

MANIFESTATION
of the
KINGDOM



**Spiritual Fruit, Gifts
and Ministries**

Dan A. Rodriguez

Manifestation of the Kingdom: Spiritual Fruit, Gifts, and Ministries

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Introduction

In this book, we honor God and His Word. Anything in it is the result of seeing the truths we present in numerous Scriptures. We endeavor to keep personal opinion out. This book is about expounding vital spiritual truths in a relevant way for the present generation. In it, we will study concerning the kingdom of God, bearing powerful fruit, manifesting God's anointing in signs and wonders, and functioning effectively in ministry gifts. May these teachings touch you supernaturally by the power of the Holy Spirit, and may His divine revelation flood your heart as you read these pages. May it move all of us into doing divine exploits for our God in the Name of Jesus!

The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. Daniel 11:32

In most solemn truth I tell you that he who trusts in me--the things which I do he shall do also; and greater things than these he shall do, because I am going to the Father. And whatever any of you ask in my name, I will do, in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you make any request of me in my name, I will do it. John 14:12-14 (Weymouth)

Chapter 1: Kingdom Authority and Dominion

Understanding kingdom authority and dominion, and our place in it, is required if we are ever to move ahead in God. Many live boring and stunted Christian lives because they have no revelation of these mighty truths. That all starts to change when these truth begin to burn in the heart. When faith begins to rise in the spirit because of God's Word concerning kingdom dominion and authority, fear, doubt, and hesitancy will leave. A new boldness and strong desire for God's purpose to be fulfilled in the earth begins to wash over a believer. That is when the Christian life begins to take on new meaning and becomes exciting! The purpose of this first chapter is to help one get grounded in these glorious truths. The rest of the book has to do with application, application, and more application!

Kingdom Authority

The Biblical concept of the kingdom of God, and its meaning to us as believers in Christ Jesus, is condensed in this first chapter. Much more could be taught on each facet, but we purposely kept it brief in order to focus the teaching on the aspects of the kingdom that have to do with spiritual fruit, gifts, and ministries. Please look up the Scriptures presented and study them. Allow the Holy Spirit to bring you additional light on this vast subject.

Many Christians understand that they are in a spiritual kingdom in Christ Jesus.

Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us qualified to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love. Colossians 1:12, 13

We came into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Living God when we made Him Lord and Savior. Should this make a difference in how we live on this planet? Yes, it should and will if we will begin to flow in the supernatural realm called *the kingdom of God*. There are mighty lessons to be learned and understood in order to function in this kingdom.

The word “kingdom” indicates *dominion, rule, and kingship*. This is what God gave man in the beginning. He gave Adam and Eve dominion to rule all the earth.¹ Adam and Eve were to rule and reign on this planet as the image and likeness of God, and under His direction. Some want to argue this point. It is foolish to do so because there are numerous Scriptures that point to these truths. The first man Adam was every bit like Jesus during His earth walk and ministry. Paul called Jesus the second and last Adam.² Glory and honor crowned Adam and Eve.³ *Crowns belong on the head of kings and not beggars, farmers, or shepherders*. The first male and female were not to be paupers but rulers! Adam and Eve were to rule and reign as kings, as the royal sons and daughters of God. They lost that privilege and honor when they heeded Satan’s seduction and temptation. (Genesis 3)

Jesus suffered the penalty of death in all realms that was due to guilty humanity. Through His awe-inspiring sacrifice, this mighty privilege of dominion was again granted to all those that would receive the gift of salvation.⁴ Jesus conferred this dominion and rule on all believers, whether they know it, believe it, or want it or not.⁵ It is available!

¹ Genesis 1:26-28, Psalms 8:3-6

² 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47

³ Psalms 8:5

⁴ Hebrews 2:14, 15, Romans 5:17

⁵ Luke 22:29

Jesus restored the dominion and rule of God granted to the human family at Eden. Jesus showed us how to operate in dominion and rule by teaching and by example. As the second man Adam,⁶ He commanded demons, sickness, trees, water, wind, waves, storms, fish, bread, and even the dead! Jesus conferred this authority, dominion, and rule of God on the twelve apostles, then on the seventy others that were sent, and finally on ALL the church!⁷ There is a further endowment on the church that no one before the sacrifice of Jesus had. That is the fact that the authority, dominion, and power conferred on the church is according to the working of God's mighty power that raised up Jesus from the dead, and set Him on His right hand FAR above all principalities, powers, rulers, dominions, or name that is named. He conferred this mighty and exceedingly great power on us the Church, the Body of Christ!⁸ If there ever was a people that should rule and reign on this planet, it should be the Body of believers in Christ! Nothing like the Body of Christ has ever existed. The very gates of hades (hell) cannot prevail against the church that walks in this mighty revelation!⁹

A Kingdom of Kings and Priests

Because of what Jesus did for us, we are a kingdom of kings and priests.¹⁰ As we quoted from Colossians 1:13, we were translated from the authority of darkness and into the kingdom or dominion of the Son. We were called to dominion, rule, and glory because Jesus is our Lord.¹¹ We are not called to live weak or defeated lives in any area: spiritually, mentally or physically. We are heirs of God and JOINT- heirs of Jesus Christ.¹² We are not any less an heir to the throne of God than the Lord Jesus. *Joint* does not denote *sub*. We are not sub-heirs but joint-heirs, and that spells royalty anyway you cut it! We have been seated with Him on the right hand of God with our Lord Jesus.¹³ We have been enthroned with Jesus. When will we start believing these truths, and begin to act like the royal family of God instead of the serfs and paupers of a kingdom? Many in the Church live far below their rights and

⁶ Jesus did not operate on the earth as the eternal Son of God in Heaven with powers inherent in Him as God. (John 1:1, 14) He ministered on earth as a human being anointed by the Spirit and functioning according to the Word (covenant) of God. (Acts 10:38, Luke 4:18) If Jesus operated as God with heavenly powers on earth, then there would have been no need for Him to be anointed by the Holy Spirit for ministry and service to God. Philippians 2:7 says in the Amplified Bible says that Jesus stripped Himself of all His divine privileges and rightful dignity as God and assumed the guise of a servant, in that He became like men and was born a human being. He came and ministered in the fullness of God's intention for the first Adam.

⁷ Matthew 10:1, 7, 8, Luke 10:1, 9, Mark 16:17, 18

⁸ Ephesians 1:17-23

⁹ Matthew 16:18, 19

¹⁰ Revelation 1:5, 6, 5:10 NASB

¹¹ 1 Thessalonians 2:12

¹² Romans 8:17

¹³ Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 3:1, 2- This "seated with Christ" is FAR above ALL rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name that is names, not only in this world, but also in that to come! It has been given to the Church! (Eph. 1:19-23)

privileges simply because they do not understand their royalty status. They plead and whine throughout their Christian lives as though they were beggars. Yet, in the sight of God and the Lord, we have raised up through what Jesus did for us, and we have been seated with Him on the throne of dominion and authority. Believe, confess, and walk with your head high, your shoulders straight, and give a Queen of England wave to those you pass by on the street! Minister to them in the power of this kingdom. Bring them up to where you are in Christ and get them set free in the royal Name we carry- the Name of Jesus! Carry yourself like royalty. We are in a royal family of KINGS! We have been crowned!

The crown of glory belongs to those that walk in God's wisdom or in His Word. Wisdom delivers the crown into one's life. (Proverbs 4:9) This is HOW we live the crowned life of kingdom dominion. Isaiah 62:3 says *crown of beauty* in the Jewish Publication Society version, and the NASB follows that translation. The NKJV translates it as *crown of glory*. Compare in other translations Isaiah 28:1 and 5 with a *crown of beauty* in Ezekiel 16:12.

The crown of thorns that they beat onto the head of Jesus represents the curse He suffered for us. He redeemed us from the curse of having a life crowned with thorns.¹⁴ We now can have the crown of life by faith as we act on God's Word. (James 1:12, 2-8) In Christ Jesus, we were created to reign in life as kings!¹⁵

Think of kingdom always as *dominion*! Every time the word "kingdom" is found, substitute it with the words *dominion* or *rule*. Do a study of the two powerful words *dominion* and *rule*. We do not have authority, dominion or rule over people, but we do have it over the devil, demons, and the curse that roams on this planet.¹⁶

Entering into Kingdom Dominion

What were and what are the requirements for entering into this kingdom rule and dominion of God? Jesus has the answer for us. He taught that in order to enter into the kingdom and rule of God, one must be born from above. He continues to teach that this is a birthing of water and the Spirit of God. (John 3:1-5) This refers to the new beginning, new birth, or the new creation we become in Christ.¹⁷ John 3:3, and 5 mentions two things. Jesus said that one must be birthed (born) from above to in order *to see*; that is, to perceive and receive revelation of this kingdom rule or dominion. There is no revelation or spiritual understanding possible without being born again or being born from above.

We enter the DOMINION (rule) or the kingdom of God by other requirements according to verse 5. What was the dominion and rule referred to in the teaching of Jesus? Note this carefully because

¹⁴ Galatians 3:13, Genesis 3:17, 18

¹⁵ Ephesians 2:10, Romans 5:17

¹⁶ Luke 10:19, Matthew 16:17-19, James 4:7, Mark 16:17, 18, 1 Peter 5:8

¹⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10

kingdom is often misunderstood as referring only to the spiritual state of a human being. For example, as in one's state of spiritual salvation. Religious tradition and denominational unbelief rejects the truth that Jesus had more in mind concerning the kingdom of God than the spiritual new birth or a future in Heaven after we die physically. Are we going to believe Jesus on this subject or are we going to follow blind traditions invented by dead spiritual leaders? I say that we should follow Jesus and hold Him up as THE TRUTH on the subject of kingdom!

The statement of Nicodemus was, **“For no man can do these miracles that you do, except God be with him.”** Jesus gives Nicodemus the way into miraculous realm of kingdom dominion and rule that affects the right here and now. Nicodemus did not expect this response and neither have many bound in unbelief. Jesus gave this ruler of the synagogue insight on how to enter into dominion rule through a supernatural birthing, one that is necessary to enter into the realm of the miraculous of signs and wonders of God.

The realm of God-manifestations is entered into, first of all, by being born again from above, birthed of water and the Spirit. This reminds me of creation in the book of Genesis 1:1-3. Jesus is here referring to a NEW CREATION as necessary for entering into the miraculous realm of God's rule and dominion, His kingdom. The water represents God's Word.¹⁸ It is sustenance because it is the Word of life. Nothing can exist without water. Nothing can exist without the Word. Jesus is the Word. (John 1:1-5, 14) Without water, there is NO life. (John 1:4) Without light, NO life can exist. (John 1:5) The Word, life, and light are a part of each other. No life can exist without water or light! Both come out of the Word. James and Peter say that we are born again by the supernatural Word of God.¹⁹ In the teaching and view of Jesus, all those birthed or born of the Spirit are to function in the supernatural realms of God because they are born into this rule and dominion.

Everybody that is born again has access into this supernatural kingdom of God realm, but there is more. Jesus emphasizes the place that the Spirit of God has in all kingdom or dominion manifestations. The Spirit of the Lord must be heeded and followed, because He is the Guide in the manifestation of the dominion of the kingdom. He leads and guides us into all truth concerning the things of the Lord Jesus and of God.²⁰ No one can function properly in this kingdom and dominion rule without the Holy Spirit's guidance.

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear its sound, but you do not know from where it comes and where it goes. So is everyone who has been born of the Spirit. John 3:8

That is the traditional rendering of this verse, but the context demands a better translation based on the Greek text. The Greek word for “wind” (*pnuema*) is the same word that is translated “spirit” all over

¹⁸ Ephesians 5:26, John 4:32, 34

¹⁹ James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23

²⁰ John 16:13-15

the New Testament. It is the same word that the translators rendered as “Spirit” at the end of the verse. They were very inconsistent in their translation of this verse. They should have translated it as “Spirit” in both places. Here is a much better translation that opens our eyes to the instruction of Jesus.

The Spirit breathes where He wills, and you hear His voice; but you do not know from where He comes (from), and where He goes (to). So are those birthed from the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will do what He wills, but one must hear His voice. We have to depend on the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the manifestation of any gift or operation of the Spirit as we minister to others. His guidance is essential in any manifestation of the realm of the supernatural things of God. He is the guide in this supernatural realm. We follow His lead.²¹ Without Him, we do not know where we are going or even what to do.

Jesus taught Nicodemus that the requirements for kingdom dominion are: the new birth, the Word, revelation (seeing and perception), and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (John 3:1-12.) That is a summary of the message of Jesus in this passage. It is a revelation of HOW TO move into these supernatural realms of God and flow in the miraculous. They are divine principles to be heeded and obeyed!

Jesus repeatedly teaches on kingdom dominion principles. Many of His parables are centered on teaching kingdom principles. Often He prefaces a parable by saying, “**The kingdom of God is like...**” That is His personal instruction on the rule and dominion of God that has been conferred on us!

Jesus taught us to pray to the Father, “**Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.**” (Matthew 6:10) The kingdom is connected to His will being done on the earth as it is in Heaven. *The rule of the spiritual kingdom of God in Heaven is to invade the earth.* As in Heaven there is NO sickness and disease, we are to go and heal the sick in the Name of Jesus.²² As poverty is non-existent in Heaven, we are to preach the good news of the Gospel to the poor.²³ Jesus suffered our poverty when He died in our place. He did it in order that rich provision could come to us.²⁴ Look up the Scriptures given in the notes and do not reject the truths of God’s Word! As there is NO curse or pain in Heaven, we are to declare boldly in the earth that Christ has redeemed us from the curse and that He bore our pains!²⁵ As there is no spiritual death in Heaven, we are to proclaim the good news that

²¹ Romans 8:14, 16

²² Mark 16:17, 18

²³ Luke 4:18

²⁴ 2 Corinthians 8:9- the context of chapters 8 and 9 refer to giving offerings, and to God’s multiplication of good seeds of offering “money” that is sown for the sake of the gospel.

²⁵ Galatians 3:13, Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 8:17

Jesus has come that we might have His life and have it more abundantly.²⁶ This is the will of His kingdom to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Never disagree with God's Word. Always be quick to agree with Scripture. To disagree with God's Word is to forfeit the place one should have in the promises it contains. The will of the Father is that His will in Heaven invades the earth! Believe it! He desires to do it through us as we minister to others in the Name of Jesus. Never argue the point or resist it. Accept it and yield to it so that the Holy Spirit can use you supernaturally.

Many churches and ministers resist these truths because of tradition and spiritual blindness. Do not join your self to them or their dead theology or they will keep you out of the revealed will of God. If Jesus taught us to pray that His kingdom come and that His will be done on earth AS IT IS in Heaven, then that is the revealed of God for all believers everywhere for all time. That is His will for you!

Jesus demonstrated the activities of dominion in the kingdom. He taught HOW to get into a flow of the miraculous. Do you realize that the miracles, healings, signs, and wonders that are seen in the life and ministry of Jesus are demonstrations of rule and dominion in the kingdom of God?²⁷ Jesus taught the disciples about kingdom authority and dominion. His commission remains the same today for all true disciples.

As you go, preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is here." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. Freely you have received. Freely give. Matthew 10:7, 8 (Literal)

The disciples were to preach that the kingdom of God was present among the people. They were to demonstrate it by healing the sick and casting out demons. They were even on occasions to raise the dead! The power of God in manifestation is the dominion of the kingdom in operation.²⁸ *Without the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, there are no demonstrations of the kingdom or dominion of God.* It is bitter pill for many to swallow, especially for those bound in traditional churches where no supernatural evidence is in manifestation. These churches offer watered down "sermonettes" on Sundays that produce ZERO evidence of God.

Polished sermons with little instruction from God's Word in it, theatrics, talented singing, big churches, and trendy programs are not a revelation of the supernatural realms of God. If people are not born again, healed, baptized in the Spirit of God with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues, and gifts of the Spirit are not in manifestation, it is a weak, watered down or dying church! My

²⁶ John 10:10, 3:16

²⁷ Matthew 4:23, 9:35

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 4:20

recommendation is to get out while one can and let the Lord lead you to a church that moves in the supernatural realms of God. The Lord may call you to start one!

*There is NO way to function consistently in this kingdom-power-manifestation and walk in the lusts of the flesh. Paul taught that those that walk in the listed lusts of the flesh (and things like it) will have no inheritance or part in this dominion and rule of God. It takes a walking in the fruit of the spirit to function in manifestations of God's power effectively and consistently.*²⁹

It is by walking in the things mentioned in second Peter 1:5-11 that we have entrance into kingdom dominion and authority. Peter mentions faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. It is a powerful list of the character that should be evident and increasing in the Christian life. It is similar to that found in the fruit of the spirit that Paul taught in Galatians 5:22 and 23. One can find everything Peter mentioned inside the list of the fruit of the spirit taught by Paul. Peter said that if we will walk in these spiritual qualities that we will be fruitful and have ENTRANCE into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus.³⁰ Peter was expounding on the instruction of Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3 concerning entrance into this realm of dominion and rule of God.

Paul again summarizes what it takes to walk in kingdom dominion as follows:

The kingdom (dominion and rule) **of God is righteousness** (being right and doing right), **peace** (wholeness, completeness, and MUCH MORE) **and joy** (strength) **in the Holy Spirit.** Romans 14:17

We will study *peace* and *joy* in this book, but I want to focus for a moment on the kingdom and righteousness connection. In this book, we will be looking at areas of righteousness that have to do with right living, more than the free gift of righteousness received in the new birth. As we saw, *kingdom* is referring to the dominion of God; a dominion Jesus conferred upon the church in His Name, through His sacrifice, and ultimate defeat of hell and death. To walk in dominion over hell and death and flow in God's blessing, we must lay hold of our rights and privileges in Christ and use them. That is the "legal" side of righteousness because it addresses the legalities of rights and privileges in Christ conferred upon all believers. Righteousness also indicates doing what is right and being right before God according to the covenant sealed in the Blood of Jesus. Many have only understood the legal side of righteousness. They either ignore it or are oblivious to this vital side of righteousness. Modern pseudo-grace teachers completely downplay and reject this aspect of righteousness as "under the law" or "works." They pervert the clear instruction of the Scriptures in this area. The apostle Paul addresses this subject masterfully. Paul teaches both sides of righteousness (legal and vital) in Romans chapters 3 through 6.³¹ Right living

²⁹ Galatians 5:16-23, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10

³⁰ 2 Peter 1:11

³¹ The legal side is that gift of righteousness we received when we made Jesus Lord of our lives. This puts us in a right relationship with the Father and He sees us completely free of all sin and death of the past. Romans chapters 3 through 5,

is part of the righteousness we received as a gift in the new birth according to Paul's own teaching. In Paul's thinking, right living is the proper and expected result of being made righteous by faith in the blood of Jesus.

My book, *Faith that Receives the Grace of God*, teaches about righteousness from the legal and vital side. Dominion depends on righteousness, peace, and joy IN the HOLY Spirit. Dominion also depends on holiness as a vital Christian way of life. Our IDENTITY in Christ as the righteous must be translated into actions that demonstrate righteousness, holiness, sanctification, and godliness. "Positional righteousness" must be lived out through your mind, mouth, and body in righteous actions of faith. This is true IF we are going to function in the realm of God's dominion and rule. These are a foundation for dominion. One will not walk in dominion without them.

Dominion depends on our place in Christ in the spirit, and whether or not we lay hold of that which belongs to us. Dominion depends on whether or not we are walking in righteousness, and appropriating by faith the mighty provisions of His sacrifice. That is the way that nothing is missing or broken (peace), and we walk in the joy of the Lord. These MUST be *in the Holy Spirit*. This also means by His power and in His direction and guidance. This will make a lot of spiritual sense by end of this book!

According to Peter's inspired instruction (2 Peter chapter 1), practice of fruit and qualities of the spirit sets us in a place to function supernaturally. If the Christian life lacks the manifestation of these fruit and qualities, one is barren and unfruitful.³² If a believer is interested in being fruitful in the manifestations and ministries of the Spirit, then the fruit and qualities of the spirit are the foundation for these operations. *The fruit of the spirit is the foundation for all other spiritual operations and manifestations.* The Lord may use some people operating in little fruit from time to time when others are not available, but in order to enter the realms of the anointing in power and glory, one must function in the fruit.

Pathways to the Supernatural Realms of the Kingdom of God

God has designed certain pathways for the Body of Christ to function in the supernatural realms of God's Kingdom while on earth. Hebrews 6:4 is a reference to "the powers of the world to come." These are from the realm of God in Heaven bestowed upon His royal children on earth. His children can carry out Heaven's agenda in power and authority as they go about representing the King. Jesus did not leave us helpless and powerless. He sent the Holy Spirit to anoint and empower us to fulfill the will of God on

establishes this doctrine clearly. See particularly Romans 3:21-26, 4:22-25, and 5:17. The vital side of living a righteous (godly) life is addressed by Paul in Romans 6:12-23.

³² 2 Peter 1:8-10

earth as it is in Heaven.³³ We have a divine assignment and have supernatural kingdom of God power available us to carry out His orders.

We are Heaven's representatives. We are His ambassadors.³⁴ We represent the King of glory. The glory of God should be our daily bread. No sickness, no activity of death, and no work of the enemy should stand in our way. We should be fearless. We should be anointed to the max, and even to overflowing.

Is the anointing infrequent in your life? Is your Christian life weak and powerless? We have written this book by the direction of the Holy Spirit to help you understand how to connect into God's realm. We desire that believers be empowered to live a glorious life in Christ Jesus. We desire that believers be a blessing to many. Do you desire to be a blessing to your generation? This book is all about establishing a person in the Word, and learning to flow in the supernatural realms of God so they can minister supernaturally to those around them!

