not on earthly things, then God’s life and the fullness that God wanted to give began to happen.

“For you died,” it says here. That old self died that wanted recognition, that wanted glory, that wanted honor, that wanted the things of this world, that wanted it’s passions and lusts satisfied. It died.

And it says that my life is now hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life appears now, then you will also appear with Him in glory. In other words, God was telling us, and telling me at that point, that I have a new life.

My life did not really exist here in this world. It was a life to come. But I have here in this world. And so what God was telling me is that I need to get about His business. I needed to get my priorities ordered as to why I am here, what I am to be doing, and how I am to be living, because I am a new creature.

And Colossians 3 went on... *“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. Put it down – sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed which is idolatry, because of these the wrath of God is*

coming. You used to walk in these ways and well I understood, in the life you once lived, but now you must rid yourself of all such things as these; anger, rage, malice, slander.”

Many people do not understand how horrible gossip is. In God’s eyes it is actually considered an abomination with murder and sexual immorality. Gossip is right up there with these things. *“And filthy language from your lips.”*

I had to understand that my mouth now belonged to God; and what I needed to speak was not to my own glory, but to His. Love speaks things that are God pleasing and encouraging to the people that hurt.

It went on, *“Do not lie to each other since you have taken off your old self with its practices and put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Therefore, (verse 12) as God’s chosen people, holy, dearly loved, clothe yourself with compassion.”*

In other words, He was telling us to put off these things and put on these things. We put off the old clothes and put on the new clothes that god has provided. And look at these wonderful things that god has provided for us: *“Clothe yourself with compassion.”* We are able to care about others.

“Kindness.” We are able to love people even though they do not deserve it. This is what grace is... underserved kindness. We are able to move towards those people who do not even deserve it; because God has given us the ability.

“Humility.” Understand that we are under God’s authority not our own. *“Gentleness, patience, understanding.”* Just as God is causing me to grow, so I could watch God helping others to grow and I could be patient with them because God was the one who is working in their lives. They are not working on my frame work, my time schedule or on my expectations. They are working under God’s direction and God has His hand on their lives. So I could learn to be gentle and patient and loving.

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues, put on Love which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

I began to get excited about that, because the desire of God for His people today is to be one – unified with each other. Not divided, not looking down on one another or feeling inferior, but understanding that we are part of the Body of Christ.

The eye needs the ear. The hand needs the foot. We are to work together, loving and caring about one another. Holding one another up when one needs to be held up. We are to be encouraging, supporting, rejoicing with each other.

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.” We cannot afford to let any strife develop within us. I used to think nothing of maybe just climbing over somebody to get to where I wanted to be. But the Lord has taught me a better way and I am still learning, as I know you are learning, to walk in peace, to be one with each other. We are to be seeking peace. We are to be actually going out of our way, not caring whether I am right and you are wrong, but seeking peace between us, as we are able to according to God’s Word.

A lot of times I would think, *“Well, my ideas are better than their ideas.”* And so, I would bad-mouth their ideas, promote my ideas and the end product is division and strife. This is wrong in God’s eyes. He does not care about who is right or who is wrong. He desires that we work together in harmony, in love, in unity in Him. *“As much as lies within you live peaceable with all men.”* (See Romans 12:17-21)

“And be thankful.” That is the key to the Christian walk, He is showing me. Praise, be thankful and praising God and do whatever we are doing for Him.

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your heart to God, and whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus; giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him.” And that, I started to understand, was one of the most exciting things – doing whatever I was doing, to the Glory of God. Giving thanks to God for what He was doing through me. Being available so that God could flow through me. Being thankful, praising God as we went, and as we praised God as we went – the victory started to increase in our midst and people began to be touched by the hand of God. They too can rejoice and be glad because just your presence coming into the room would

light up the room with the presence of God because you are encouraging people to look to Him. My Father God then was able to move in their behalf.

The next section of Colossians 3 goes into husband, wife, children relationships. And I started to understand the importance in Ephesians 5 of the husband loving the wife as himself. And I started to understand the importance of the wife honoring the husband and I started to see how significant marriage actually was to the Lord.

The husband actually represents Jesus Christ; and the wife actually represents the Church. As the husband loves the wife as Christ loved the Church, the ability of God flows into that marriage to make it strong. And as the wife honors and praises the husband under his authority as to God, then I started to see how the Church was to operate; giving praise and thanks to God. I started to see how blessed a thing marriage can be; and the unity that God can bring into a family, when God's people will do what God says to do.

I want you to note today, something that also came to me. We always share what God teaches us. That is what you have to share – what you are learning from God's Word and experiencing on the basis of God's Word. That is what your testimony consists of. That is what I share – what God has taught me.

I want you to know today, that the key to loving is to understand that God first loved you. God first loved me. As I think upon that, and the more you think upon what God has done for you, then you start to see that love is a natural outgrowth. It is a fruit of the spirit. You do not have to work it up. It will just flow out of us. Love is the first fruit of the spirit that is listed (Galatians 5) and it will come as we grow to understand the depth of God's love for us in Jesus Christ.

I pray today, that you understand that God loves you. God right now is moving through you to love somebody else. Start right there at home with your husband, with your wife, with your children, with your parents; then reach out to your neighborhood, to your church. Pray – Ephesians 3:14-19. then we reach out to the world as our Father has reached out to us. As they say, *“Like Father, like son.”*

“Love your enemies. Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you that you may be children of your Heavenly Father...” “Therefore be perfect even as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)

NOTES