We have a deep desire for God to manifest Himself among the churches and in individual lives. We crave the manifestation of God's rule among us and through us to others. We fervently want God's manifested glory. People and preachers talk about their yearning for God to show up. Who wants to learn HOW to make themselves available for God to show up and show out? Is anyone interested? Are YOU interested? This desire should burn within us if we are the children (sons and daughters) of God.

³³ Acts 1:8, Luke 24:49, John 14:15-18, Matthew 6:10

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:20

Chapter 2: Foundation for Kingdom Manifestation

Peter called fruit bearing the way to gain entrance into kingdom manifestation. Paul said that works of the flesh will keep one from any inheritance in the kingdom of God, and then he tells us the way to kingdom power and dominion. He gives us a list of the fruit necessary to walk in the realm of the spirit. Jesus called producing fruit absolutely necessary for kingdom (dominion) living. Do we need any other witnesses? I don't think so. Here we go!

The Fruit of the Spirit

The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. Galatians 5:22, 23

The fruit of the spirit is the foundation for any operation in the supernatural ways of God in His glorious kingdom. When speaking of the things contrary to the fruit of the spirit, Paul teaches that those that practice the evil things he mentions will not inherit or have a share in the kingdom of God.

Now the works of the flesh are obvious, which are: sexual immorality, uncleanness, lustfulness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, rivalries, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these; of which I forewarn you, even as I also forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21

Paul teaches this right before he mentions the fruit of the spirit. Why does he do that? He wants to clearly distinguish between those things that produce a manifestation of the kingdom or dominion rule of God among us, and those things that will stop the manifestations of God among us. There is no other way to function in and maintain supernatural activity in the power of God, both personally and corporately as the Body of Christ. The works of the flesh will stop the flow of the rule, dominion, and reign of God through any believer that practices them.

The fruit of the spirit will open up the flow of the rule, dominion, and reign of God through any believer that practices them. Folks, that is plain English! How much clearer of a message do Christians need to understand this simple truth? Live like hell does and one gets little to no manifestation of the kingdom, but live like heaven does and one gets in on God's awesome kingdom in demonstration on the earth! Glory to God!

*The fruit is the foundation that must be in place to remove from our lives dead religion with no power. The anointing that breaks every yoke and removes every burden functions in the environment of the fruit of the spirit.*³⁵ The fruit of the spirit are the governing principles of this mighty kingdom, both in heaven and upon the earth. As we study the fruit of the *spirit*, these truths will shine brightly.

I left the word "spirit" with a small case letter "s" on purpose, because the context in Galatians 5:16-23 is speaking about the human spirit and not referring directly to the Holy Spirit. Any translation that wrote the word "spirit" with a capital letter did so because of either tradition or assumption. The Greek text makes no such distinction. Only context can give the right answer as to whether Paul was referring to the Holy Spirit or the human spirit. Many translators automatically assumed that Paul was

³⁵ Isaiah 10:27, Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38, 1John 2:20, 27

suggesting the Holy Spirit. Did Paul tell us that the Holy Spirit would produce these fruit in your life? One may argue successfully that the Holy Spirit is certainly involved in the fruit of the spirit. There is no question about that at all! For example, it was the Holy Spirit that shed abroad the love of God in our hearts (or “spirits”) when we made Jesus the Lord of our lives.³⁶

We can say the same thing about every single fruit mentioned in Galatians 5:22, 23. They were all *divine deposits* by the Holy Spirit in us when we were born again. Even though that is true, we need to see who is responsible for producing fruit.

I am the Vine and you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing... In this, my Father is glorified, that YOU (not the Holy Spirit!) should bear much fruit; and you will be disciples to me. John 15:5, 8

Did you see that the Lord is the vine and we are the branches? Where are the fruit to come forth, from the vine or the branches? If you answered “the branches” then you are right, and we are the branches! The Vine does not produce fruit. The branch produces the fruit. As long as a person thinks it is God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit producing the fruit, they will go throughout their Christian life hoping and a praying for the fruit. Jesus said you (which includes all in the Body) should bear much fruit! Granted, it is not independently of the Vine. If someone tries to do it on his or her own, Jesus said, “*You can do nothing*” on your own anymore that a branch can produce anything once it is severed from its Source. The life comes from God the Holy Spirit within us. It flows from our bellies as rivers of living water.³⁷ It is God at work *in us*.³⁸ We must recognize our Source!

All spiritual life and power for production of any fruit comes from Him, yet He does not make the fruit happen for us. He empowers us so fruit production can take place through us. Fruit is going to come out of us into the natural for all to see. Yes, it starts from Him within us. The power is from Him. The anointing is from Him. The Divine “sap” is from Him. Yes, it is His life and His love that He put in us, but He will not force it out of us. Fruit production can come **IF** we do our part. The Vine has a part to play just as the branch has a part in the production of fruit. Separate one from the other and no fruit will come forth.

Get a hold of this analogy of Jesus. The branch cannot produce fruit by itself, but I have news for you, neither can the Vine produce fruit alone. No fruit grows on the Vine! Jesus cannot produce fruit in the earth apart from the branches either. Jesus needs good branches to bring forth good fruit in the earth realm.

³⁶ Romans 5:5- Heart and spirit are used interchangeably, as in Romans 2:29.

³⁷ John 8:37-39

³⁸ Philippians 2:13, 4:13, Ephesians 3:20

What kind of branch are you?³⁹ According to Jesus, it will take abiding in Him and His Word abiding in us so we can produce good fruit. (John 15:7) It will also take some “pruning” to become branches capable of producing more fruit. (John 15:2, 3) Pruning is a good way of expressing what Paul taught about what the Word and the Spirit of God will do in the life of the believer if they would allow it.

Every Scripture is inspired⁴⁰ by God and is useful for teaching, for convincing, for correction of error, and for instruction in righteousness (being right and right doing); so that the man of God may himself be complete and may be perfectly equipped for every good work.... proclaim God's message... convince, rebuke, encourage, with the utmost perseverance as a teacher. For a time is coming when they will not tolerate wholesome instruction, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will find a multitude of teachers to satisfy their own fancies; and will turn away from listening to the truth and will turn aside to fables. 2 Timothy 3:16- 4:4

The pruning process is critical and it happens as we submit our thoughts, speech, and actions to the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit to correct and instruct us on the path of life. It is the process of a constant adjustment according to God and His Word.

This “pruning process” has to do with renewing the mind, training our senses to discern the difference between good and evil, and separating ourselves from all filthiness or anything that contaminates the mind and spirit according to the world's way of doing things.⁴¹ The pruning process is at work when we humbly submit our way of doing things to His way as He reveals in His Word. It comes by meekly receiving the Word implanted in us and then by putting it into practice in our lives.⁴²

God has instituted the PRACTICE of the fruit of the spirit as the powerful method to accomplish “pruning” in our lives. This leads to great fruit being visible on our branch. You learn about love in the Word and then you practice it. You learn and get a revelation of joy in your life and then you practice it. The same goes for all the fruit of the spirit. The more you practice, the more the Holy Spirit can show you and teach you. Then the Lord will give you correction, instruction, and at times even rebuke! That is the chastening of the Lord taught in Hebrews 12:6-11.

Modern translations will use the word “discipline” instead of “chastening.” God will discipline you and it is not always fun. He will not always be sweet and tender about it either. Sometimes it is going to hurt your feelings. Other times you will feel the mighty conviction of the Holy Spirit. At times, the Lord will speak to you so bluntly that a whipping with a 2 x 4 would have felt better! It may hurt on the

³⁹ John 15:1-10

⁴⁰ Lit. *God-breathed*.

⁴¹ Romans 12:2, Hebrews 5:12-14, 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:2

⁴² James 1:21, 22

inside. What do you do when God “whips” you in your spirit (*because He is the Father of spirits- Hebrews 12:9*) with His Word? One thing you had better never do is to reject it. Never resist His correction or rebuke. Humbly accept it, correct yourself, repent, and go on! If you will accept your “licks” in the spirit from the Father of Spirits so that you may live, then it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. (Hebrews 12:9, 11)

Read the following verses on “fruit.”

And let them also learn to maintain good works for the necessary things that they may not be without fruit. Titus 3:14

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for a tree is known by its fruit. Matthew 12:33

But that sown on the good ground is this: the one hearing the Word, and understanding it, who indeed bears and yields fruit, to one a hundredfold, and one sixty, and one thirty. Mat. 13:23

Every tree not producing good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Mat. 7:19

I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one abiding in me, and I in him, this one bears much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5

Who serves as a soldier at his own expense at any time? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who shepherds a flock and does not eat of its milk? 1Corinthians 9:7

But by the favor of God I am what I am, and His favor, which was toward me, has not been without fruit, but I labored more abundantly than all of them, yet not I, but the favor of God with me. 1Cor. 15:10

So that, my beloved brothers, you be firm, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your labor is not without fruit in the Lord. 1Cor. 15:58

For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth. Ephesians 5:9

But if I live in the flesh, this to me is the fruit of my labor, and what I will choose I do not know. Philippians 1:22

Not that I seek a gift, but I seek that fruit multiply to your account. Phil. 4:17

Walk worthily of the Lord to all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work and growing into the complete knowledge of God. Colossians 1:10

Then through Him let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God always, that is, the fruit of the lips, confessing to His name. Hebrews 13:15

The above verses teach us that fruit is visible. *Fruit is visible on the outside!* It is the “outgrowth” of that within! It begins on the inside, but it must come out in the ways we are seeing from these verses. Notice how “good works” and good “fruit” are consistently connected.

Now let us begin to examine these fruit of the spirit individually. You will see that some overlap and that some are very different from the way they are viewed by tradition.

Again, I mention the fact that these fruit are all vital for the flowing of the supernatural in our lives. We want to move and flow with God in His power, but the anointing is stifled where these are not in operation. Your development in all the fruit of the Spirit, coming up out of your spirit into your life, is essential or primary, even for the renewing of your mind.⁴³ The fruit are the foundation to all things of the Holy Spirit and to all God desires that we walk in while on earth. These are tools that make us available and ready to be used by God to minister salvation, healing, deliverance to the oppressed, and the power and presence of God to all those around us.

⁴³ Galatians 5:22, 23

Love

The fruit of the spirit is LOVE... Galatians 5:22

Love is the first fruit mentioned in this list. We now have on the inside of our spirits a new nature in Christ, and the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We can walk in newness of the Spirit, and not the oldness of the letter of the law.⁴⁴ The love commandment is the royal law of this kingdom in which we live.⁴⁵

Notice here how Jesus condenses all the law and the prophets into two commandments. Keeping this will cause you to never deal with all the rest of the commandments because LOVE of God and loving your neighbor as yourself fulfills all the righteous requirements of the law.⁴⁶

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law”? Jesus said to him, “You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and great commandment and the second is like it: You will love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:36-40

The entire *law* hangs on these two commandments. In other words, loving God and your neighbor as yourself sums up all of God’s moral commands. As we will see, that has a deeper significance than by stating the obvious.

Jesus was God manifested in the flesh and He never suggested anything to anybody. He always commanded.⁴⁷ We are His friends IF we do whatever He commands us.⁴⁸ We ONLY love Him if we keep (do or obey) the commandments of Jesus.⁴⁹ His instruction was never a “take it or leave it” proposition. He spoke the words of life and gave them as commands.⁵⁰ More on this in a moment, but here is how the apostle Paul stated that loving God and your neighbor as yourself fulfills all moral commands.

⁴⁴ 2 Peter 1:4, Romans 5:5, 7:6

⁴⁵ James 2:8-12, Colossians 1:12, 13, John 13:34

⁴⁶ Rom. 8:4, 2:26 NKJV

⁴⁷ Matthew 10:5, 11:1, John 12:49, 50, and many other places

⁴⁸ John 15:14

⁴⁹ John 14:21-23

⁵⁰ John 6:63

Owe no man anything except to love one another, for he who loves has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, “You will not commit adultery, you will not murder, you will not steal, you will not covet,” and any other commandment are summed up in this word: “You will love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no evil to its neighbor so love is the fulfillment of the law.
Romans 13:8-10

Love will not yield to theft, adultery, murder, covetousness, lying, cheating, or evil speaking. Love will abide in His commandments and allow His moral commandments to be the guiding force in life. Love is the fulfillment of ALL moral commandments because real love would not violate them. Love does not remove the necessity of the existence of God’s moral commands. Did you know some misguided preachers are teaching that “grace” means that we are no longer under the Ten Commandments? Don’t be fooled! Love does not delete Bible morality! Love supersedes the moral code because it is of a higher order in the realm of the spirit. God IS love and that is as high as you can go in any realm.⁵¹ Nothing is higher than He is, and He certainly believes in holiness and morality!

Immorality in the sexual or other arenas of life is NEVER a product of God’s love. The love of God opposes pornography, homosexuality, and lesbianism. It opposes fornication, adultery, and lust. Love has to do so because love will always abide by DOING God’s Word and Covenant.⁵² Whatever God forbids, love forbids, because He is love. Love is in you because God is in you, and He is love.⁵³ Walking in love, which is also walking in the spirit, fulfills *the righteous demands of God's moral law* for the believer in Christ.⁵⁴

When we walk in the fruit of the spirit, we will not violate any (specifically) moral laws. The bad consequences prescribed on the disobedient by not keeping the law cannot touch us.⁵⁵ We don't have punishment for violating law if we don't break it. Jesus bore the punishment of our peace.⁵⁶ He was whipped in my place, so now I go free from the penalty of breaking law. He became the curse for me to set me free.⁵⁷ Even if I miss it and sin,⁵⁸ I can run to my Advocate, the Lord Jesus, confess my sin to Him, and faith in His blood will cleanse me from unrighteousness and sin. That way the curse can never touch me if I will stay in the light, as He is the light.⁵⁹ Faith works through love.⁶⁰ Many fail in faith

⁵¹ 1John 4:8

⁵² 1John 2:5

⁵³ 1 John 4:4, 16

⁵⁴ Romans 8:4

⁵⁵ Deuteronomy 28:15

⁵⁶ Is. 53:5

⁵⁷ Galatians 3:13

⁵⁸ 1John 3:4 calls sin “transgression of the law” or the “moral” aspects of law.

⁵⁹ 1 John 1:7- 2:1, Romans 3:25

⁶⁰ Galatians 5:6

and in receiving from the Lord because they do not walk in the love of God. This will become obvious as we continue in our study of the fruit of the spirit.

Faith comes from the hearing of the Word.⁶¹ That makes an intimate connection between faith, love, and the Word of God. Keeping or doing God's Word will cause love to mature and be complete.⁶² We mix faith with the Word heard for it to produce fruit in our lives.⁶³ They are all connected.

Did you notice the last phrase in Romans 13:10 that "love is the fulfillment of law?" The way Jesus fulfilled the law was by walking on the love commandment and thereby superseding all law. As Christians, we have the command to do the same.

This is His commandment, that we *believe* (have faith in) in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and *love* one another, just as he has commanded us. 1John 3:23

Notice the two things that the Lord Jesus commanded us. According to John, they revolve around LOVE and FAITH.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. John 15:9, 10

Keeping the commandments of Jesus will cause us to abide in the love of the Lord. Let's ask as rhetorical question. If we do NOT keep the commandments of the Lord Jesus, will we still abide in His love? The apparent answer is, NO! One cannot abide in His love and not keep His commandments. It is ONLY those that keep His commandments that abide (stay in and reside) in His love. Keeping His commandments refers to us knowing and DOING them. It also refers to doing the works of Jesus and the greater works. We will see that more clearly soon. We have much more to say about the commandment of love and Bible morality under the fruit of gentleness.

Unconditional Love

Here is something that may shock some because it goes so contrary to all the teaching and preaching you hear today on *unconditional love*. The Greek word used in the New Testament for love is *agape* (the noun), and the verb, *agapáo*. Some translate this word group as *unconditional love*. They believe that this Greek word group refers to a love that is available regardless of our actions and words. In the sense that God's LOVE is ALWAYS available, that it is undeniably true. He makes His love available day and night, 365 days a year (and 366 days on leap year!), all the time. But, *agapáo* nor *agape* include the idea

⁶¹ Romans 10:17

⁶² 1John 2:5

⁶³ Hebrews 4:2

in their definitions that, if one continues in sin without repentance and confession of sin, one will have a *manifestation* of this God-kind of love anyway. Note that I am referring to a *manifested* love from God.

If it were true that regardless of un-repented and un-confessed sin one can have a manifestation of God's love, then *universalism* and its claim would be true. The universalist teaches that at the end of time everybody will be saved and have his or her part in future bliss because of God's unconditional love for everybody. For the universalist, the "love of God" insinuates that God will overlook all sins and evil because there is going to be a "reconciliation of all things." Universalism is a perversion of the truth and a serious deception. In the Old and New Testaments, there is a clear doctrine of the eternal damnation of the wicked. That truth is denied by universalism, as is taught in some cults and in other heathen religions of the world. In Hebrews 6:1 and 2, the doctrine of *eternal* judgment is presented as a foundational doctrine of the Church.

The book of Revelation records the future bliss of the righteous in heaven, and in the new heavens and new earth. It also chronicles the eternal abode for the wicked. Here is my question: "Is the love of God unconditional for those that go to hell, and for those in the future that will have their part in lake of fire?" The answer is NO! They have cut themselves off from having any *manifestation* of God's love.

People have thought, and taught, that the only reason that people go to hell is, not because of any sin they have committed, but because they rejected Jesus. That is ultimately true, but the Bible tells us that on judgment day two sets of books will be opened. The things recorded in them will be the criteria by which every human being will be judged. What are the two books by which all humanity will be judged? One is called the Book of Life. The other book is a record of the works people did, whether good or evil.⁶⁴ Those that their names are not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

Take a close look at the following Scripture. Pay attention to the fact that *unbelievers* get a separate mention as having a part in the lake of fire.

"But the cowardly, *unbelieving*, sinners, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, have their part in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." Revelation 21:8

Get this straight in your thinking. The lake of fire is reserved for all those living in or practicing these categories of listed sins, as well as also being the final destination for the *unbeliever* that refused God's free gift of salvation in Christ Jesus.

⁶⁴ Revelation 20:12-15, 21:8, 2Thessalonians 1:7-10- Paul states that even the believer will have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of what they did in their own body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10) Some have the idea that the works you do in your body don't matter in Christ or that they are of little consequence, either positively or negatively. How wrong they are!

Human beings can, and often do, reject the love of God. When they go to hell and the lake of fire, nothing externally has separated them from God's love. They chose to reject God's love. It was the choice of their will.

A popular Christian song quotes Paul's saying in Romans 8:37 that **"nothing can separate us from the love of God."** That is true. Nothing on this earth can separate us from His love, but here is one thing Paul left out. NOTHING can separate you from the love of God BUT YOU. The only exception to the statement is that the individual can separate him or her self from the love of God. This is proven by all those that will go to hell and the lake of fire, not because God did not love them, but because they chose to reject God's offer of salvation through Jesus (His love), and they chose to live for the devil. They rejected His love plan for humanity!

The ultimate choice belongs to each human being as to where they will spend eternity. That choice MUST be made before physical death. People enter the judgment they have made for themselves once they depart from this earth through physical death.⁶⁵

Here is a selection from one Greek dictionary about the word *love* in the New Testament.

"Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2Co. 5:14; Eph. 2:4; Eph. 3:19; Eph. 5:2; Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, Gal. 5:22.

"Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John 14:15, 14:21, 14:23; 15:10; 1John 2:5; 5:3; 2John 1:6. Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God."

"Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom. 15:2, and works no ill to any, Rom. 13:8-10; love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal. 6:10. See further 1 Corinthians 13 and Col. 3:12-14." *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*

Note what I italicized from Vine's dictionary. I am primarily dealing with this part of love in this section about "unconditional" love. Vine goes on to give us a catalog of Scriptures that prove his point about the expression of love through obedience to the Lord's commands.⁶⁶ Please study them because it is a part of love that is not often preached or taught. Vine says that *agape* love "*expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments.*" Is not that exactly what Jesus said? Then it should not

⁶⁵ Hebrews 9:27- this is true even though they will have to go through the final judgment before the throne of God.

⁶⁶ John 14:15, 14:21, 14:23; 15:10; 1John 2:5; 5:3; 2John 1:6

be a strange doctrine to us, but the absolute truth. Remember that Jesus is THE TRUTH and that truth is in Him!⁶⁷

Whoever has my commandments, and keeps (does or obeys) them, that person is one who loves me. Whoever loves me, will be loved by my Father, and I will love him (or her), and will reveal myself to him (or her)... If a man (or woman) loves me, he (or she) will keep (do or obey) my word. My Father will love him (or her), and we will come to him (or her), and make our home with him (or her). He (or her) who does not love me does not keep (do or obey) my words. The word that you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. John 14:21-24

John 14:21-24 reveals in no uncertain terms that by OBEYING the commandments of the Lord Jesus that we show our love for Him and the Father, and they have the opportunity to *manifest* love towards us. His love, though available to everybody on the planet, is not *manifested* toward the disobedient and rebellious. It is available, but it is NOT *manifested*! Did you look at the scripture references in note 68? 1 John 2:5 teaches that IF we keep, do, or obey His Word, then love of God is matured (perfected) in us.

John 3:16 demands a response in order to participate in the love of God demonstrated for the whole world by the sacrifice of Jesus.⁶⁸ Though God so loved the world that He sent Jesus to pay the penalty for guilty humanity, it is ONLY those that believe it and receive it that get in on this great love. It is available for all humanity, but only the receivers of it will enjoy the benefits of it. Those that do not believe (trust and obey) and receive it will perish. Jesus commanded the church to go preach the gospel to every creature. Those that believe it (Gr. *trust and obey*) will be saved, and those that do not believe it (Gr. *are faithless, betray a trust, unfaithful*) will be condemned (Gr. *judged worthy of punishment*). This should be quite obvious, but strange and unfruitful doctrines concerning “unconditional love and grace” are causing many to turn away from the truth and believe fables.

Some preachers and books say that Jesus or Paul coined the word “agape.” No, the word (as a noun and verb) was used among the Greeks for centuries before Jesus. Both the noun and verb were used 300 years before Jesus (B.C.) to translate the Hebrew word for *love (ahab)* into the Greek translation from the Hebrew Old Testament known as the Septuagint. When the apostle Paul quoted Leviticus 19:18 in Romans 13:9, “**You will love your neighbor as yourself,**” he was quoting the verse from the Greek Septuagint for the Greek speaking churches. *Love (agapao- agape)* in the Greek Septuagint is mainly translated from this Hebrew root word *ahab*.

In Hebrew, the word *ahab* is a covenant term. In a covenant, each party has a part to play in the manifestation of *ahab*. It is never one-sided! It is a *loyal or faithful love* based on the covenant of God. Often, in Hebrew, there is another covenant term used to express this kind of loyal love. It is usually

⁶⁷ John 14:6, Ephesians 4:21

⁶⁸ See also Romans 5:8, and 1 John 4:9, 10.

translated as “mercy” or “kindness”. The Hebrew word is *chesed*. Brown, Driver Briggs Hebrew-English Dictionary says that the definition is *goodness, kindness, and faithfulness*. David used this word when describing the faithfulness and protection that Jonathan demonstrated because of the covenant they had entered into.⁶⁹

David new much about this term *chesed*. It is the word translated *mercy* over 100 times in the book of Psalms. It is the word translated *mercy* in the well-know declaration, “**The Lord is good and His mercy (chesed) endures forever**” in Psalms 136,, and in the rest of the Old Testament. Again, these are terms based on covenant. Those in the covenant are extended mercy because they are a part of the covenant. Those without a covenant receive no mercy, unless they come into the covenant. In reality, the covenant itself, and the opportunity for someone to enter the covenant freely, is a sign of mercy, favor (grace), and love. Translate that into how we freely came to Jesus, and were graciously accepted in this marvelous covenant, even though we did not deserve it!

Covenant denotes that each member in the covenant does their part to live up to the requirements and responsibilities of the covenant. When one member of the covenant calls on the other for mercy, mercy will be extended as a result of this covenant bond between them. One in covenant has a loyal love for the other in covenant. They will do for each other whatever is necessary to keep their covenant commitment. If one has a need, and calls upon the other covenant partner, then the other must meet that need because of love. Mercy must be extended based on the covenant between the parties. Actually, love and mercy is the desire, heart felt willingness, and even intense eagerness to be a blessing to each other in covenant. It is the willingness to help, bless, care for, protect, aid, and even fight (even to death) for each other. That is covenant!

That is the way David felt, even after Jonathan (his covenant brother) was murdered. His covenant with the deceased Jonathan was so fresh and strong on his mind that he extended royal treatment and great blessing on the only descendant of Jonathan left, Mephibosheth.⁷⁰ Mephibosheth got the benefits of the covenant because of the covenant of his father with David. That, my brother and sister, is mercy and loyal love! What if Christians learned that this is what we should be doing towards one another in the new covenant sealed in the Blood of Jesus? Brothers and sisters (covenant terms) in the Lord would treat each other differently!

Some modern translations have correctly translated *ahab* as *loyal love*. *Love* signifies that you are a lover of God and His Word and you demonstrate it by loyalty and faithfulness to His dictates, teachings, orders, and words. To love God in the Hebrew language indicates that you are loyal and faithful to the

⁶⁹ 1 Samuel 20:8

⁷⁰ 2 Samuel 9

Lord with ALL your spirit, soul, body, all you possess, and all you are.⁷¹ Disloyalty and unfaithfulness to Him and His Words are out of the question for you because you love Him. That is real and true love! You reverence, respect, and honor Him so much that you refuse to do that which displeases Him, and you are faithful to do what pleases the Lord. You want to please Him. You desire to honor Him. You are zealous to live for Him. You are in love with Him and His Word! That is love according to God's Word.

The unfaithful and disloyal DO NOT love God or His Word and are in opposition to God's Covenant. Israel was so unfaithful and disloyal, and they served false god's so much that God ended up divorcing them! Study the book of Hosea and Jeremiah. Disobedience, treachery, harlotry, and unfaithfulness became so pronounced among God's people, that He could no longer stand their wicked ways. He said to them, "I sent her (Israel) away and gave her a writ of divorce."⁷² Even though God hates divorce,⁷³ there were occasions that the treachery and rebellion left Him no option but to put away an entire generation of His people. He did that after the children of Israel refused to go into the Promised Land because of fear, rebellion, and unbelief. God waited forty years until the entire adult generation that came out of Egypt died in the wilderness.⁷⁴ Their kids made it into the land of promise!

Jesus said that a believer should not divorce except for the cause of immorality. (Matthew 19:9) I know that some Christian men and women violated their covenant of marriage through fornication and adultery; their spouse forgave them, and took them back. That is honorable! Jesus did not say they HAD to divorce, but that it was an option. Thank God for those that have the spiritual fortitude and pure gumption to push through all the feelings of betrayal and treason of a spouse that commits a sexual sin against their mate. Jesus did give a way out for those that simply had to have a way out. Of course, God's best is that it never comes to a divorce. There are exceptions. Sometimes divorce is absolutely necessary according to the apostle Paul.⁷⁵ No woman needs to live in an abusive situation. God has called us to peace, and getting beat up by a demon inspired spouse abuser in NOT peace!

I wrote all of that on marriage to tell you the following: Do you understand that marriage is based on a covenant⁷⁶ and that vows are exchanged? One vow is that each spouse will be faithful to the other. Each spouse has a responsibility, and is accountable for keeping their vows. Covenant always demands the participation of both sides in order for a covenant to be honored.

That is the way it is in the New Testament with the relationship between the Father and the believer in Christ Jesus. The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit have a part to play, and then the believer has

⁷¹ Deuteronomy 7:9-11, 6:1-15, 28:1, 2, 13, 14, and all of chapter 30 to name a few verses! This is the principle that exists in all the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation- love Him- obey Him faithfully and live, but disobey, be disloyal and unfaithful to Him, and get death!

⁷² Jeremiah 3:8

⁷³ Malachi 2:16

⁷⁴ Hebrews chapters 3 and 4, Numbers 13 and 14

⁷⁵ 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

⁷⁶ Malachi 2:14

certain responsibilities and is accountable for their actions. Why has that been so hard for people to understand or accept? I will tell you why. It is a whole lot easier to believe that Christians can leave it all up to God, and have no covenant responsibilities. It is easier to think that they have nothing to do in this covenant but “just believe”, or have certain beliefs. No sir! The covenant demands from us commitment, obligation, responsibility, and accountability, together with our rights and privileges in Christ Jesus.

Immorality, as stated by Jesus in Matthew 19:9, is from the Greek word *porneia*. It includes ALL illicit sexual intercourse: adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals, and more.⁷⁷ Actually, this word also includes the spiritual adulterer and fornicator that abandons the Lord and lives once again for the devil. This describes the apostate. In Scripture, the Lord considered the apostate an adulterer and a fornicator. I must add that the vice of pornography is included in this definition, though indirectly. The word pornography is based on this Greek word *porneia*.

Some say that “agape” refers ONLY to the God-kind of love. I beg to differ. Did you know that it is possible to love (*agape*) the world and the things in it, and to even love (*agape*) darkness?⁷⁸ Those disloyal and unfaithful to the Lord are in “agape” of what is the opposite of loving God. One can *agape* either God or mammon.⁷⁹ It’s the choice of each individual whom they will love.

No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate one and love the other; or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon.⁸⁰ Matthew 6:24 (NASB)

To *agape* God or mammon will be determined by whom you serve and to whom you are devoted. *Devoted* is how the NASB translates the Greek word *antecho*. Others translate it as *loyalty*, *respect*, *attach your self to*, *hold to*, and *cleave to*. *Agape* is directly connected to *service* (Gr. *submission and yielded obedience*), *loyalty*, *respect*, and *devotion*! *Agape towards God is then respect for Him with submission to His will, and a yielded obedience to Him in loyalty that cleaves to Him!* How do you like that powerful definition gleaned from the words of Jesus? I like the phrase “cleaves to Him” because it reminds me of Deuteronomy 30:19 and 20. Please read it.

Unconditional love is usually taught with the underlying current of thought that God just winks at evil, and pays no attention to it in the life of individuals, especially in Christians. The ONLY way that

⁷⁷ Thayer’s Greek- English lexicon #4202

⁷⁸ 1John 2:15, John 3:19

⁷⁹ Matthew 6:24- I am using *agape* (the Greek word as a noun), even though in these places it is the verb *agapao*. I do that because *agape* is the most common word for love quoted in Christianity.

⁸⁰ *Mammon* was a loan word in Hebrew from Aramaic. It is used by Jesus to refer to wealth and possessions that are used wrongly and are given precedence over God and His Word. Money is not evil in and of itself. Some have believed in error that money is inherently evil. The truth is that money is often used for evil, but it can and should be used for good. See 1Timothy 6:6-10, and 17-19.

God pays no attention to evil is when a sinner repents of evil and comes to Jesus. When a Christian does evil, God expects repentance and confession of their sin so they can be cleansed from sin and unrighteousness. Even under grace in Christ, the wages of sin are still death.⁸¹ That will not change. Sin deserves and carries a death sentence with it. That is why believers do not need to live in sin, that is, if they want life and blessing. It is that simple.

IF we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us.⁸² What happens if we do not confess our sins? Does the Lord just forgive us anyway? If we sin as born again Christians, but refuse to repent and confess our sins, does the Lord just forgive us anyway? Not according to this *conditional* statement in 1John 1:9. It is not automatic.

Let me say something else to avoid confusion on this issue. The only part of cleansing in the Blood of Jesus that may seem “automatic” for the believer is IF we walk in the light as He is in the light, then His Blood continues to keep us clean from sin.⁸³ That tells us that we are ONLY responsible for what we know, and not for what we do not know. God will not call us into account over what we do not know.⁸⁴ Though this is true, this truth must be received by faith for it to work. Nothing in the kingdom of God happens without faith nor is it automatically received.⁸⁵

Let me state some things for the record so you don’t go off half cocked and think I am denying the eternal mercies of God. I would NEVER do that.⁸⁶ God is good and His mercy endures forever! God’s love and mercy are eternal. They are ALWAYS available to ANYBODY regardless of their sin, IF they will only repent, and receive it as the Lord’s free gift. God will not force anyone to RECEIVE His free gifts.

God has mercy on our ignorance and mistakes. If God did not have mercy on our ignorance, we would all be in a mess. We can always come to the throne of His divine favor and obtain mercy and find favor to help in the time of need.⁸⁷ Thank God for His eternal mercy. I have received His mercy when I messed up big time. If I got what I deserved, I would already be in hell, but He had mercy on me because I came to Him in repentance, confessed my sins, and received His mercy. God always makes His favor available to the humble.⁸⁸ Humility is shown when we repent, confess our sins, and walk in

⁸¹ Romans 6:23

⁸² 1John 1:9

⁸³ 1John 1:7- the word *continue* is implied by the present continuous sense of the word “cleanses.” It is a continual cleansing IF we follow the conditions in this verse.

⁸⁴ James 4:17

⁸⁵ Please read and study our book, *Faith that Receives the Grace of God*, to answer any questions in this area of faith that receives.

⁸⁶ Psalms 136, 145

⁸⁷ Hebrews 4:16

⁸⁸ 1Peter 5:5

the light of what we do know. These are paramount to staying within the boundaries of His eternal mercy, favor (grace), and love.

Favor, mercy, and love depend on our response to His covenant Word. If we continue in faith and love, then we have His favor.⁸⁹ If we step out of the boundaries of the covenant through unbelief or rebellion, then His love cannot manifest towards us unless we repent.⁹⁰ This has always been a reality about any covenant of God. As we stated, a covenant always demands responsibilities, and accountability. We enter the new covenant in the Blood of Jesus through the new birth, but the covenant is a two-way street. God did His part of the Covenant through Jesus, and now He expects us to fulfill our part as His sons and daughters.⁹¹ Loyal love is a part of our covenant in Christ Jesus!

Compassion is Love in Action

What we do out of love for others is called compassion in the Bible. Any discussion of love as a *fruit* of the spirit has to do with *compassion*. One cannot separate love from compassion or it cannot be FRUIT. To manifest *fruit* means that something is showing up on the outside. It is not just the “love sap” in the tree, but the *fruit on the branch* that all can see and benefit from. The sap in the tree can benefit no one until it feeds the branch and the fruit is born on it. Are you seeing this?

Compassion is what separates love “talk” from a demonstrated love, a fruit-bearing love. Jesus demonstrated love through compassion. He loved the people and did something about their condition with the power of the Holy Spirit. That is true compassion!

Jesus went out and saw a great crowd, and He was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick. Matthew 14:14

Being *moved with compassion* is when the love deposited in you by the Holy Spirit bubbles up from your spiritual well and manifests externally in a desire to do something to minister to the needs of others. To be moved by compassion indicates that the fruit of love is ready to be picked and be of benefit to others!

Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight... Matthew 20:34

⁸⁹ Colossians 1:22, 23

⁹⁰ Hebrews 3:12-19, 4:1-3, John 14:21-23, Proverbs 28:13

⁹¹ 1Peter 1:13-25, 2:8-16, 4:1-11, Galatians 5:13-26, 6:7, 8, 1Thessalonians 4:1-12, 1Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:12-20, Titus 2:1-15, Romans 6:12-23- The responsibility and accountability of each believer for their actions is recorded throughout the New Testament, even in every epistle written by the apostle Paul. Over and over, Paul teaches the “gentile” churches about their responsibilities and how to live a holy life.

Love that remains in you and does not come out in a manifestation of power will leave the blind in their state of blindness. Jesus allowed the love in Him to flow out of Him in a demonstration of compassion and the eyes of the blind were opened. Note that it did not say that Jesus only loved this blind man. The miracle happened when, in compassion (love's fruit), Jesus touched their eyes with healing power.

Then Jesus called His disciples and said, "I have compassion on the crowd because they continue with me for three days now and have nothing to eat..." Matthew 15:32

That story in Matthew 15 goes on to tell us about the miraculous feeding of the five thousand from one little boy's lunch. If one's love stays on the inside, the crowds will go home hungry. It is when love is allowed to flow out into a river of compassion that a miracle of divine provision can happen.

The Greek dictionary definition of compassion is *to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, have compassion, for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity*. I think that most of the dictionaries are only giving a natural interpretation of the word compassion based on usage in Greek literature and so on. They haven't necessarily made the connection between compassion and the power of God to make people free and move one into the miraculous realms of God on behalf of others. The Holy Spirit gave me this definition for compassion: *Compassion is a spiritually deep-seated love that yearns for another human being's deliverance, help, and provision.* Compassion moves you into action with God's power and anointing on behalf others! If what you are feeling on the inside just makes you "feel warm and fuzzy all over," it was not compassion. It is not true compassion until someone receives from God based on it.

The "seat" of love is in your spirit. Compassion is when love stands up and gets off its seat and does something for others with God's anointing and power. As long as love stays seated in your heart, then nothing will happen. Something may happen to you personally, but nothing will happen for others unless love comes off its seat and manifests as compassion.

In Matthew chapter's 14 and 20, compassion *moved* Jesus to heal. Compassion will move you to bring deliverance to the person who is the object of compassion. This takes compassion out of the feeling realm of the senses, and over into the power realm of God's Spirit. This removes compassion from an internal experience alone and shows its true character.

Compassion is not a feeling of sympathy. Sympathy is not a deliverer. It is only feeling sorry for people; it produces no power, and has no ability to change anything. Sympathy is a "suffering along" with another person in the emotions, but doing nothing to minister to them and to deliver them. It may feel good to the feelings, but it is actually useless, unless you move from sympathy into compassion's power to deliver and make people whole. Sympathy will leave you by the roadside hurt, bleeding, and dying. It will feel sorry for you, but it will do nothing to assist you or bring healing to you.

Jesus answered, “A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half-dead. It so happened that a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. In the same way, a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was: and when he saw him, *he was moved with compassion*, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two coins, and gave them to the host, and said, “Take care of him; and whatever else you spend, when I come back again, I will repay you.”” Luke 10:30-35

The priest and the Levite may have felt very sorry for the man and said, “Well, that is too bad that robbers got the poor man. He looks like he is half-dead and I cannot do anything about it. It is really a shame that we have so many robbers along this road...!” That is only sympathy, or a feeling sorry, a feeling of pity for folks with no spiritual power, and not a desire to get involved and do something to alleviate the person's suffering.

The Samaritan was moved with compassion. Compassion decided to help and to do something to alleviate human suffering and pain. Compassion took it upon itself to pour wine and oil on the man's hurt and help him to get on to the road to recovery.

Compassion took care of the man's expenses until he could recover. That is real love. It takes money sometimes to do what compassion (demonstrated love) must do. This Samaritan had the money to pay the expenses at the inn, and to pay to take care of the man until he got well. Can you see that based on compassion we should believe God to have more than enough cash flooding our bank accounts? That way we are not just blessed, but are a blessing to others. That is what God told Abraham, and that is our inheritance as the seed of Abraham.⁹²

Religion sees no benefit in being financially blessed because it has little to no compassion and is as the priest and the Levite. *The truth is that religion is very selfish and self-centered.* They think being wealthy as a Christian is evil and not to be desired. People have fussed at me and said, “The Bible says that money is the root of all evil.” That is NOT a Bible verse. That is wrong thinking and believing. The Word says in 1 Timothy 6:10, “**The LOVE of money** is the root of all evil.” That verse goes on to tell us that this love of money is covetousness.

Multiplied millions of people in churches do not know they are presently in love money. Surveys tell us that 80 to 90 percent of Christians do not tithe! They love money so much that they refuse to give God His tithe.⁹³ You can be a multi-millionaire and not love money because you tithe and support the

⁹² Genesis 12:1-3, Galatians 3:14, 29

⁹³ Malachi 3:10-12

work of the Lord.⁹⁴ You can also be a miserly millionaire that thinks only about his or her own needs and desires. A person can be poor and love money. Did you know that? That is why someone can commit a crime for money. That is why the thief steals. The love of money (covetousness) drives the thief and murderer-for-hire. It is THE root of ALL kinds of evil.

If someone is poor and does not do what the Word says about tithes and offerings, they are in love with the little money they do have. Not only that, but poor folks will never get out of their poverty withholding tithes and offerings. Generosity with what you do have is a BIG sign as to whom you serve in your heart, either God or mammon.⁹⁵

Why does tradition so doggedly determine to be against Christians being wealthy or the Scriptural teaching about prosperity? Tradition is blind to what a blessing a believer can be to other people by having plenty of money.

Read the entire Psalms 112. Did you know you can be righteous and rich? There are many examples in the Bible that prove this. Have you ever read about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon, Boaz, Job, Esther, Barnabas, the wealthy women that ministered to Jesus of their substance, and many, many, more? Many righteous wealthy people are mentioned in the Bible.

2 Corinthians 9:6-11 says that one powerful reason we are to expect a mighty harvest of multiplication from God because of our giving is so that we can be **“enriched in everything to all liberality (generosity), which works through us thanksgiving to God.”** People will thank God exuberantly when you bless them financially. It never fails.

Bless someone with a car with no debt on it and that one will praise God for His goodness. Especially, this is true if you were led by the Lord to do it, and if you give Him the credit for it! My wife and I have done it a few times and God always got the glory for it.

Put a person in business by giving them a fully operational jewelry store and they will run, jump, shout, and praise God. My wife and I did just that on Saint Croix (U.S. Virgin Islands). We gave our jewelry store into the life of the wife of a minister, lock, stock, and barrel (with NO strings attached). God got all the glory for it!

Minister to someone the amount of three mortgage payments on their home and see if they rejoice or not.

Pay for a whole school year for a person's child and see what happens.

When triplet sons were born to my wife and me March of 2012, someone paid for a subscription online for baby diapers and wipes for an entire year! We praise God to this day for this wonderful gift! The same goes for the thousands of dollars worth of clothing, car seats, toys, swings, bouncers, cribs, triplet strollers, play yards, and more that has been given to us! We praise and thank God for all of it! He gets the glory for it all!

⁹⁴ 1Timothy 6:17-18

⁹⁵ Matthew 6:24, 2Corinthians 9:6-10

When someone gave us a debt free car on the island of Saint Thomas (USVI), we jumped and shouted! You would too if you had been traveling for months on the open-air busses used for public transportation (called “safaris”)! The heat and humidity are very high on St. Thomas, and one customarily sweats through their clothes as they ride on these vehicles.

Offer to pay all of someone's bills for a month, and see their joy and thanksgiving towards God.

Give someone \$5000 or \$50,000, and watch them praise God with all of their hearts!

In Matthew 15:32, compassion moved Jesus to feed the multitude. Compassion did not sympathize with the need and say, “Oh that is too bad that they are hungry. I wish I could do something for them.” All sympathy can do is say how sorry they are, and leave you in your need with no answer, and no provision. Compassion, on the other hand, will move over into the power of God, get a spiritual answer from the Source of all goodness, and bring spiritual power into action that drives out the need, and brings wholeness into the situation.

Look at Luke 15:11-15, and look at how compassion moved Jesus to raise the dead! The man was too young to die. The mother needed her son, and the son needed his mother. Compassion moved Jesus into a miracle, a sign, and a wonder. Compassion moved Jesus from a natural response of grief and feeling sorry for the mother's loss into the supernatural realm of God where NOTHING is impossible.

Compassion is always connected to something powerful and miraculous. Compassion is supernatural. Compassion is the great and eternal key to the great commission of Jesus in Mark 16:15-20.

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news (gospel) to all the creation. He who believes and is immersed will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned. Miraculous signs will accompany those believing in my name: they will cast out demons, speak new tongues, take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Mark 16:15-18

Love and compassion must be the reason we minister to people. It is impossible to separate love from compassion. They are both referring to who God is and what He does for people when He demonstrates His power and goodness for them.

The keys of the kingdom for the follower of Jesus are in the marvelous work of Jesus as our Redeemer, and Peter received the revelation of these keys of the kingdom. Jesus said that He was giving Peter and the Church (assembly of believers) the “keys” of authority to bind (prohibit or “lock”) and loose (permit or “unlock”).⁹⁶ Peter demonstrated the keys of authority in the book of Acts as he

⁹⁶ Matthew 16:13-19- Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail against the church as it functioned with this dominion and authority.

preached to the multitudes, manifested God's healing power, administered divine judgment, ministered the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and raised the dead.⁹⁷

First and second Peter specifically reveals these keys. An entrance is ministered to us into the kingdom (dominion and rule) of God as we walk in faith, moral excellence, self-control, godliness, brotherly love and the other things mentioned in the list Peter gives in second Peter 1:5-11. The list that Peter shares with us is very similar to the list of the fruit of the spirit Paul teaches in Galatians 5:22 and 23. Note that Peter says that walking in these things will keep us from being unfruitful. This suggests that doing these things will cause us to be fruitful.

In conjunction with what I said in the previous paragraphs, read 1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:1-13, and 14:1 to see that love and compassion (a heart *yearning* and a *strong desire* to minister to people) are the greatest ingredients to the miraculous, and should be the motivation behind all manifestations of the Spirit.

Selfish ambition is demonic and devilish according to James 3:14-16. It is contrary to love and compassion. Another translation says "rivalry," and others refer to a competitive spirit. These are all devilish ambitions. We should fully cooperate with those doing something for God. If God has not called you to be the leader with a ministry vision, then support someone that is a leader for God and get behind his or her vision. Get rid of competitiveness, rivalries, and all selfish ambition right now and get over into the realms of love and compassion towards people.

Compassion moved the father of the prodigal to restore his son, receive him, and rejoice over him when the son humbled himself and came to his father.⁹⁸

Compassion moved an owner that was owed a huge debt to forgive the debt as though it had never happened!⁹⁹

Powerful manifestations of God happen when we minister to someone after a flood of compassion flows towards people from our hearts. It is miraculous!

Finally, be all of one mind having compassion on one another, loving the brothers, being tenderhearted, friendly. 1 Peter 3:8

Again, compassion is not some mushy-gushy feeling, but a very real power of love that wells up from your spirit, especially when confronted by someone's need. Compassion is much more than passion. It is a spiritually deep-seated love that yearns for another human being's deliverance. Compassion moves you into action with God's power and anointing on their behalf.

⁹⁷ See Acts chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9.

⁹⁸ Luke 15:20-24

⁹⁹ Matthew 18:23-27

According to the above verse in 1 Peter, we are to be ministering in compassion to one another. We are to have compassion for one another by demonstration and not by word only. We are to crush and annihilate pain, sorrow, sickness, disease, financial needs, and even premature death through the exercise of compassion! This shows that the miracle working power of God is in demonstration to deliver and make people whole!

Jesus is the perfect example of compassion that we need towards everybody. Compassion causes our prayers for others to be effective and saturated with the powerful love of God that delivers and makes whole.

Please note in the Scriptures how real true love and faith of God will minister concretely to people's needs.

What good is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, and yet his actions do not correspond? Can such faith save him? Suppose a Christian brother or sister is poorly clad or lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "I wish you well; keep yourselves warm and well fed," and yet you do not give them what they need; what is the use of that? So also faith, if it is unaccompanied by obedience, has no life in it--so long as it stands alone. No, someone will say, "You have faith, I have actions: prove to me your faith apart from corresponding actions and I will prove mine to you by my actions. You believe that God is one, and you are quite right: evil spirits also believe this, and shudder." But, idle boaster; are you willing to be taught how it is that faith apart from obedience is worthless? James 2:14-20 (Weymouth)

Real faith sees a brother or sister in need and does not just pray for them. They minister to them as the Lord leads them. That is a manifestation of real faith and, as we will see, it is a demonstration of love and compassion.

Notice the brother and sister in need were not showing everybody their need, pouting, crying, writing letters to get money, making phone calls to tell everybody their problems so they feel sorry for them, or advertising their need. I thought I would throw that out there for the sake of pastors and ministries that have to deal with the "leeches" that are only after a handout. These people need to get their eyes off people as their Source of their supply and onto God. Most of them just need to stop being lazy and get a job. I am not talking about these opportunists and unrighteous folk that are only after people's money. We need to mark people like that. Either they should straighten up or we should run them off! I am not referring to these deceivers at all, and neither was James.

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brethren abides in death. Everyone hating his brother is a murderer. In addition, you know that no murderer has everlasting life abiding in him. By this, we have known the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for the

brethren. Whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother having need, and shuts up his bowels from him, how does the love of God dwell in him? My children *let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.* By this, we have known the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother having need, and *shuts up his bowels* from him, how does the love of God dwell in him? My children let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 1John 3:14-18

If we become aware of a need of clothing, food, or even any other much bigger need among the brethren, and it is within our reach to fill that need and we do not fill it, then we are not practicing love. We practice love in the same way as compassion. Here is the truth of the matter: love demonstrated IS what the Scriptures call compassion. “*Shut up his bowels*” is a phrase directly referring to compassion when it is not permitted to do its work of demonstrating love for the brethren. Remember that the definition of compassion from the Greek is “*to be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, have compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity).*” Other translations tell us that the phrase “shutting up his bowels” can be translated as “shutting up a heart of compassion” or some other similar phrase. The Greek word used here for *bowels* is the same one used in the Gospels for *compassion*. John is instructing us that real love of the Father in us will minister to the needs of others. Love is to be tangible and not in word only. Tangible love is compassion!

“Love talk” is cheap and seriously selfish. Love that ministers to people is grand and generous! All else is false or a cheap imitation of a real and true love. When we demonstrate compassion towards others is when love in us becomes real.

1John 3:14 and 15 reveals that all so-called love that does nothing to minister to the needs of the people is an abiding in the realm of death. Loving is demonstrated by action and it will minister to their needs as led by the Spirit. Notice in the verses above the clear connection between love and God's kind of life. Actually, if one's only concern is for their self, then that one is abiding in the realms of death and not where the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus can make them free from every law of sin and death.¹⁰⁰

This is why giving to the work of the Gospel is so righteous, right, and so necessary for each believer. It removes you from the realm of covetousness and makes you rich towards God and His plans and agenda.¹⁰¹ You cease to be out only for yourself and get involved in supporting those ministers and ministries that are ministering to people unselfishly. Truly, this is good ground for sowing!

Make a quality decision to walk a life full of compassion as Jesus did. God will open your spiritual eyes and your heart, to see any need that arises around you. It is that simple. He will move you to pray and minister with power to set free those around you! Allow His compassion to reside and make a

¹⁰⁰ Romans 8:2

¹⁰¹ Luke 12:21

permanent dwelling in you. How are you to do it? A good “recipe” to include in your daily “spiritual food” is to draw close to God with an intensive desire to be in His presence, His glory, and His anointing, and then to see what He leads you to do to give it away as you minister to others.

Here is another side to walking and living in the fruit of love. If you allow it, Satan will use resentment, bitterness, and strife in your life. Give him NO place! (Eph. 4:27) These are diametrically opposed to walking in love. *Offense* is the root cause of resentment, bitterness, and strife. When people get offended, the result is first strife. How do you deal with offense? Do not give yourself the “right” to be offended. Do not allow yourself any of the things that are contrary to love. Stand against them vigorously! Once strife sets in, then resentment comes in right behind it, and finally bitterness will be the outcome. Never allow it to take root in you. Confess it to the Lord as what it is. It is sin, defilement, and it will remove a person from the favor of God. Bitterness is deadly.¹⁰²

I do not have the space here to deal with each one of these, but I suggest you study the subjects from the Scriptures. The devil knows that if he can get you offended, and over into resentment, bitterness, a refusal to forgive, and strife, that you will never come to fullness in God, and you will actually begin to go the other way, the way of defeat, no promotion, no production, and death.¹⁰³

Forgiveness and forgiving people that have wronged you is massively important to producing love fruit. We will cover some details about forgiveness under another fruit of the spirit.

Let me summarize our study on love. Love is the first on the list. Walking in God’s love is a matter of daily practice and something you must watch closely. Again, the practice of love is compassion. Wallowing around in resentment, bitterness, strife, and offense are in opposition to the love commandment and true compassion.¹⁰⁴ It is not a suggestion that we walk in love, but a commandment. This commandment of the church includes all the rest, and yet it supersedes all other commandments.¹⁰⁵ If you do this one, you will not violate the others!¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Hebrews 12:15

¹⁰³ In Mark 4:14-20, it is the devil that brings offense to STEAL the Word out of your life. In 2 Timothy 2:24-26, he wants you in strife to keep you captive at his will, and thereby never be fit for the Master’s use. In Hebrews 12:15, he is looking for bitterness to keep you bound to defilement. In Matthew 18:22-35, he is looking for you to refuse to forgive your brethren so that you get turned over to the tormentors so you can finally be destroyed and out of his “hair” forever.

¹⁰⁴ John 13:34, 1 John 3:23, 24, Romans 13:9, 10- Read my book, *Faith that Receives the Grace of God*, for a fuller revelation on love as the commandment of the church that supersedes all others.

¹⁰⁵ Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 from the Amplified Bible. The Holy Spirit shed the love of God abroad in your heart. Put your name in every place you find the word “love.” That reveals to you how you should act towards other people. Practice will perfect love or mature it, and a grown-up love will *cast out all fear* from you! (1 John 4:18)

¹⁰⁶ Romans 13:9, 10

Joy

The fruit of the spirit is... JOY Galatians 5:22

JOY has a powerful effect when it comes from inside your heart (spirit) and is manifested externally.

A merry heart does good like a medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones. Prov. 17:22

The fruit of joy has a great power and strength. Laughter, rejoicing, and the joy of the Lord are medicine and healing.¹⁰⁷ There is healing power for the heart, mind, and heart in it. It will do you good to spend much time in the study of JOY.

Sour pusses and prune faces have got to go! A smile and a good countenance go a long way. Walk into a store with a growl or frown on your face and see what kind of reception you get. Compare that to a joyful attitude and a glad countenance and see what happens. Trust me when I tell you that there is a big difference.

This area is one to monitor closely. I have done so for a long time. Purposely, I focus on allowing the joy of the Lord to come out of me by faith, and allow it to affect my emotions and my countenance. My natural personality is not to be cheery and have on a happy face. By nature, I am the more serious type. If I let my natural tendencies rule me, and allowed what they call an A type personality to rule me, I would be serious, harsh, and rough all the time. God has done a work in me and on me, and I am getting better all the time. I know my wife appreciates it! My wife has helped me many times along these lines. I tend to be very intense, blunt, and direct. Often people can perceive it wrongly even though in my own thinking and perception I was just making a point or being truthful.

About ten years ago, I walked into one fast food restaurant with my wife and had an interesting revelation about my character. I got in front of the young man at the cash register and ordered my food distinctly, forcibly, and with a no-nonsense attitude that shocked the young man. I did not even realize what I was doing. As far as I was concerned, I was just ordering our food in a normal voice, tone, and body language. I came across as way too intense, and maybe even belligerent! He backed up about two or three steps from the cash register, and said in somewhat of a shock, "Whoa mister, what did I do wrong?" I apologized when I realized what was going on and finished my order. My wife later told me that I almost sounded like I was mad at him. Honestly, I never heard it or perceived it. I certainly was not angry, but it was perceived that way. Your countenance and body language speak loudly to others!

I trained for 35+ years in a variety of martial arts and owned my own dojo. I trained many people on how to have a body language that demonstrated confidence and strength, not weakness and timidity.

¹⁰⁷ Nehemiah 8:10, Philippians 4:6

Weak, timid, and fearful body language are what criminals look for. A person with that kind of body language is a criminal's assurance that they can steal, kill, or intimidate that person. They become an easy target for the thief or other criminals. If your character and body language says, "Hands off because I am confident and know how to handle myself," then they will usually look elsewhere. They figure out that you may defend yourself, and that spells trouble for them. In 56 years (as of this writing), I have had relatively few times that I had to defend myself. Criminals take one look at me and decide to leave me alone. The other side is that they would run into the VERY BIG angel assigned to me, and that is a bad day for any criminal! I believe in divine protection according to Psalms 91. I have supernatural help and protection!

All that said, there is the fact that when dealing with others one should not have a serious scowl on their face and assume an aggressive posture. That is what you must watch out for. I have to watch this closely. When I go into a place of business, I have to purposely tone down my request and directness by watching how I say things and act. Often, it is not just what you say, but HOW you say something. Mind you, this does not mean that in any way I am being weak, timid, or fearful. I still have confidence and assurance WITH joy. Joy is power and strength. It is never weak, wimpy, or a sissy! I can be assertive and confident and be full of joy, rejoice, laugh and SMILE! Jesus walked in fullness of joy and there was NOTHING weak, wimpy, or sissy about Him! He was always powerful and strong. He is our example.

Joy will take all of us a long way, especially, if like me you have a very strong, opinionated, and assertive personality that has to be curbed and controlled by practicing the fruit of the spirit.

Never allow yourself to be put in a box. You control whether or not you have joy, rejoice, and have a joyful countenance. Do not allow your thinking to be limited. You are not restricted to what fruit should or should not be operating in your life based on national origin. Never allow background or ancestry to govern your character. Do not think because you are of a certain racial or national origin that you should be loud, obnoxious, nasty, and enjoy a good argument. Do not believe that because you are of a certain country that anger needs to be a way of life for you. Never use nationality, race, or upbringing as an excuse for not operating in the fruit of the spirit. NONE are valid reasons! Paul did not say, "The fruit of the spirit is joy unless you belong to such and such a nationality or are from such and such area of the country!" No, the fruit apply to us all in an equal fashion. None of us has an excuse for not developing the fruit in our own lives.

Here is something to be glad and rejoice about.

Let them *shout for joy*, and be glad, that favor my righteous cause: Yes, let them say continually, Jehovah be magnified who hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. Psalms 35:27

Do you ever shout for joy? Practice it out somewhere where you can let it flow freely. Often it will take an act of faith to begin, but one must practice laughing, rejoicing, and shouting for joy. Look at your face in the mirror in the morning and laugh. Learn to laugh at truly funny things, and even force yourself to laugh in the middle of trouble. Later, we will look at counting it all joy when you fall into different trials, as James chapter one teaches us.

There is a powerful release from tension and stress in joy and laughter. Research online about the powerfully positive effects of laughter and joy. It's been in the Bible for millennia, but medical research over the last century is only now finding out about it! Norman Cousins found out about it when he was diagnosed with a form of arthritis that was life threatening. He used laughter as part of his self-medication to receive healing! He got every film of the Marx Brothers and laughed his way back to health!¹⁰⁸

My mother wrote a powerful exhortation on the subject of joy.¹⁰⁹ I will be quoting from her ministry (in smaller type) on this subject here.

“Joy is the fruit of a good relationship with God. You have two choices, to have joy or not to have it. In life, everything has two choices, to do it or not. To have joy is a quality decision. Joy has to be alive in you so that you can en-joy and re-joyce always. The meaning of the word enjoy is to like, to possess, to own, to receive pleasure, to have a great time. *Enjoy* is a verb, and a verb expresses action. It is never stagnant or motionless. Joy does something.

If you divide the word enjoy, the prefix “en” signifies “in,” like when you are covered or complete. This means that you are wrapped up, covered, and surrounded in-joy.

Happiness is temporal, but joy is eternal! Joy is really a spiritual force; a spiritual power in motion that always does and always produces something. It comes from the heart and shows up on the outside. God put joy in us in the new birth just as He put love in us. It is a fruit of the recreated human spirit, but it must be practiced. If you have joy, it will show because it is fruit. Fruit is supposed to show. It becomes obvious and people will ask you what do you have that they do not have.”

In Philippians 4:4-8, to rejoice indicates to be completely full of joy in the Lord always. This is not rejoicing sometimes, but rejoicing always.

A very powerful way to rejoice is not to be anxious about anything. Quit the worry and put your trust in Him that He has answered all your petitions. Cast your cares over on the Lord because He is greatly interested in you. He cares for you. That is true humility. (1 Peter 5:6, 7)

Make your requests of faith and let them be made known unto God with thanksgiving. We praise Him and are thankful that He has heard your prayers even before we see the results. That is real faith.

¹⁰⁸ The story is in his autobiography, *Anatomy of an Illness* (Bantam Books, 1981).

¹⁰⁹ See 1 Timothy 6:17, Philippians 4:4

Then Paul tells us *how* to think. This is important every day of your life. It will help you to stay in joy, and out of things that will rob your joy.

Whatever things are true ...noble... just... pure... lovely... of good report, if there be any virtue... praiseworthy... think (also means *to meditate*) on these things.

Your heart has to be fixed and trusting in the Lord. Read Psalm 112. Your spirit has to be established on God's Word. Philippians 4:8 reveals a key to staying with your heart fixed on the Word, and keeping joy in its proper place in your life. Refuse those thoughts contrary to the Word. Keep thinking good and pure thoughts. Feed yourself with the Word, speak the Word, act on it and maintain control of your thought life.

In John 15:11, Jesus promises us that His joy will be in us. It came into our spirit when we were born again and now we are to release it and walk in it.

“Joy is contagious. Let me give you an example: think about it like “a bubbling brook.” How about when you take a soda bottle and shake it before opening it? That same kind of bubbling and overflowing should be just like your JOY. Allow it to overflow into others every day.

John 16:24 says that we have complete joy in Him or in His Name. That is another key to continuous joy in our lives... abide in Him and let His words abide (make their home) in you. (John 15:7)

A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance! Proverbs 15:33

Sour faces and bitter lives are inconsistent with the joy of the Lord! Joy inside will flow and show up on the outside!

A merry heart does good like a medicine! Proverbs 17:22

The proof is unmistakable... JOY HEALS. It is God's divine medicine. If sickness is in your body remember that Jesus bore it for you so you do not have to bear it. He took your sickness so now you can have healing and health! (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:17) NOW GET FULL OF JOY ABOUT IT! REJOICE!

Now women, and the men too, you will love this part. Proverbs says that a joyful heart makes a cheerful face, and is good medicine. I like it in Spanish: “a joyful heart brings beauty to your face.” With beauty and free medicine, that is all we need to be beautiful. It is a promise from God. JOY is a free medicine from Him. Hallelujah!

Joy will bring back what belongs to you. Discouragement, worry, sadness cannot stay when joy is flowing through you and when you are fully developed in it.

Some of the robbers of joy are: lying lips, gossip, judging and accusing the brethren, murmuring against anointed leadership, depression, sadness, grief, strife, worry, anxiety, fussing and fighting, flare-ups, getting revenge, and getting offended.

In the morning, we have a mandate, an order from God to get joy. Psalm 30:5 says that joy comes in the morning.

Look yourself in the mirror and start declaring:

“I have the joy of God today. The fruit of joy will reflect in me daily. The joy of the Lord is my strength. I hook up with the Holy spirit today to be in perfect joy.” (Nehemiah 8:10) Romans 14:17 says: ‘The kingdom¹¹⁰ of God is righteousness, peace and JOY in the Holy Spirit.’ Therefore, joy is mine in Jesus Name. To have joy is an act of my will. Today I walk in JOY.”

It is your choice! Choose joy by thinking on it, meditating on it, saying it, and practicing it! Habakkuk 3:17-19 says that no matter what comes your way, you rejoice in the Lord of your salvation. He is your deliverance! He is your strength and He makes you walk on high places, like walking in space, because life’s cares will not stick to you. Just think...the Holy anointing oil of God is dripping from head to toes and nothing bad can stay. You will be so slippery that the devil cannot get hold of you. YES and AMEN!”

Joy Instructions!

Here are some instructions my mother gave at the end of the article that will absolutely cause the joy of the Lord stir up in you, and flow out of you mightily.

Follow these instructions for 31 days:

Praise and worship Him daily.

Sing a song unto Him.

Open your heart to Him.

Pray in the spirit (tongues) at least 1 hour a day.

Smile and laugh a lot.

For 31 days, read a chapter a day from Proverbs.

Read 1 Corinthians 13 every day.

Read a chapter a day of 1 John (there are only 5 chapters).

¹¹⁰ “Kingdom” is referring to the dominion of God, as we studied in the first chapter of this book. To walk in dominion over hell and death and flow in God’s blessing, we must lay hold of our rights and privileges in Christ, and use them. That is righteousness. Righteousness also means doing what is right and being right before God according to the covenant sealed in the Blood of Jesus. We study “peace” after we finish our study on joy. Dominion depends on these three: righteousness, peace and joy. They are a foundation to dominion. Dominion depends on our place in Christ in the spirit, and our laying hold of that which belongs to us and walking in it (righteousness), appropriating by faith the mighty provisions of His sacrifice so that all is complete and whole (peace), and we are walking in the joy of the Lord.

Keep reading repeatedly until you finish the 31 days.

Declare the Word of God daily... Look for verses of Scriptures that apply to your daily need.

Encourage yourself daily like King David did. (1Samuel 30:6)

Keep growing in the Lord and in the Power of His might.

I am going to add some more to her list. Practice smiling, laughing, and sharing joy with all those around you, and BE KIND! If you sow seed of joy and kindness every time that you have an opportunity, it will begin to produce a harvest of joy in your life! Kindness is not weakness or only for women! Many men think that if they are kind that they are acting like a woman! That is wrong thinking. Some women can be as mean and ugly as any man, but real men and women will practice kindness. When you practice joy, kindness will flow from it. Kindness is a show of strength and power. Only those that know and understand their place in Christ can be truly kind to others. Unpleasant people have no concept of true strength and power. I know some Bible-toting Christians that are as mean as a hornet! That has to change! We should be known as Christians because of our joy and kindness, not by our ability to give others “a piece of our minds” and be nasty to folks.

Here is another way to share joy and gladness with others, especially if you are going through a rough emotional spot. Be a hilarious and prompt-to-do-it giver, as the Amplified Bible translates 2 Corinthians 9:7! Be led by the Lord and ask Him where you can sow a financial seed into someone’s life that will bring him or her joy! I am telling you, I have done this, and it has brought great joy into my life to bless someone else financially. Try it. You will like it. You may like it so much that you may never want to stop. Again, it has a powerful healing affect.

Do all this and watch what happens with sadness, grief over any loss, and depression. They will all melt away. All those are negative, devil-inspired emotions. They may attack your life, but don’t dwell on them. You need to resist them as if you would resist the devil over any other sin.

In that day, you will ask me nothing. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you will ask the Father in my name, He will give you. Up until now, you have asked nothing in my name; ask and you will *receive*, that your joy may be full. John 16:23, 24

Answered prayer will cause joy to be full. Here is an important question. When should one begin to rejoice? Should we begin to rejoice once we see the manifestation of the answer to our prayer? If you wait to see the answer before you rejoice, you may never get your answer. The right understanding here will get us into the manifestation of answered prayers. Jesus is not saying, ‘wait till you see the answer and then you will have joy’. The Greek word for “receive” is vital. It is defined as: *to lay hold of, appropriate, claim, seize, or to take*. Jesus told us how this word is related to answered prayer in Mark 11:24.

That is why I say to you, whatever you ask for, believe (*trust*) that you have received it, and then it will be granted to you. Mark 11:24

Jesus said that the trust or believing comes before the answer shows up. One must trust that they have the answer before one can see it. One must lay hold of, appropriate and take the answer in faith before the answer comes. Connect this to John 16:24. When we ask, we believe that we receive the answer as done for us and accomplished on our behalf so that our joy may be full. The joy should not start when we see the answer according to this. The joy **MUST** start before the manifestation ever shows up. Get full of joy over your answer before you see the answer! Laugh aloud by faith!

Faith, joy and laughter are connected. God sits in the heavens and laughs. (Psalms 2:4)

We are supposed to laugh at famine and destruction! (Job 5:22)

Abraham and Sarah had a child in old age by the promise of God. They named the blessing they received *Isaac*. *Isaac* means laughter in the Hebrew language! Begin rejoicing by faith the moment you pray for the result. “Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha- in the Name of Jesus! Ha, ha, ha, ha- the answer is mine!” That is real faith.

Begin laughing by faith at any negative circumstance because it does not have a chance at staying in your midst. It must obey and bow its knee in the Name of Jesus. You rejoice before you ever see the manifestation. You laugh because the victory is yours! You thank God for the answer and the victory before you can see it or feel it. You are grateful for His provision and you rejoice in the fact that the answer has come before you actually enjoy the results.

I know that is not always as easy as I made it sound. I have been there when I prayed in faith and the last thing I wanted to do was rejoice and thank the Lord for the answer. I felt nothing when I started to praise and thank God for what I believed I received when I prayed. I felt dry and with no life or power behind my words. I have raised my hands by faith and thanked Him for the answer when what I really felt like doing was crying, complaining, and grumbling. The last thing I wanted to do was praise and give thanks to God until joy and laughter burst forth. I really wanted to crawl into bed and pout or mope. Yes, real men can pout. It is not just a woman thing. Men and women are subject to the same emotions though often women express them better.

I can't tell you how many times I praised and thanked God for my answered prayer while feeling nothing, and the devil was all the time screaming in my ear that I was being hypocritical because I was not feeling like being grateful. That is when you need to take a stand and say, “I don't care what I feel or what I see. I am trusting God and His Word and His Word says...” I would begin to quote God's Word, thank, and praise the Lord for the answer by faith. Every single time it would not be long until joy would begin to stir up on the inside of me and strength and power would come. Suddenly, I would begin to rejoice aloud and thank Him with a strong voice for the answer. Soon, I was over into joy, and it was not long before the answer showed up! Sometimes the manifestation has taken longer, but every time the problem would come to mind, I would go back to thanking the Lord for my answered prayer and get

over into joy UNTIL the answer to my prayer showed up. Now, I am just like you. I have missed it in this area when I let my emotions and feelings get the best of me. I have not been perfect in this and neither has anybody else. We should practice these truths more and more and get better and better at praying in faith and stepping into the joy of the Lord in us.

Thanksgiving and praise are hooked up with joy. Both thanksgiving and praise are released through the mouth. They are like the buckets that dip into your spirit and draw out the joy of the Lord.¹¹¹

Have you ever gone to church feeling down in the dumps? I have a few times. I would get into the service and feel dead, dry, and “lower than a snake’s belly.” “Do you mean to tell me that preachers can feel that way” Yes they can. We are no different than you when it comes to having to deal with feelings and emotions. I go to church whether I feel like it or not. Then the praise and worship team at church would begin to minister to the Lord in song. I would begin by faith to praise and worship with the praise team and soon the joy of the Lord would overtake me. I go from dry to full and overflowing. Glory!

Fullness of joy is directly connected to the presence of the Lord.¹¹² We come into His presence with thanksgiving and singing unto Him.¹¹³ We can also come into His presence in prayer.¹¹⁴ As we pray and spend time before the throne of grace with the Father, joy will burst out of us. Pray in tongues for a while and spend time listening to the Lord and watch how joy bubbles up out of you.

Peace

The fruit of the spirit is PEACE... Gal. 5:22

And through Him having *made peace through the blood of His cross*... Colossians 1:20

Through the shed blood of Jesus that sealed our inheritance in Him forever, some provisions were made for you and me. The context of this verse says that heaven calls the entire spectrum of this provision PEACE. Read up to verse 21. Peace is much more than tranquility, calmness, and serenity. *Peace* as a fruit of the spirit is a whole lot more than “being at peace” or having an “inner peace”.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. *Not as the world gives* do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27

¹¹¹ Isaiah 12:3

¹¹² Psalms 16:10

¹¹³ Ps. 95:2, 100:2

¹¹⁴ Heb. 4:16, Phil. 4:4-6

According to Jesus' teaching, the peace He offers is not like the peace the world offers. The peace the world offers is selfish, self-absorbed, and interested only in itself and its personal tranquility. The peace of Jesus is completely different than that.

Eastern cults, religious philosophers, and other deceived people define "peace" like this: *Peacefulness is an inner sense of calm - it comes from becoming still - in order to reflect and meditate on our inner wisdom and receive answers. It is becoming quiet so we can look at things quietly. Freedom from desire leads to inner peace.*

This quote is from the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu or Laozi from somewhere between the 4th and 6th century before Christ. Contrary to these unscriptural ideas, God says, "**Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart!**" (Psalms 37:4) The devil does not want you to have any legitimate desires in your heart. The enemy wants people to have "freedom from desire." Why is Satan interested in removing human desires (according to God) from the heart? Jesus taught, "**Whatever things you desire (in line with God and His Word) when you pray, believe you have received them, and you will have them.**" (Mark 11:24) When you delight yourself in the Lord is when those desires begin to come to pass as you add faith to them. That spells trouble for the enemy.

How does one delight himself in the Lord so that his (or her) desires are granted? One must spend time around the Father and His Word in fellowship with Him. One must live and speak those things in line with Him and His Word. Your inner desires begin to line up with His desires. Then, when you pray, it will be according to His will as revealed in His Word.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask what you will, and it will be done for you... in this is my Father glorified... John 15:7, 8a

This verse addresses fellowship with the Lord when it says, "*abide in me.*" Then it addresses the spending time listening to, meditating upon, and doing the Word when it states, "*and my words abide in you.*" These are prerequisites to receiving what you pray. These prerequisites align your thinking, desires, words, and actions in faith and in God. These are indispensable to getting the desires of your heart. These are intimately involved in "delighting yourself in the Lord." God gets great glory when His children follow His instructions to answered prayer, and get the fulfillment of the desires of their hearts that are according to God.

I believe in being "calm" in the spirit and mind. I like that, but real "spiritual calm" can only come from God. Just as Jesus commanded the sea and the waves, "Peace- be still", He will command the same in any human being through the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not a one sided deal though. There is more to it than to sit by and wait for the divine command. We have a part to play in this divine peace. We will say more about that side of it below.

Here are some more worldly views on peace:

“End each day with thoughts of peace. Begin each day with thoughts of peace. Continue thinking thoughts of peace throughout your precious day and happiness will be yours. Set peace of mind as your highest goal, and organize your life around it.” (B. T.)

That really sounds spiritual. Actually, it is as far away from any true Bible spirituality as you can get. In this quotation above is a very selfish and self-centered idea of peace. Notice that so called “spirituality” without God is mostly occupied with itself. Did you see that the quotation makes the statement, “Set *peace of mind* as your highest goal?” I told you that the world's peace is all about “me.” It is centered on selfishness. It is a central issue in the “peace of mind” eastern cults.

Peace of mind should not be your highest goal or you will miss all the blessings of God. Yes, I believe that in Christ, we are to have a mind and heart of peace and not in “pieces”, but it does not come by natural methods. This kind of peace these worldly writers speak about is a natural substitute for God's supernatural peace. It is a natural “peace” achieved by human effort and “mind control.” It revolves on the premise of humanly taking control of your mind. Look at the glaring difference between God's peace and human pseudo-peace, and compare it to what the Scripture teaches about a sound mind.

For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

God is a Spirit being and is in fact the Father of spirits,¹¹⁵ and His sound mind for the believer comes through the power of the Spirit and not the power of the mind. The power of the Spirit through the Word is supposed to transform the mind, to renew it and transfigure it.¹¹⁶ The Spirit of truth is supposed to lead us and guide us according to the truth of God's Word!¹¹⁷

“In acceptance, there is peace. Acceptance is the first step to inner calm. The poor long for riches, the rich long for heaven, but the wise long for a state of tranquility”. (Swami R.)

This well-known deceased “swami” was a very deceived individual. Psalms tells you that the fool says that there is no God. In his book, “*Enlightenment without God,*” this “swami” clearly portrays his foolishness by stating that God or a belief in God is unnecessary to achieve peace.

Additionally, this man fell for Satan's deception just like all that follow the philosophies of eastern cults and Christian traditional thinking influenced by their thinking. They teach people to take it all in even if it is bad. “Don't do anything to change it” is their philosophy. They instruct their ignorant followers: “If it's bad, but you learn to live with it, you can have an inner calm.” That is all straight from hell.

¹¹⁵ John 4:24, Heb.12:9

¹¹⁶ Romans 12:2

¹¹⁷ John 16:13, 17:17

Real strength and power comes from rejecting any work of Satan, and driving out from your life anything unlike God.¹¹⁸ It is Satan and his demons that come to steal, kill, and to destroy. Jesus came that we might have life and that more abundantly.¹¹⁹ That is when true release and true peace will flow like a river. Anything less and it is a lie, a pseudo-peace, and an imposter of God's peace. Real peace is deliverance, freedom, supply, provision, security, and health, covenant relationship with God, wholeness, and completeness in Christ. If you never heard of Bible peace like this, keep reading because we prove it! Real peace is for you and for all those around you. Real peace is being blessed and then turning around and being a blessing to someone else. Real peace flows from the inside to the outside.

I mention these worldly ideas on peace so you can compare them to the truth of Scripture and see the glaring differences between them. All these “self” oriented ideas of peace make “inner” tranquility and freedom from stress the ultimate goal in life. They are not life’s ultimate goal. Real freedom from a heavy weight of stress comes from “*casting all your cares upon Him,*” trusting that He cares for you, and that He is interested in your life and affairs.¹²⁰ He wants you to be blessed and for you to be made whole in every area of life. He wants your life to be changed and brought to higher and higher levels in Him. He wants His best for you.

“*He who lives in harmony with himself lives in harmony with the world,*” said Marcus Aurelius.¹²¹ He missed it by a thousand miles! Marcus Aurelius agreed with all the philosophies of ancient “inner calm and harmony” cults. *Harmony, tranquility, inner peace* or *calm*, are all buzzwords used by the eastern religious cults and philosophies when speaking of this selfish and self-absorbed tranquility and calm of mind that they call “peace.”

“*Love the moment and the energy of that moment will spread beyond all boundaries into blissful, peaceful happiness. If half a century of living has taught me anything at all, it has taught me that nothing can bring you peace but yourself.*” (Dale Carnegie - 1888-1955)

Nothing can bring you peace but yourself? Sorry Mr. Carnegie, but your idea of peace is foreign to the Bible. Real peace only comes from God and not from your own self. He provided real peace through the great sacrifice of Jesus for us. Jesus presented His Blood in heaven as proof of His death and sacrifice for us and it settled the real peace issue forever. Reconciliation was accomplished. Nothing is broken and nothing is missing in this true peace. It was placed in us as a divine deposit as all the other fruit of the spirit. It is God’s gift to us. We are to receive and to walk in peace.

We are not commanded to “love the moment” as Dale Carnegie said, but to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves!¹²²

¹¹⁸ James 4:7, Ephesians 4:27, 6:10-13

¹¹⁹ John 10:10, 8:44

¹²⁰ 1 Peter 5:6, 7

¹²¹ Roman Emperor and philosopher-121-180 AD.

¹²² Matthew 22:27, Luke 10:27

“When your mind is tranquil, all your ill-thoughts cease. You cannot perceive beauty, but with a serene mind.” (Henry David Thoreau)

Notice the ideas of “tranquil” and “serene mind.” God's idea of peace is more comprehensive, down to earth, and real. It starts as a deposit from Him in the human spirit, but it is not supposed to stay there only for yourself and your “inner tranquility.” God requires that peace come forth to the outside.

None of the fruit of the spirit are put inside the believer at the time of the new birth so they can have “tranquility and serenity” like the gurus teach, but they are put in us by the Holy Spirit to make things happen on the outside. (Galatians 5:22) The fruit of the spirit is not the “internal tranquility of mind.” It is FRUIT. It will produce from the inside out for all to see and for others to benefit from it. It will make you not only to be blessed, but also to be a blessing to those around you! (Genesis 12:3)

God's peace is powerful and not “ethereal.” When God is at work in His peace, the devil's head is going to get crushed!¹²³ Peace is powerful and life changing. It is not the “Mickey Mouse” (sorry Mickey fans: no insult intended for the mouse!) peace of the swamis. God's peace will produce and bring forth fruit in this natural world.

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 14:17

Righteousness, peace and joy have to do with power and the manifestation of kingdom on the earth. God's kingdom is defined as His rule and reign demonstrated through us. It is real power at work.

For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. 1Corinthians 4:20

What kind of power is expressed in the kingdom of God? Is it ethereal and “mental power?” Jesus told the disciples to announce,

“The kingdom of God is here; heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, cast out demons...”¹²⁴

That is the kind of kingdom power we are talking about, a signs and wonders kingdom manifestation, a demonstration of the Spirit instead of all “talk.”¹²⁵ True kingdom power is expressed in casting out demons, healing the sick, ministering to the oppressed, raising those bowed down, good

¹²³ Romans 16:20

¹²⁴ Matthew 10:7, 8

¹²⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:4

news to the poor, and so on.¹²⁶ All these are directly linked to “peace.” That is a radical departure from traditional thinking, but it is so nevertheless!

Peace has to do with God's power, God's glory, and God's anointing. These are in the Holy Spirit, and He is in us.¹²⁷ Many Christians only know this word “peace” from the Greek. They may not even know one word of Greek, yet what they believe is “peace” is mainly the peace as taught by Greek philosophers and far eastern cults. We are familiar with that definition of peace in Christendom. At first glance, it appears that the Greek word agrees with the eastern godless philosophies. This is only true at first glance! Upon a closer examination, we find that it does not agree because something else is behind its usage in the New Testament.

Peace as the Hebrew word *shalom*

Let's first see the common word translated *peace* in the New Testament. I am using Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon (dictionary).

Peace¹²⁸: G1517

[ειρηνοποιέω](#)

eirenopoieo

1) To make peace, establish harmony

Part of Speech: verb

A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number: from [G1518](#)

That definition is about as shallow as they come, and it really does not tell you much of anything. What is the related word? It is actually the root word G1518. At least Thayer tells us this much. We begin to get some light with the root word.

[ειρήνη](#) (G1518)

eirene

Thayer's Definition:

1) A state of national tranquility (*no national turmoil or civil unrest*)

1a) Exemption from the rage and havoc of war

2) Peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord (*they can agree and not be in strife*)

3) Security, safety, prosperity, felicity (*keep this definition in your thinking*)

¹²⁶ Luke 4:18

¹²⁷ Romans 8:9-11, 1 John 4:4

¹²⁸ According to Strong's Concordance numbering system.

- (4) Of the Messiah's peace
 - 4a) The way that leads to peace (salvation)
- 5) Of Christianity, the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is
- 6) The blessed state of devout and upright men after death

Keep the #3 definition in mind. The above definition does not tell you that Thayer continues in his dictionary to tell us what is the background of this word. I got the above definition of Thayer's from the version of the lexicon that is condensed in very well known free Bible software. In Thayer's printed version of the lexicon, it tells us that *eirene* is the same word generally used in the Septuagint¹²⁹ for the Hebrew word *shalom*. This is important because the Septuagint was the text of the Old Testament that the apostle Paul consistently quoted in his epistles when he wrote to the Greek speaking churches.

Thayer's also mentions the fact (in the printed version of his dictionary) that the Greek word *eirene* is based on the Hebrew word *shalom*, and that it is defined as: *security, safety, prosperity, and felicity*.

Why is it that most Bible students do not get this information out of Thayer's? The reason is that Thayer's gives us the word "shalom" only in Hebrew letters in his original printed lexicon.¹³⁰ So many miss this information I just gave you because they do not read Hebrew.

If you only study the condensed version of Thayer's used by most Bible study software you will miss this. The English only condensed version of Thayer's I quoted above refers to this definition without it ever telling you that Thayer actually wrote that *eirene* was based on the meaning of the Hebrew word *shalom* (שָׁלוֹם). That is why I told you to hold definition #3 in your mind because it is a neglected part of the definition of "shalom."

So what are we telling you? It is simple. *Shalom stands behind the use of this Greek word "eirene" in the New Testament.* That is really good news! *Peace* through the Blood of His cross includes *security, safety, prosperity, and felicity* because the background and usage of the word comes from the Hebrew language and the word *shalom*! This is sounding more and more distant from all the philosophers and the weirdo religious ideas of eastern "pseudo-peace" swamis and gurus. They are not the same!

If we are going to get an understanding of this Greek word *eirene* then we must study the Hebrew word. Get ready to be blessed by the truckloads. Once you know the true definition of "shalom" or "peace" you will see what Jesus actually provided for us through the Blood of His cross. It is awesome and marvelous to our eyes! It is more than the "peace" of knowing that you will go to heaven when you die. Thank God for that part of "peace", but He is interested in getting *shalom* to you in the here and now!

Let's look at this Hebrew word "shalom" in Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew-English Lexicon.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures produced in Alexandria for Greek speaking Jews c. 300 B.C.

¹³⁰ שָׁלוֹם

H7965

שלום / שָׁלוֹם

Shalom

1) Completeness, soundness, welfare, peace

1a) Completeness (in number)

1b) Safety, soundness (in body)

1c) Welfare,¹³² health, prosperity¹³³

1d) Peace, quiet, tranquility, contentment

1e) Peace, friendship

1e1) Of human relationships

1e2) With God especially in covenant relationship

1f) Peace (from war)

1g) Peace (as adjective)

Part of Speech: noun masculine¹³⁴

This gives you a good picture of what Jesus provided for us through the Blood of His cross that sealed the eternal covenant in Heaven for us.¹³⁵ This all is a part of *shalom* provided through the blood of His cross! Believe it, take hold of it, confess it, and appropriate it now!

Here is a key issue in peace as a fruit of the spirit. Prosperity, faring well, health, completeness, and everything else under the heading of *shalom*-peace, has been deposited in your spirit as a free gift from God in the new birth. Now all these must come forth out of the spirit into the natural world. They will surely come forth as we practice the principles of the Word that draw these out from the realm of the spirit into the natural. His divine promises have been given to us so that as we believe God's Word to us, and do whatever He says in it, they will begin to come forth in power. Understand this, prosperity and health come out of the spirit into the natural and not the other way around. Completeness, faring well, quietness, and contentment spring forth from your spirit as we live out His Word. Health is in you. Blessing is in you. Prosperity beyond your wildest dreams is in you. Now they must come out. How do they come out of us?

¹³¹ Coded with Strong's concordance numbers. (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 1996)

¹³² Literally, "faring well" and not "government" welfare program,

¹³³ Oh-oh" for all that thought that "health and prosperity" are not a part of the Gospel! The Blood of His cross provided it all under the heading of *peace*!

¹³⁴ Also look at the verb *shalem* #7999 for further study.

¹³⁵ Heb. 9:12

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you... If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask what you will and it will be granted unto you... He has given to us exceeding great and precious promises that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature... Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ... They did not mix faith with the Gospel (the promises, the blessing) they heard so that it did not profit them... Matthew 6:33, John 15:7, 2 Peter 1:4, Ephesians 1:3, Hebrews 4:2

Many have gravely misunderstood the reason for God wanting to make believers healthy and prosperous. Why is God so interested in your healing and in your abundance? He wants you blessed for sure. He loves you and yours, and wants to bless you with abundance and health.

I pray that you prosper and be in health even as your soul prospers. 3 John 2

...God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 1Timothy 6:17

...I came that you may have life and that more abundantly. John 10:10

By His stripes (bruises) we were healed. 1Peter 2:24

We know the favor (gift, grace) of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might be made rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9

Why does God want to bless you in this life with more than the spiritual salvation of “when you die you get to go to heaven”? Why has He given us richly all things to enjoy? Why has His power given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through these exceeding and great promises?¹³⁶ It is a whole lot easier to witness and minister to others when you are well yourself.

Have you ever had a raging ugly flu that knocked you flat on your back for days? I hope not. Did you feel like witnessing, preaching, teaching, ministering to others or even going to church? I am sure that you did not feel like even reading your Bible! Sickness robs people of their ability to be a strong witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. We need healing and health for service in the army of the Lord. We are called soldiers and we are in the army of the King of kings. Sick soldiers cannot fight and they certainly cannot win!

¹³⁶ 2 Pet. 1:3, 4

Have you ever heard of a sick boxer winning a match? Sick football players are not making the touchdowns in a game. Diseased baseball players are not making homeruns. Most athletes are out of the game if they have some sickness or disease.

Sickness, pain, disease, etc. keeps many from the race they are to run because they don't know that Jesus bore our sicknesses and pains, and that by His stripes we are healed!¹³⁷ I know that there have been a few exceptions, but why settle for the exception when Jesus did this for all of us!

God wants you to win and have triumph and victory!¹³⁸ Defeat is NOT a part of our strategy in the Body of Christ. We are to be more than conquerors, and never are we to be the conquered.¹³⁹

It is certainly easier to support your church and those ministries that are teaching and ministering the Word and the power of the Spirit if you have some money and resources. Poverty (as is sickness and disease) is a part of the curse of the law on the disobedient as revealed in Deuteronomy 28:14-68. Defeat in war, social upheavals, plagues, famines, and every form of human tragedy imaginable was under that curse. Christ has already paid the price to redeem us from that curse!¹⁴⁰

God wants us free from poverty and He wants us to have abundance for the support of the Gospel ministry in the earth. He wants us to sow seeds of *money* and *resources* into His work. Then He wants to multiply it back to us so that we have an abundance *for every good work*.¹⁴¹

He wants the fullness of His “shalom” in our lives so that we can turn around and be a blessing to others. That is what the great commission is all about.¹⁴² We get saved and then we turn around and get others saved. We get healed and then we go and get others healed. We get baptized in the Holy Ghost and then go and minister to others so they can have this glorious supernatural experience. We get blessed financially and then we have more than enough to share with others. We have God's safety and protection and can bring others into safety as well.

God told Abram in Genesis 12:2 and 3 that He would bless him. God gave the ultimate purpose of this blessing in that passage. It was not so Abram “his four and no more” would be blessed in a corner. No! God further said to him, “**and to make you a blessing.**” God's purpose has never changed. He wants you blessed beyond your wildest dreams in spirit, soul, body, financially and in your daily life so that you can turn around and BE a blessing!

God blessed Abram (Abraham) with much silver and gold, cattle, lands, and gave him physical health and strength. He protected him from his enemies, right in the middle of war. He even died at an

¹³⁷ Isaiah 53:4, 5, Hebrews 12:1, 2

¹³⁸ 2 Corinthians 2:14, 1 Corinthians 15:57

¹³⁹ Romans 8:37

¹⁴⁰ Galatians 3:13

¹⁴¹ See 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

¹⁴² Matthew 28:18-20

old age without any sickness or disease.¹⁴³ God gave him and his wife Sarah strength to have a child when they were very old.

Abraham's faith is the kind of faith we as Christians are to imitate.¹⁴⁴ He is called the father of the faithful in Christ.¹⁴⁵ Those that are of this same kind of faith are called the sons of Abraham, and are blessed with Abraham.¹⁴⁶ Christ redeemed us from the curse so we could walk in this blessing of Abraham. We are Abraham's seed in Christ and heirs of this promise just as Jesus is heir of it! We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.¹⁴⁷ This blessing is just as much our right by virtue of the New Birth as it was for Abraham and for Jesus!

The shalom Gospel we are supposed to preach

This is all a part of the “shalom” gospel we are to preach and teach!¹⁴⁸ This is all a part of the gospel that Paul preached according to his own teaching in Romans 10:14 and 15. There, Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7. In the Hebrew text of Isaiah 52:7, *peace* is the word *shalom*. It is the Gospel of *shalom*. It is the gospel of completeness in Christ in all realms spirit, soul, body, health, prosperity, supernatural safety, faring well, and wholeness. It is the gospel of covenant relationship with the Father through Jesus' Blood where we have free access by faith into His great favor.¹⁴⁹ It is the gospel of the blessing of God on His people!¹⁵⁰ It is the gospel of the supernatural miracles, signs and wonders!¹⁵¹ One Jewish rabbi defined “*shalom*” by the phrase “nothing missing and nothing broken.” That is the gospel of *shalom*! It will straighten out the crooked places and the twisted limbs. It will deliver the oppressed. It will be good news of deliverance to the poor. It will set things right. It will change the impossible and make it possible. It will open blind eyes and cause the lame to walk. It will unlock the bars of the prison doors and it will set the captives free.¹⁵²

Here is the great key that unlocks the treasure house of this great and grand “shalom” sealed in the Blood of the Savior Jesus. Here is the part that you must do to appropriate and embrace what Jesus provided for you.

¹⁴³ Genesis 13:2, 14:14-15, 22-23, 21:5, 24:1, 34-35, 25:8

¹⁴⁴ Romans 4:12-25

¹⁴⁵ Romans 4: 11, 12

¹⁴⁶ Galatians 3:7-9

¹⁴⁷ Galatians 3:13, 14, 16, 29, 4:6, 7

¹⁴⁸ In Isaiah 52:7, *peace* is the gospel of “shalom” in Hebrew.

¹⁴⁹ Romans 5:1, 2

¹⁵⁰ Galatians 3:8

¹⁵¹ Romans 15:18, 19, Acts 14:7-10

¹⁵² Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38, Hebrews 12:12-13, Mark 10:27

And may the God of hope (*full expectation*) fill you with all joy and *peace in believing* (*assurance, relying, trusting, obeying, being faithful*), that you may abound in hope (*full expectation*) through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Notice the two very powerful words *in believing*. *Shalom* from God is manifested in and through us in believing, and not in doubting. We have to take the time to abide in the Word until it drives out doubt from the heart.¹⁵³ The Word must renew the mind and fill the heart with expectation to receive the fullness of all that Jesus provided for us through His great sacrifice.¹⁵⁴ The part of believing that has to do with obedience is essential here just as much as the trusting. Obedience to His written Word is first. Then we must also be obedient to His leading and specific Word to us personally, as He guides us into all truth by His Spirit.¹⁵⁵

Notice the last phrase of this verse: **“Through the power of the Holy Spirit.”** Do not ever suppose that any of this is going to come to pass in your life without the power of the Holy Spirit. We must depend on God, His Word, and His Spirit to walk in the fullness of what was provided for us in Christ. We will prosper and grow up in any of these areas even as our soul prospers. We develop in God from the inside out, from the spiritual to the physical. It takes spiritual development and spiritual growth. As we learn and develop, we begin to walk in more and more of what Jesus did for us. As we trust and obey God, we embrace and appropriate more of His Divine promises to us. As we follow the Word and the Spirit, we rely more on Him for everything in life.

We emphasized these facets of the word *peace* above because they are things that are overlooked often in the study of peace as a fruit of the spirit. I am well aware of the other side of peace, that is, peace as the provision of God when we come to Jesus and make Him Lord over our lives. Peace in this setting refers to a covenant relationship. It refers to our place with God, He becomes our Father and we become His sons and daughters. It refers to the fact that we are no longer in opposition to one another because now the believer carries within the nature and the Spirit of God. It is a new creation in Christ. It is all the old things of spiritual death and sin being passed away as though. We are a brand new creation of God. There is nothing missing and nothing broken about our relationship with the Father. We are one with Him and we bear the divine image and likeness of God through the awesome redemption provided in Christ Jesus. We stand before Him pure and righteous as though Adam and Eve had never sinned. This is a peace and a joy that is beyond human comprehension, unless the Spirit of God reveals it to us. It is the ceasing of that which kept God and mankind apart from each other, and it is the birthing in us of that which can fellowship with God as though sin had never existed.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ John 15:7

¹⁵⁴ Romans 12:2

¹⁵⁵ John 16:13, Romans 8:14, Deuteronomy 28:1, 2

¹⁵⁶ Romans 5:1, Eph. 2:14, 15, 2 Cor. 5:17, and others

The stories are endless of what happens to people when they first come to the Lord. Some years ago, I heard one man say that the amazing thing about coming to Jesus was that the “war” that raged in him for decades ceased the moment Jesus came into His heart. I can tell you that it is peace like a river. It is the cessation of the war of sin and death against us in the spirit, and the birth of a new life in God and the Lord Jesus. I experienced that wonderful peace when I made Jesus the Lord of my life. His love came in me and changed me on the inside. I too can say that Jesus made everything new in me and He said to my tormented life when I met Him, “Peace, be still” and the war in me stopped!

There are other facets to peace, like living in peace with people around you, peace ruling in your spirit as an umpire, peace guarding your heart and mind from all anxiety, and more. There is also the pursuit of peace and being a peacemaker.¹⁵⁷

Peace in the Bible is NOT Pacifism

Here is a sacred cow among many religionists that needs to be kicked over and destroyed. The ideology of *pacifism* is foreign to the Bible and is not related to *shalom*. *Peace at any cost* is not taught in the Bible. Peace is always governed in Scripture by covenant and relationship. Peace that compromises Godly principles and morality only for the sake of peace is not taught in Scripture. That is pacifism and not Bible peace. Pacifism believes that we are never to fight under any circumstance and that peace *at any cost* is for what we should be striving. It believes that any compromise that needs to be made with the enemy is the answer to conflict. I wish we could say this is true, or that it has worked in the past, but history has proven that it is not true and that it does not lead to peaceful resolutions. Peace does not always come free of cost on a national or regional level. Sometimes you have to fight for peace. The reason for this is because there is a murderer and destroyer loose on the earth named Satan, and many are his followers that blindly do his bidding.

The enemy is out to forcefully attack and destroy nations, states, provinces, cities, families, and individuals. Resolve that reality in your thinking. Then resolve that sometimes we are going to have to fight to protect our rights in these areas. Yes, our first priority is to go to God and recognize that the true enemy of the believer is the devil and his demon forces, and that our wrestling is not with flesh and blood. We first use our authority in the realm of the spirit against demon-inspired individuals.

What do you do when demon-inspired individuals insist on doing harm to a church or to individual believers? Sometimes a government or a police force can come to our aid, especially if there is some semblance of rule and order operating in that government, and they are interested in the well being of their citizens. The truth is that if we are attacked even as Christians, we should never lie down and quit and let the devil or demon-inspired people kill us. Jesus NEVER said, “Go and die when attacked by a mob of thugs”. NO! He said that we are to go and preach and minister in His authority and power. I

¹⁵⁷ Rom. 12:18, Col. 3:15, Phil. 4:6, 7, 1 Peter 3:11, Matthew 5:9

firmly believe in going for deliverance by the power of God with everything we have available at our disposition. I also believe in explicit self-defense under certain circumstances. Sometimes it is better to get up and get out of town under certain severe circumstances, as Paul did in Acts.¹⁵⁸

God can supernaturally increase any natural power or ability you may have and make you like David or one of his powerful soldiers. Some of his soldiers could defeat hundreds of enemy soldiers by themselves! How about Samson or Abraham? Abraham took 318-armed men from his house and beat a huge army! What about Gideon and his 300 soldiers? The Bible is full of God empowering men and women supernaturally on different occasions to take up arms and fight for the victory. These manifestations are a part of the working of miracles or the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in miraculous ways.¹⁵⁹ We can never count this out as a possibility in dangerous situations. The bottom line is victory in the Name of Jesus.

Often we read that the *hand of the Lord* would come upon some of these men used miraculously in the ways described above. You especially see it in the life of Samson. *The hand of the Lord* is another way of saying that the Holy Spirit would come upon him in power to do what was impossible for a man to do on his own without the supernatural assistance of God.

Some seem to think that this supernatural activity is not for us after the sacrifice of Jesus. I beg to differ greatly with that dumb assumption. If these things are not available to us after Jesus, then that would suggest that what they had under the Old Covenant under the blood of animals and via fleshly circumcision is greater than what we have in the New Covenant sealed in the precious Blood of Jesus! We can never believe that lie! We have a better covenant established upon better promises!¹⁶⁰ This is not a lesser covenant in the Blood of Jesus, but a greater Covenant with even more powerful provisions! It includes everything they had in the Old Testament plus, plus, plus, plus many other marvelous and grand things!

There are times when peaceful people are pushed into a corner and they are required to defend themselves. We are not required to allow the devil or the world to run over us. We are not to be doormats for the world or the devil! We are required to “turn the other cheek” for a brother or sister in the Lord. We are not required to lie down and die when attacked by some thug that comes to take our life. “*Turn the other cheek*” is not a reference to the criminal that comes to steal, kill, and destroy your family, property or nation. Jesus was speaking about an angry brother or sister in the Lord. His reference to “turn the other cheek” does not include the criminally insane! We do have angelic assistance and divine provision for protection, but there may be an occasion that a Christian may have to engage in self-defense. There may be a time when self-defense is an appropriate response and it is one mandated by the Spirit of the Lord. Being led by the Spirit is primary in all of this.

¹⁵⁸ Acts 14:5, 6

¹⁵⁹ 1 Cor. 12:7-10

¹⁶⁰ Hebrews 8:6

I know this really goes cross-grain to most Christian thought, but I can't help if there is massive ignorance of the Scripture in this area. Pacifism and its weak ideologies have led many Christians to their premature deaths over the centuries. This pacifism error crept into Christianity from eastern cults and heathen religions that flooded the monasteries and Christian schools during the middle ages. This was the ideology of the martyrs that were eaten by lions in the Roman coliseums. "Just show them how you allow yourself to be killed and die graciously without complaint" is not the teaching of the Bible. Only by taking Scripture references out of their context and setting is it possible to conclude that Jesus or His disciples taught a form of pacifism. They taught peace, but certainly not pacifism.

If you do not believe what I am telling you then read the Scriptures. The Bible is full of examples. There were numerous times that the enemies of Israel came and God's people were forced into a battle. At those times, when they sought the direction of God, the Lord led them into victory and triumph sometimes by engaging in battle, and at other times by standing still and knowing He is God.¹⁶¹

Psalms 91 is the primary Scriptural reference we should all be standing on for our divine protection, especially when in harm's way. One should never wait to be in harm's way and then try to take a stand on this chapter. It should be a part of our daily stand of faith. Start trusting God for this while you are safe! Just as we should daily put on the armor of God, we should daily put on this protection Psalm.

Did you know that sometimes love can be furious and will fight for those that it loves? If you don't think so then what do you call it when Love Himself gets furious and full of wrath over evil people doing evil against His people? God is love, but He does have wrath against evil. He is even vengeful against those that harm his children.¹⁶² He takes it personally. Sometimes love and compassion will do whatever it has to do to protect those it loves as long as it does not violate God's principles.

Let me ask you a question. Do you love your children? What would you do if some thug came and tried to hurt your little child? You know what you would do. You would fight for your child's life even if you seriously harmed the attacker. You would put your life on the line for your children. You would get in harm's way for them. That is a demonstration of love. Your love for your child is demonstrated when you protect them from harm. It is not demonstrated when you sit there and sing "Cumbaya" while they get hurt by some attacker.

Recently, I heard the story of a father that heard the screams of his little six-year-old daughter and caught a man trying to rape her. He took no thought for his own safety, attacked the man viciously, and killed him. He did not intend to kill him, but only to stop the attacker's rape. I dare say any of us that are fathers or mothers would have done the same thing. Did you know that some idiotic (and sissy, wimpy foolish, senseless, moronic) people got upset because he killed the man that was trying to rape his little six-year-old daughter? Are you kidding me? Some even thought the father should have been arrested and charged with manslaughter. That is sad and twisted thinking. The authorities refused to charge him,

¹⁶¹ See 2 Chronicles chapter 20 for an example.

¹⁶² Romans 12:19, 2 Thessalonians 1:6

thank God. I say, "Hooray" for that dad. He is a HERO and a great father! They should give him a medal for valor and the Congressional Medal of Honor. By the way, that father is a Christian.

While I am on it, the Bible does not say in Hebrew or Greek, "Thou shalt not kill." It says, "You will not commit murder." Killing an attacker in a purely self-defense situation is not murder. Murder is premeditated and carried out with the intent to end the life of another human being. In a real self-defense scenario, the intention was not to murder, but to stop the attacker from harming the victim. If in the process of self-defense the attacker dies, that is not murder.

My wife gave birth in 2012 to our three boys. Do you think we would not protect our sweet and precious triplet boys? We will protect them with everything and anything at our disposal. I would not have to pray to protect them from harm. It would flow out of me without even thinking about it because I love my boys. Do you think their mama would just sit by and let somebody harm them? My wife is sweet and kind, but she would not hesitate to do whatever necessary to protect those boys.

Have you ever heard of how protective a mother elephant or bear is about her cubs? If the animal kingdom has that much sense, are we humans not to do the same for our children? The foolishness and devilish wisdom espoused by so many in the world is amazing to me. To them it is OK to save the whales and dolphins and murder the unborn babies in abortion clinics. They will get all up in arms over the protection of animal rights, yet they get offended and lash out against Christians that protest the murder of the unborn and want to protect their rights to life. That, my friends, is insanity! It shows you the depths of darkness on this planet.

Only a person with a perverted sense of morality will get offended at someone defending their loved ones even if it leads to the death of the criminal attacker. Would you men do whatever it took to protect your wife? If some criminal tried to manhandle your wife, would you "turn the other cheek" and do nothing or take out the perpetrator anyway you could? Again, "turn the other cheek" does not apply in cases where the demon-inspired criminal intends physical harm to you or your family.

Would you just sit by and let thugs hurt your family or friends in the Lord? If you love them, you will stand up for them, and trust God for supernatural protection and deliverance. It is a demonstration of the love of God and compassion to protect the life of your brethren when possible.

What would you do if somebody tried to break into your house? Would we do whatever was necessary to stop evil or just lie down and give in to the demon-inspired individual that has come to harm, to steal, and possibly kill? I think we would use whatever means necessary for our protection. I know I would. I would not have to pray about it, think about it, nor would I feel the need to repent if I had to hurt somebody in order to protect my wife, my children, or family from harm. I would act because I have already prayed and believed God for protection and deliverance! In the same way, I know my wife would act to help me any way she could if someone tried to hurt me. I know most of you women would do the same for your husband or family.

We never look for and should never provoke fights or wars, either on a national or personal level. We all know that. We are not to walk in strife, be spiteful or revengeful. We leave vengeance up to God.

We pursue peace, we are peacemakers, and we live in peace as much as possible with those outside the Covenant. Sometimes a fight is unavoidable, and that is what I am talking about here. Much more could be written about all this. I know some will not like what I have stated, and some may misinterpret it and take it to extremes, but it is true nevertheless.

Here is another excellent Scripture to stand on when in need of supernatural deliverance because our God can empower us supernaturally to fight when called upon to do so or when needed.

For by you I can run through a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. God is perfect in His way, the Word of the Lord is tried, a shield is He to all those trusting in Him. For who is God besides the Lord, and who is a rock except our God? God girds me with strength, and He makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like mountain goats on the high places. He causes me to stand. He teaches my hands to battle, so that I can bend a bow of bronze in my arms. You give unto me the shield of your salvation (*deliverance and protection*), your right hand supports me, and your humility makes me great. Psalms 18:29-34

Patience

The fruit of the spirit is PATIENCE... Gal. 5:22

For many in the church, *patience* means to sit there and take it all. To many it carries the same meaning as the phrase “grin and bear it!” Traditional “churchianity” thinks that to be patient indicates that you accept everything the world, the flesh, and the devil dishes out. Some have the idea that to be patient requires that you put up with sickness, disease, the curse, or premature family death graciously and that the world marvels at how you suffer under its heavy burden. That bubble of ignorance is going to get blasted right now! The world has been laughing at the stupidity of a weak church and a watered down Christianity for centuries. I say in Jesus Name, “No more!”

We know from the Word that Jesus suffered our sicknesses and pains so that by His stripes we are healed.¹⁶³ We know that Jesus became a curse for us when He died for us so we would be redeemed from it. (Galatians 3:13) We are the redeemed of the Lord and that is what we should be saying about ourselves according to Jesus' awesome sacrifice for us, the promises of God, and our Blood Covenant.¹⁶⁴ Whatever they had under the older parts of God's Word in the Bible (commonly referred to the Old Testament) has been made exceedingly better with greater promises! (Heb. 8:6) We have got something that is much better than anything they ever had under Levitical law. Actually, what the older Covenant saints had before the sacrifice of Jesus can't even be compared to what is available to us today under the newer provisions of the Covenant (commonly called New Testament or Covenant) that has been settled forever in the Blood of Jesus!¹⁶⁵ If they ever got healed or lived in health under the older Covenant provisions *how much more* are we to live in life, health, healing, wholeness and victory now that Jesus paid the awesome price for an eternal redemption for us!¹⁶⁶ If God brought out the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage with silver and gold and there was not one feeble (*sick, weak, or crippled*) among them, HOW MUCH more does He desire that we today lay hold of the provisions under our Blood assured and guaranteed rights and provisions established forever.¹⁶⁷

There are two sides to this word “patience” that are important. First, let's give you a definition of the word from the Greek because it has been grossly misunderstood in Christianity as a whole.

G3115, *μακροθυμία*, makrothumia.

Thayer's definition:

¹⁶³ Isaiah 53:4, 5, Matthew 8:17, 1 Peter 2:24

¹⁶⁴ Psalms 107:2, 2Peter 1:3, 4, Heb. 8:6, 13:20

¹⁶⁵ 2 Corinthians 3:6-11

¹⁶⁶ Heb. 9:12

¹⁶⁷ Psalms 105:37, Hebrews 11:40

1) *Patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance*

2) *Patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs*

Look at definition #1. Let's start there. The definition of *patience* is: *endurance, constancy, steadfastness, and perseverance!* Does that sound like “*just put up with everything bad that comes your way?*” If it does, then you are taught, think, and believe wrongly.

Endurance

Endurance is the first word we want to look at. It is a powerful word. It denotes that you can go on and on when others run out of the will or strength to continue until the finish line. You can go the distance! *Endurance is a great and powerful key to winning and walking in victory.* Victory is non-accessible without it.

Have you ever seen a long marathon? The one with the most endurance and training under his or her belt will win the prize. Endurance means that you have the strength to push through to victory regardless of resistance or the pressure to quit.

Do you not know that those running in a race all run, but one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain. 1 Corinthians 9:24

What do they obtain? He is referring to obtaining the prize. That refers to the fact that we win. God wants us to run the race to win. Defeat is not in God's dictionary! He doesn't believe in it and we should not either.

Have you ever heard the saying; “It's not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game”? A better saying that has the right attitude is, “If you play the game right you will win.” The first saying will foster the wrong attitude. It will develop a weak-minded attitude that cowers to defeat. A person without the right attitude will accept defeat and say as in Spanish, “Lo que será, será!” No, it is not “whatever will be-will be!” We are commanded to take up spiritual armor.¹⁶⁸ We are commanded to win against every work of hell!¹⁶⁹ We are ordered to not give place or a foothold to the devil!¹⁷⁰ You run the race set before you in Christ and go for the finish line.¹⁷¹ You never stop until the day you go to heaven and then it's for eternity baby!

That is the right attitude that Paul laid out before us.

¹⁶⁸ Ephesians 6:10-18

¹⁶⁹ Mat. 16:18, 19

¹⁷⁰ Ephesians 4:27

¹⁷¹ Hebrews 12:1

I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. 2 Timothy 4:7

Never surrender and never quit is the right attitude. World War II hero, General Douglas MacArthur had the right attitude when he corrected the wrong thinking of soldiers going into battle. He said that most men in uniform had the attitude that they were willing to sacrifice their lives for their countries. It is a noble to think, “I am willing to die for my country”, but a war is not won with that attitude. MacArthur said that the right attitude that leads to victory is to make the enemy die for their country! He was telling them, “Get your mind off of dying and on the victory side at all costs!” He was also the one that said the famous words:

“In war, there is no substitute for victory...”

“Age wrinkles the body. Quitting wrinkles the soul...”

“It is fatal to enter any war without the will to win it.”

We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus.¹⁷² This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.¹⁷³ He always leads us into triumph in Christ.¹⁷⁴ Thanks are unto God that ALWAYS gives us the victory!¹⁷⁵

The fruit of endurance is powerful. It causes you to stay the course regardless of circumstance or feelings. How is endurance developed? There is only one way to develop endurance and that is by practice, practice, and practice. I could say, “training, training, and more training.”

I participated a few times in martial arts fighting and forms competitions. The key to having a good fight was to train consistently before the fight. That was the only way to develop endurance. I did not train the week before the competition alone. Had I done that, I could have been severely hurt or worse. You better not get into the ring with a trained fighter without preparation! I trained about 6 months to perform well for a few three-minute rounds and two forms competitions. One particular time, I won medals in four categories. It did not just happen by chance. I had trained, and trained some more, to be ready for the competition.

When I went for both my first-degree black belt testing in Aikido and in Tae Kwon Do (TKD), I trained every day for about six months to a year prior to testing. In TKD, I trained for about six months with the Olympic competitors training for the Pan American Games. When I took that TKD exam, I breezed through it, and never even broke a sweat! It was easy. Others that barely trained, huffed, puffed, and looked badly. I looked sharp, and was in the best shape I had ever been until that time in my life.

¹⁷² Romans 8:37

¹⁷³ 1 John 5:4

¹⁷⁴ 2 Cor. 2:14

¹⁷⁵ 1 Cor. 15:57

Boxers do the same. They train and train. Why do they engage in all that training? Why is it that they have so many practice fights in the ring before the actual fight? There is no endurance and no skill without practice and more practice.

Olympic contenders practice for years before competition. I know you are getting this. Professional weightlifters don't begin to train the day they have a competition. It takes years of hard training to develop their strength and get good at the techniques.

Soldiers are never sent into battle without a lot of training first. Why is that? Without proper training you are a danger to yourself and to your fellow soldiers. Instead of shooting the enemy, you may shoot off your own foot!

Soon you will see how it all ties with how we stand on the Word and never back off.

Constancy and its Power

Constancy means you never change once you engage with your faith on the Word. Constancy denotes that I believe the Word today, tomorrow, and the next day. I am the same, yesterday, today, and forever like my Lord.¹⁷⁶ Look at the definition of this word *constancy* from Webster's Dictionary of the English Language.

1. Fixedness; a standing firm; hence, applied to God or his works, immutability; unalterable continuance; a permanent state.

2. Fixedness or firmness of mind; persevering resolution; steady, unshaken determination; particularly applicable to firmness of mind under sufferings, to steadiness in attachments, and to perseverance in enterprise, lasting affection, stability in love or friendship.

3. Certainty, veracity, reality.

Again, it connotes you never give up and you never quit. "Quit" is not a part of our vocabulary. Regardless of how tough it gets, and regardless of the resistance you may have, you never relent. You stand firm, fixed, knowing who your God is and knowing that the victory is yours.

Surely, he will not be moved forever; the righteous will be remembered forever. He will not be afraid of bad news; his heart is fixed, trusting in Jehovah. His heart is sure; he will not be afraid though he sees his oppressors. Psalms 112:6-8

The man or woman of the Word and the Covenant that will not back off that Word is fixed and unmovable. They trust their God. They know that God will come through for them. They know their victory is assured. This is the true patient man or woman of God. Circumstances contrary to your faith can't sway you. Your prayer, or what you have believed you have received in prayer by faith (Mark

¹⁷⁶ Heb. 13:8

11:24) is as sure to you as the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. Actually it is more sure than that because the heavens and the earth will pass away, but not His eternal and incorruptible Word!¹⁷⁷

Steadfastness and Perseverance

Now look at steadfastness and perseverance and their meanings from the dictionary.

Steadfastness: *Firm; with constancy or steadiness of mind.*

Perseverance: *Persistence in anything undertaken; continued pursuit or prosecution of any business or enterprise begun.*

So the true definition of patience is NOT “just put up with it as long as you can and hope for the best.” NO! It is a real power that causes you to stand and not be moved or waiver UNTIL you overcome and you WIN! This is essential for our understanding. With this in mind let's look at James chapter 1. Some keys to the development of patience are brought out here and you will see why these words we have been studying are so important for our understanding of this subject.

This side of *makrothumia*¹⁷⁸ is identical in meaning to the definition of this next word that was translated frequently as *patience* in older translations like the King James Version. This is the word translated as *patience* in the next two texts we are going to be looking at in Hebrews 10:36 and James 1:2-5. They are basically synonymous words.

Here's the word:

G5281, Gr. *hupomone*

Thayer's definition is: steadfastness, constancy, endurance.

Is there additional proof that *makrothumia* and *hupomone* can be synonymous? Yes there is! Both Greek words are used when speaking of the prophets and their perseverance and stand of faith.

My brothers, take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering ill, and of longsuffering (Gr. makrothumia). Behold, we count blessed those who endure (Gr. hupomone). You have heard of the patience (Gr. makrothumia) of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is full of pity and of tender mercy. James 5:10, 11

The context reveals that both words are used interchangeably in this text. This is proof that the words were synonymous in the minds of those writing in Greek and were being used to refer to the consistency, perseverance and constancy of the prophets and of Job. Yes, there are nuances in each word that could be translated in other directions depending on the context, but I wanted you to see the

¹⁷⁷ Mark 13:31, 1 Peter 2:23-25)

¹⁷⁸ *Makrothumia* is the Greek word used for “patience” in Gal. 5:22.

synonymous usage in this passage. There is a definite part of each word that matches and makes them parallel. Now we can proceed to James 1.

The Testing of your Faith

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But let endurance have its perfect work, that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing. James 1:2-4

This translation is a better rendering than the old King James Version. The word translated *endurance* is this Greek word *hupomone* which is often a synonym of the word *makrothumia* that we have been studying from Gal. 5:22.

If you have ever lived by faith at all, you know that the devil will challenge your faith. Your faith will be tested, and it will not be fun at all. Yet in the middle of it all, James said to count it all joy. He is saying that even though it may not look like a joyful event; *count* it as though it is. Why? He is giving us the warning that joy should be maintained even in the midst of trial. If you already know that “you win” in Jesus' Name, and are convinced and fully persuaded that God will perform on your behalf that which He said, then you can stay in joy.¹⁷⁹ Your faith will have the victory. To stay in joy signifies that you stay in strength because the joy of the Lord is your strength!¹⁸⁰

Notice closely why you can look at the testing of your faith as a reason for joy.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various trials, knowing...

James tells us that it is not an “if” trials are coming, but a proposition of “when” they come. Tests and trials will come. Don't get victim-minded though because then he says, “When you *fall* into various trials.” This reveals to us that we do not believe for trials, and we certainly do not live in the expectation of tests and trials, but we are smart enough to know that our faith will be challenged. Then, note that they are *various* or different kinds of testing and trials.

Here is something else you need to know. This is not the testing that God brings when He gives you His Word and expects you to obey it. That is the Word testing you. That is not evil in any way. That is God giving you the choice, the opportunity to obey or disobey. That kind of testing is similar to the testing Jesus was doing when He asked His disciples to “feed the multitudes” though He already knew

¹⁷⁹ 1 John 5:4, Romans 4:18-22

¹⁸⁰ Nehemiah 8:10

about the miracle of multiplication of bread and fish that He was going to perform.¹⁸¹ This was the Lord bringing a test so they could locate themselves. That is a good kind of test. It is like the testing done for deacons in 1 Timothy 3:10. It is a good testing to locate the faith and loyalty of the person desiring to function in the church in this capacity or place of responsibility.

The testing this portion of Scripture in James 1 is talking about is the testing with evil circumstances and evil situations that Satan brings. It is the kind of testing that is brought in order to steal, kill, or destroy if at all possible. This kind of testing with evil is something God never does.

Let no one being tempted (tested or tried) say, I am tempted (tested or tried) from God. For God is not tempted (tested or tried) by evils, and He tempts (tests or tries) no one (with evils). James 1:12

Evil is never God's way of testing, and He is certainly not the one behind any kind of evil. Satan is the one behind all evil. Many think that God is the one bringing evil circumstances and situations into their lives. Look at James' response to this.

Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. James 1: 16, 17

Deception is being preached from pulpits around the world concerning testing and trials. They have not rightly divided the Word of God and understood that the dividing lines are clearly drawn. In a short sentence: If it's good it's God, and if it's not good then it's not. If you have any questions along these lines, especially in reference to the origin of evil, sickness, disease, and the curse, study my book, *The Story of our Great Redemption: Beyond Human Imagination!*

James 1:2 tells us there is something you are fully aware of right in the middle of the testing of your faith. You know something. You are intimately acquainted with some inside information that causes you to have joy. In addition to what I already mentioned, look at the things that James says that you know.

The Four Things you must know in testing and trials

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various trials, *knowing*:

- (1) That the testing of your faith produces endurance.**
- (2) But let endurance have its perfect work,**
- (3) That you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.**

¹⁸¹ John 6:5, 6

(4) If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives generously and without reproach, and it will be given him. (James 1:2-5)

The reasons for joy are powerfully effective and glorious! What are they? Before I expound on these, we must see that James refers to the testing of your *faith*. It is never the testing of your unbelief. Unbelief just get's "nailed" (hit very hard) by evil conditions and circumstances because it is in agreement with the devil, and it is against God's Word. That is a different scenario than the person living and acting in faith. The person in faith is living by the Word. Faith and the Word are "joined at the hip," if you understand my lingo. They are an integral part of each other, and cannot be separated one from the other.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word. The Word must be mixed with faith for it to produce. So, they are intimately and eternally connected. One cannot have any faith without God's Word, and can't get results from the Word without faith.¹⁸² No Word equals being without faith, and no faith means one has no Word in them!

Satan always comes to steal the Word that is sown when it is received in faith. The devil has a short list of stuff he may bring against a person to see if they really trust God and are taking a faith stand on that Word. The things the devil uses to steal the Word from the heart are persecution (difficulties or bad circumstances), worry (anxiety, care), pressures (lusts), and being deceived about money (not trusting in your God as your sole Source of all provision and all that entails).¹⁸³

He is an example. One starts to have symptoms in their body of some sickness or disease. The person KNOWS that Jesus took their pains, sicknesses, and diseases so they can be healed and healthy.¹⁸⁴ The individual goes to the Word, feeds on it, and they take their stand on God's Covenant provision for healing. The person prays, believes they have received it when they prayed, and then they say, "Amen!"¹⁸⁵ The person rebukes and resists the disease or pain in Jesus' Name.¹⁸⁶ Yet, the symptoms persist in their body and nothing seems to have happened. Now, what do they do? Did God lie? No! So, who's the liar? The liar is the devil and his lying symptoms!¹⁸⁷ The fact is that one may still feel bad, but *the truth* of God's Word says that they are healed. So the person chooses to believe God and resist the lies of the devil until the symptoms no longer stick around. In other words, their stand of faith on God's Covenant Word will always come to pass. Sickness has no choice but to flee. Their endurance kicks in as they stand on the Word by faith. Their consistency of believing, and their

¹⁸² Rom. 10:17, Heb. 4:2

¹⁸³ Mark 4:14-20

¹⁸⁴ Matthew 8:17, 1 Peter 2:24

¹⁸⁵ Prov. 4:20-24, Mark 11:24

¹⁸⁶ James 4:7, Eph. 4:27

¹⁸⁷ John 8:44

steadfastness of faith, persists, and dominates. The individual refuses and rejects all thoughts to the contrary, regardless of how they feel, because they know God's Word is the truth and God always backs up His Word when someone consistently believes it and acts upon it.

Again, James 1:2 tells us there is something you are fully aware of right in the middle of the testing of your faith. You know something. You are intimately acquainted with some INSIDE information that causes you to have joy. In addition to what we already mentioned, look at the things that James says that you know.

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various trials, *knowing*:

(1) That the testing of your faith produces endurance.

When your faith is tested by evil,¹⁸⁸ it should cause endurance to get even more determined to win. It will work for you if you know this, and if you are determined to let it do its job. It should be a joy to you because you know you will win in the Name of Jesus. You will come out victorious. That is the production or the putting into action endurance, perseverance, and constancy. These are definitions of *patience* from the Greek words *makrothumia* and *hupomone*.

When faith, real Bible faith that is, gets under pressure, it gets tougher instead of weaker. It stands stronger, and it refuses to cower or back down. This coupling of faith and perseverant patience is all-important for a victorious outcome. Patience as consistency of trusting and acting on God's Word is a force that stabilizes faith. It strengthens as it is put into practice and causes faith to be unwavering and unrelenting.

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has a great recompense. For you have need of endurance, so that having done the will of God, you may receive the promise... Hebrews 10:35, 36

Confidence in God has great recompense. It will produce results. The need of confidence is always endurance, perseverance or patience. In doing what God's will reveals in His Word, or doing His instruction to you on a personal level, it will always produce a manifestation of His promises.

Do you see this? Confidence or unswerving trust (faith) is supported by "patience" until the manifestation shows up in the natural world. Your committed trust and obedience to God, supported by

¹⁸⁸ **Unbelief doesn't get tested! Evil circumstances and difficulties crush it.** Unbelief gets defeated, hurt, whipped and beat to a pulp. Faith is tested by the devil because it contains something that terrifies him and that is the power to overcome and win and to destroy his kingdom. Faith creates and contacts God in His power and that scares the devil out of his wits. Contrary to that, unbelief gets overwhelmed and is easily defeated.

perseverance, will get the job done. One minister said something to this effect, “If you make up your mind to take a stand on God's Word forever, it won't take long for the manifestation.” Abraham showed this is the kind of committed, submitted, and loyal trust concerning the promises of God.¹⁸⁹ It is the kind of faith that pleases God.¹⁹⁰

(2) But let endurance have its perfect work...

To get results in your stand on God's promises you must “let” endurance (patience) do its full job. Don't cast it away. Allow it to do its job by NEVER letting go of your stand of faith. Stand strong until it comes to pass. Let steadfastness without wavering continue to work. It will get the job done.

(3) That you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

The result of that kind of strong faith and patience (*perseverant, steadfast, constant*) stand will cause you to mature in the Lord and be complete. To be *complete* means that every need is met and your answer has manifested. Then it tells us that you will lack nothing! You lack nothing of the provision of the Blood Covenant you believed. Whatever you stood on the Word for is not lacking. This refers to the fact that the supernatural has overtaken the natural. That is powerful!

(4) If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who gives generously and without reproach, and it will be given him. (1:5)

Wisdom is here called in to receive understanding on how to stand. Follow this closely. Wisdom will tell you what Scriptures to stand on for a particular need and what to do to act on the Word. In conjunction with faith and “patience” *wisdom* has a prominent place in receiving from God. I can't even begin to tell you the times I really didn't have much of a clue of how to take a stand on the Word and asked God for wisdom. Oh, I knew a bunch of Scriptures that gave me a general answer to my need, but I needed wisdom on *specific application*. It's the specific application that is needed often in our stand and believing God for something. That is where His wisdom comes in, and He is always ready to give His wisdom generously to those that ask for it in faith!

Wisdom will become in these cases the difference between using faith as a water sprinkler where it scatters water everywhere, and using your faith like a laser beam in its precision and accuracy. Did you get that?

¹⁸⁹ Romans 4:17-23

¹⁹⁰ Heb. 11:6

Two things I am never interested in are wasting my time, and doing stuff that produces no results. I am only interested in making the most of my time and doing things that produce results. These are more reasons why we should shun religious tradition and ideas, because they are unproductive and a complete waste of our time!

Patience and forgiveness

The second definition of the word for “patience” (*makrothumia*) in Galatians 5:22 is this: patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs.

The other side of *makrothumia* is revealed by the word “forgiveness.” The person that practices longsuffering or patience in this realm refuses to hold a grudge or seek revenge. Rage is not in their lives. Uncontrolled rage is certainly not a fruit of the spirit. To be a “hot-head” is not a blessing. Many Scriptures in Proverbs and elsewhere prove that.

To *forbear* or *forbearance* is defines as: *to abstain, to omit, to hold one's self from motion or entering in on an affair, to refuse, to decline, to be patient, to restrain from action or violence.*

Following are three translation of Proverbs 25:15. Notice how they use the words *patience, gentle talk, long forbearing,* and *slow to anger* when translating this verse.

Patience and gentle talk can convince a ruler and overcome any problem.

By long forbearing is a ruler persuaded, and a soft tongue breaks the bone.

In being slow to anger a ruler is won over, and a soft tongue breaks the bone.

Forbearance is the exercise of *patience, longsuffering, leniency, indulgence towards those who injure us, and a delay of resentment or punishment.* It is an integral part of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a fruit of the recreated human spirit, one of the forces of life that proceed from the spirit. It is not a mental or emotional something or other. It is spiritual and it is enforced by the exercise of the will regardless of emotions or feelings.

Jesus said, “**Believe you have received when you pray,**” but that is not all He said in this context. In order to get the grant of answered prayer, He connects it intimately to this word “forgiveness” and to its practice.

Therefore I say to you, all things whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received *them*, and it will granted to you, and when you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, *forgive* so that your Father in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses. Mark 11: 24, 25

The prayer of faith will not work in the environment of unforgiveness. Lack of a person forgiving the wrongs others have done against them, will have as a result that the Father cannot forgive their sins. That's bad news. Holding a grudge or seeking revenge because of not forgiving a brother or sister in the Lord means that any sin one may have committed is held against them. Ouch! One can never have confidence towards God of any answered prayers while living in unforgiveness because their heart will condemn them, and faith always begins in the heart.¹⁹¹

Beloved, if our heart does not accuse us, we have confidence toward God, and whatever we ask, we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 1 John 3:21, 22

As long as our heart accuses us of unforgiveness, we cannot have confidence towards God of answered prayers in faith. The opposite is true. If we forgive those who wrong us, we have assurance of the Father's forgiveness, our hearts will not accuse us, and therefore we can have confidence towards God that our prayers are answered.

Unforgiveness is very dangerous for Christians, and it can be deadly, if pursued over a long period of time.

Peter came to Jesus and asked,

“Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?”
Matthew 18:21

The parable of the unforgiving servant answers this question, and it exemplifies the way the kingdom works in this area of forgiveness. It is a tough parable that reveals Heaven's standard of forgiveness for Covenant people. The bottom line is this: *Forgive so you can receive forgiveness.*

Refuse to forgive and eventually that one is handed over to the tormentors! That is an outcome nobody wants. Let us run from unforgiveness because the Father had great mercy on us, and has forgiven us our sins. The reality is that we have had a huge debt of sin removed by mercy, and we should always forgive those that trespass against us.¹⁹²

Freely forgiving the wrongs of people against us would seem to put Christians in a very vulnerable position, but it is not. Instead of giving place to revenge in such matters, turn it over to God by faith, and forgive the offending party. God takes all wrongs against His people seriously. If someone continues along the path of attempting to hurt God's people, things will not turn out well for that individual.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Rom. 10:10

¹⁹² Study this parable in its entirety in Matthew 18:21-35

¹⁹³ Rom. 12:17-21, 2 Thes. 1:4-6, 2 Tim. 4:14, etc.

Many times, we quote Luke 6:38 when speaking about giving and receiving offerings. Look at what giving and receiving are linked to.

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Luke 6:37

After that, comes the well-known Luke 6:38.

Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over, they shall give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you measure, it shall be measured to you again.

I think, we have generally pulled Luke 6:38 out of context. It applies to much more than finances. It is actually the seed principle in operation. It teaches that we will reap what we sow.¹⁹⁴ Giving condemnation will also reap condemnation. Giving judgment will reap judgment. Giving forgiveness will reap forgiveness. Read verse 36. Note that giving mercy will reap mercy. That is as true as giving will produce a crop of whatever it is we have sowed. This principal of sowing and reaping is intimately connected to bearing fruit. The sowing and reaping principle will activate the fruit of the spirit. This is why it is more blessed to give than to receive,¹⁹⁵ because the giver is the sower of good seed that will bring forth a harvest. That is the fruit we are looking for!

It would violate God's principles for the person that refuses to forgive to be forgiven. Without forgiveness, the heart brings accusation and condemnation to a person and it stifles any confidence of answered prayer. According to this principle, the person that refuses to forgive can forget about getting a harvest of anything good. No giving of tithes and offerings can produce for the person that has an unforgiving heart. No prayer for healing will work for the one holding a grudge, and you can forget about divine protection.

The opposite of forgiveness is strife and holding a grudge. When in strife, a person gets offended and refuses to grant forgiveness quickly, if at all. Jesus said that a person like that will eventually get turned over to the tormentors by the Father because they did not forgive from the heart.¹⁹⁶ The evil steward was offended, strife ridden, and unforgiving.

Paul said this about strife:

¹⁹⁴ Gal. 6:7, 8, 2Cor. 9:6-8, Mark 4:26-28, Luke 17:5, 6, etc.

¹⁹⁵ Acts 20:35

¹⁹⁶ Matthew 18:21:35

The servant of the Lord must not strive (be in strife and unforgiveness) but be gentle to all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose if perhaps God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. That way they will wake up out of the snare of the devil because he (the devil) takes them captive to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:24-26

The devil takes captive those that stay in strife because they are doing the devil's will! That is not good! The devil will lead them around by the nose. He will have control of their lives. Why? Strife is at the root of all lack of forgiveness towards others. It demonstrates a judgmental and condemning heart. So, all that this person could possibly get is the opposite of the blessing. In case you are wondering what the opposite is, let us spell it out. Unforgiveness will get the curse!

But if you have bitter jealousy and strife in your hearts, do not glory and lie against the truth. This is not the wisdom coming down from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. For where envying and strife are, there is confusion and every foul deed. James 3:14-16

At times, jealousy, envy and strife run in the same pack and are all three equally earthly, of the natural senses, and devilish.

Maybe you have been perfect all your life but I have not. I have missed it in my Christian walk, gotten into strife, and was jealous and envious. Thank God that we do not have to stay there. We can grow in love and stay out of strife, bitter jealousy, envy, and an unforgiving spirit. We need to repent, forgive, and receive the mighty cleansing sealed in the Blood of Jesus for us.¹⁹⁷

Here is a problem we all face. Have you ever forgiven from your heart by faith someone that did you wrong? You confessed before God, "Father, I forgive from my heart so and so." Then you confessed your sin and received your cleansing from all unrighteousness. Suddenly, you see the person that wronged you down the street or at church and all those feelings of unforgiveness creep back on you. You think, "Oh I thought I forgave them, but I guess I didn't!" If you did forgive sincerely then you did forgive from the heart. What is the problem? Feelings and emotions tied to whatever the situation was that caused the strife to begin with now has to be dealt with. How?

After you have forgiven, any feelings or emotions contrary to that must be put down with your own words and mouth. This is casting down imaginations that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God and of Christ.¹⁹⁸ Those disobedient thoughts and bad emotions have to be squashed and rubbed out! Refuse to say anything that is not according to forgiveness. Enforce your faith, speak to that thought or imagination, and say to it, "NO! I forgave them and I will walk in the love of God towards them." Grab your Bible and find Scriptures on forgiveness to uphold your faith as you resist the enemy in these areas.

¹⁹⁷ 1 John 1:7-9

¹⁹⁸ 2 Corinthians 10:4- 6

Launch your attack on those ungodly and disobedient thoughts and imaginations in Jesus Name! Satan will play on the negative emotions and bring images of hate to your mind against someone that wronged you. That is the main battle we need to engage in. It is the battle of staying in the love of God. We refuse the lies and feelings played on by the enemy.

Gentleness

The fruit of the spirit is GENTLENESS... Gal. 5:22

Originally, the English word *gentleness* denoted that you were born in dignity. It was used differently than in our modern usage of the word as meaning “soft” or “polite.” When the King James Bible was translated, you were a person that was well born of a good family if you were “gentle.” Those having a respectable birth were considered “gentle” or “gentlemen.” The prefix “gen” had to do with family, stock, race, etc. This word also was associated with another similar word, “genteel,” that originated from the Latin. The Latin word was “gentilis” and it took on the meaning of a *fellow citizen*. The underlying thoughts here are dignity, respectability and proper “upbringing.” It is more than that, as you will see. The Greek word used in Galatians 5:22 will bear some of this out. Gentleness is the Greek word [χρηστότης](#) (G5544).

chrestotes

Definition:

- 1) moral goodness, **integrity**
- 2) benignity, kindness

Gentleness as Integrity

Early Greek writers also used this word in the sense of “honesty” and “honor.”¹⁹⁹ These ideas are included and deeply rooted in this Greek word translated gentleness.

Let us now turn our attention to the word *integrity*. It is almost a lost quality in modern society. The church should be an example of integrity and honor in the world. Regrettably, churches, ministries, and ministers have often not been the right example of integrity. I have met some of the most dishonest people in some churches and ministries. Some ministers I met were outright liars and deceivers. Their word meant nothing to them. In contrast, I have also met some shining stars of integrity in the church that would rather die than to renege on their word.

What is expressed by the word *integrity*? Let me give you some examples from my own life and ministry.

I remember the day when my dad could walk into his bank and they would write him a check for whatever amount he needed for his businesses. The bank would think nothing of it. They knew his word was as good as gold bullion in the bank vault. They knew that they could send him the paperwork later

¹⁹⁹ Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Volume IX, page 489.

and never even think about whether they were going to get paid or not. They knew he would make it good and pay it off quickly.

My dad, Israel, was a man that would have rather died than go back on his word. His integrity was the same all the way across the board. In business, in life and in family, if you could ever get him to give you his word, it was as good as having the money already in the bank! I learned this about him over time by watching him. It did not take rocket science to figure it out. I learned that if I could ever get him to say he would do something for me that he would do it regardless of circumstance, time involved, or the difficulty of the task. He never failed me. Once he gave you his word, it was as good as done.

If dad ever told me that he was going to have a “come to Jesus” meeting with me when we got home, I was as good as spanked! There was no changing his mind, no appeasement, and no possibility of getting out of it. I did learn a good way to circumvent the spanking. It served me well. I learned that even though I had done wrong, if I went to him FIRST, “fessed up,” and told him the truth about what I had done, that he was merciful and let me off the hook. (*Sounds like the way Jesus is with us in 1 John 1:9!*) I would get some correction, a reprimand, maybe instruction or his wisdom, but he would not spank me. If I lied to him, and he found out about it, the whipping was on!

Mothers are so wonderful and sweet in most cases. My mother is usually like that. My mom’s idea at the time I was growing up was, “I am not going to let Dan get away with anything!” She didn’t either. My mom caught on to my scheme so she began to tell my dad my “sins” before I could “confess my sin.” I was in big trouble after that! Now I do not want to compare my dear mother to “*the accuser of the brethren*”, but at that time, she wanted to make sure I got a good whipping. Momma is short in stature. She is tough as nails, but she rarely tried to spank me herself because it would literally hurt her more than me. So, she made sure dad would hear about it. He did hear about it and I was toast! Have any of you ever been in that situation?

When I was about 8 or 9 years old, the family sat around the television and tuned in to an Oral Roberts tent revival. This was around 1966 or so. Among other healings, in this particular program they showed a young boy that got healed from a deformed foot and took off running at the command of the man of God. I was shocked to no end. I turned to my dad and asked, “Dad, is that real?” Dad never looked at me because he was in awe just like me. He said, “I don’t know if it’s real or not, but I am going to find out.”

A year or so went by and he finally went up to Tulsa, Oklahoma to find out. Somehow, he went to Tulsa at the same time Brother Roberts was in town. He got his picture taken with Oral Roberts, which was one picture that I had for many years until a hurricane that hit Puerto Rico destroyed it. He came and told our family: “It’s real!” Whatever it was that convinced him of the reality of miracles and healings, I never asked nor really cared. I knew my dad well enough to know that if said it was real then it was real! I believed it from that moment forward.

My dad owned numerous Italian restaurants in the 60’s. One of the times we lived in the States, he left the businesses in the charge of one manager that ran up many thousands of dollars of debt in the

name of the corporation. Dad always ran a debt free company, but this manager started borrowing money on the company's credit, and lining his pockets with it. In addition, he had taken money that was to be used to pay suppliers and pocketed it. My dad found out about it and fired the manager instead of having him prosecuted. Dad rushed back with the family to take over the indebted businesses. Do you know what dad did? In order to keep the word to the banks *given by the bad manager* in the name of the corporation (and thereby he considered it to be in his name), we lived for over a year a very frugal lifestyle in a very small home. Compared to the mansions we had lived in, this was a closet space! It was small, but my parents took the necessary steps to sell some properties and to pay as much to the bank and other debtors as was possible. It worked and they got out in a little over a year. My point is that they kept their word even to their own hurt.

In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors them that fear the Lord; he that swears to his own hurt, and changes not... Psalms 15:4

I was asked by the senior pastors of a church in Texas to initiate Spanish services. I agreed to do it for a few months until a pastor could be assigned for the task. Inopportunately, I got deathly ill right around the time that I began to lead the services, but I had given my word. What do you do? My word committed and obligated me regardless of how I felt. I continued to have the services even though I almost died in the process. I lost more than 40 pounds and could not sleep more than one night a week for a few months. Finally, my body started shutting down. Appetite and clear thinking went out the door. Even menial tasks became major problems. A horrendous confusion set into my mind. I could not understand simple questions or speech. Paranoia and stark fear settled in on me. It finally got to the place that I was bedfast every day of the week except for that one weekly service. I could not study, read, and sleep left me. I could not even dress myself or speak in coherent sentences. The final service I was able to lead at that church was done by the sheer will of "*I will do it even if it kills me*" because I had given my word. It almost did kill me. I finally had to give up that leadership role because I could no longer stand on my two feet for any length of time, and I developed baseball size black rings around my eyes that nothing could cover up!

Thank God for the healing power of God. He delivered me from destruction!²⁰⁰ I was delivered from the brink of dying young by God's great love and mercy! Thank God that I had some powerful people in the Lord (*like my wife Christine and my mother Noemi*) around me that stood with me in faith when all seemed lost and there seemed to be no hope for me. My wife, mother, and sister never gave up on me, even when others wrote me off. Even with my body in a shut down mode, I stuck it out.

²⁰⁰ Psalms 103:1-5

For your information, it was not God teaching me a lesson nor was He the one that made me sick. It was fear and grief at that time in my life over the things lost in the past that opened the door to a satanic attack.

Thank God for deliverance from fear and grief! Just like Job opened the door to a satanic attack that almost cost him his life through fear and grief, I had done the same thing.²⁰¹ Oh, but thank God for His mercy that delivered me as others prayed and believed God on my behalf. It was just as the Lord did for Epaphroditus, who became deathly ill, but God had mercy on him by healing him and delivering him.²⁰² Thank the Lord for His mighty deliverance!

That was a very hard example of keeping your word. I wanted it to mark your thinking. It may be one of those examples some may have preferred I did not mention or elaborate, but let me give you another one from my dad's life.

Dad had negotiated to buy some air conditioning equipment for the first building we rented for the church in Puerto Rico. Before we signed any contract with the person to do the installation, we received a second offer to do the same job for hundreds of dollars less. It may have been a tempting offer for some. We could have saved a bundle of money. Some may think that it was the Lord's money and we should have taken the offer. "Why, you could have saved the Lord all that money!" Yes, you could have saved the money, but gotten completely outside of the principle of Bible integrity. The question to ask here is this: "Is my word for sale?"

Dad just smiled at me and said, "I can't take that offer and you know it." I knew it. He had given the first man his word, and even though it cost us a lot of extra money, his word was more valuable than the money. Contract or no contract, his word was on the line, and he was not about to change it.

Do that a few times and you will begin to be very cautious to what you give your word and to whom you give it. You should not throw your word around unless you have the intention to keep it.

In the mid 1980's, when I was the pastor of a church considered large for its day (3000+ members), I gave my word before the Lord and to myself that I would never be swayed by money in ministry. I would do things honestly and right regardless of the money offered to me by wrongly motivated people. I would never charge the flock for services rendered as a pastor. I had a good salary from our church, and it is right and good to take care of your pastor, but I am talking about taking money from people when they want a particular favor from you and are willing to pay you for it. Following is a good example.

One thing I never did, and will never do, is perform wedding ceremonies for people that are not from our own church. I knew of pastors that had a real flourishing business of marrying anybody for a few hundred dollars a ceremony! It was very lucrative for some.

²⁰¹ Job 3:25

²⁰² Philippians 2:25-27

One pastor built a beautiful home from his earnings of just getting anybody and everybody married! He got the money and the church itself received no payment for the use of their facilities to perform the ceremonies. Back then, it was not a serious issue in Puerto Rico like it would be today. Today they would nail anybody doing that and yank non-profit status from them as they well should. The U.S. IRS is even quicker to act if they get wind of shenanigans like that. I refused to do it, not because of fear of man or because of non-profit status, but because I gave my word before the Lord and to our board of directors. It was because of an inner reverence for God that I kept my word.

One couple came to our church and wanted me to officiate their wedding because they really liked our church facilities. I was also a well known television pastor and teacher in Puerto Rico and elsewhere, and they wanted the “TV personality” to marry them. Their motives were selfish, period! The man was the owner of a chain of stores that had made millions of dollars. I told him that I could not perform the wedding ceremony at our church or anywhere else. Neither one of them was a member of our church, nor was he born again. The business owner slowly pulled out a big fat checkbook and said, “Pastor Rodriguez, you know that I am a wealthy man.” I did know that. It was common knowledge. His businesses were known on the island. He had truckloads of money. Some would have seen this as a great opportunity to get money for their church or for them on a personal level. What would you do?

Here is what I did when the man signed a check, but did not fill in the amount. He looked up at me over his reading glasses and said with a sly grin, “What's your price? Name it, and I will fill this check out for any amount you want?” I am sorry to say that I was very nasty, rash, harsh, insulting, and ugly about it, and kicked them both out of my office. I even said some very foul things to both of them that would have made Peter's statement to Elymas the sorcerer sweet!²⁰³ If I told you what I said in response to his offer, some of you would blush, and I would probably get several e-mails with rebukes. “Such language Brother Rodriguez! Shame on you!” I know it. I repented later, but meant every word of what I said to them at that moment. The man made me angry by thinking I could be bought. The anger was right as long as I did not let it lead me to say the wrong things or act unbecomingly. The Scripture does say that we can be angry and yet not sin.²⁰⁴ The way we do not sin is by yielding to it by allowing anger to seethe even after the sun has gone down. I yielded to the anger in every way!

Now, why would I do something like that when I could have had \$10,000 (or more) and built a swimming pool or even bought a nice car in those days? My word was not for sale at any price. I was not a hireling and I was not a whore for hire! It is crude and blunt, I know, but it should get my point across. I was not on sale!

In 2012, my wife and I visited a church in Florida that has a highly anointed man of God as its pastor. This pastor mentioned how a pastor at a church he was invited to preach at offered to give him a big offering if he would “prophecy” certain things at his church because the pastor really needed for it to

²⁰³ Acts 8:9-10

²⁰⁴ Ephesians 4:26

be said. This man of God told him where to stuff his check! He was not a whore or a pimp. He was not about to compromise the gift of God on his life for money. He was no Balaam! We will say more about Balaam later in this book.

I affirm boldly that this is the kind of integrity I am talking about.

Until I die, I will not retract my integrity from me. Job 27:5

I did not have to pray about it. I did not need to fast about what I should do with all that money I was being offered by that wealthy business man. Integrity was my guide. Taking that man's money was not even a temptation for me. Integrity let me know that to reject his offer was the right thing to do.

Does anyone remember the devilish movie of a husband that was paid \$1,000,000 by some lustful millionaire that wanted to have sex with the man's gorgeous wife? I mistakenly saw the movie when it first came out and nearly vomited.²⁰⁵ It was so disgusting a thought that a man could give up his wife for money that I had no way of even describing my feelings adequately. He "pimped" his wife for the right price! She was just an expensive whore to him.

People of Bible integrity would have never fallen for such a thing. People with little morality or integrity of heart or life are the only ones to fall for the "give me your price" scheme. Some people think like this: "Everybody's got a price." Sorry, but some things are priceless. Integrity of life and heart are worth more than gold, silver, or precious jewels.

Some time ago, I was the member of a ministerial alliance. I was very blessed to be a part of this organization. Frankly, I have so much respect for the man of God leading that alliance that I thought I would be a member of it until the catching away of the church! Regrettably, the leader of the alliance began to get off into stuff that was unscriptural. The leader began to peddle it as something from the Lord, but it was not from the Lord because it violated the Word in numerous respects.

I was slow to act, as one well should be in these kinds of situations. When I first observed what was going on, I began praying about the matter. After a few months, I saw there was no change and they were getting deeper into it. It was becoming an unspoken requirement for the ministers in the alliance to follow the example of the leader in his ideas and teaching along these lines. Privately, I let the ministerial alliance know my concerns in writing and pointed out the unscriptural things being

²⁰⁵ I'm sorry to say I was hoodwinked into seeing that abominable movie after being told by someone I thought had spiritual sense that it was a "good" movie. I don't fault the one that told me about the movie. I was at fault for not checking things out myself! Never to go to a movie until you research it for yourself. Some people may have a different idea of "good". A descent movie worthy of a Christian viewing it is very rare. Most Hollywood (and Bollywood or whatever other "wood" they may come up with) movies, almost without exception, are the garbage and licentious filth of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Never expose yourself or your children to the G and PG rated movies that are full of witchcraft, sorcery, and other abominations.

presented. The leader of the alliance was using Scripture in a manner that was very much out of context and not rightly dividing the Word. It got back to the leader, as it should have, since my concerns were actually directed at him through the leadership. The leader of the ministerial alliance did not listen. He publicly mocked the concerns I presented privately to the leadership of the alliance. The leader did not mention me publicly by name, but made public reference to my letters and concerns.

That was tough; especially when the leader insulted my mother in public at one of the meetings we attended by using a racial slur when speaking to her. The one thing we never did was get offended. I was sorely tempted. I wanted to lash out especially at the injustice of being racially offended. I could have yielded to the spirit of offense, but I know better than that. I stayed in love and determined to forgive.

Even though it was one of the most difficult decisions because we highly respect this leader as a man of God, I resigned from the alliance. Why did I do that? Was I just trying to be hardnosed, difficult, rebellious or contrary? No. Integrity to God and His Word are primary in my life. That is first. I will not be a part of that which violates the principles of God's Word. Regardless of friendship, alliance, ministry, family, or church, my integrity is with my God and His Word, and my steps were guided through integrity to act. Integrity would no longer allow me to participate in what I knew to be error. I trust you get that.

I can have a limited fellowship with Christian people that do not believe as I do. The difference is when they try to push me into accepting their wrong teaching or doctrine. As long as someone is willing to fellowship with me, I am certainly willing, loving, and kind. I like to talk to folks, even some of the ones in sheer unbelief. Maybe I can persuade them to come to believe the Word. One thing I never do is to participate in their unbelief. I do not sit there and listen to all their worldly trash. As long as they do not try to shove their erroneous ideas down my throat, we can talk. I draw the line if someone insists I believe as him or her in order to talk to me. That is what happened at this ministerial alliance. They were insistent, and I had to choose God and His Word above any alliance or friendship. Do you see the difference? I am not telling anybody what to do in this. I am telling you what I had to do to stay in integrity.

The integrity of the upright shall guide them... Proverbs 11:3

Satan came to Jesus with the temptation, "I'll give you the whole world if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus did not even flinch. He would never betray God for money, or anything else for that matter. That is one the devils ploys. He thinks most people will settle for a price. If the offer is high enough, then maybe they will succumb. I know born again, Holy Spirit baptized people that would never take the bait. Their word is solid as a rock and they will never back down from it.

There was a TV cigarette commercial in the 70's that showed a guy or gal with a black eye. They would emphatically say about their choice brand for smoking, "I would rather fight than switch!"

Christians should be even tougher than that. They should be like so many throughout history, *“I would rather die than switch!”*

In my integrity you uphold me, and you set me before your face forever. Psalms 41:12

Integrity will keep you steady even in the midst of the crisis of life. You refuse to be moved because you trust in God's integrity. He knows the integrity of your heart and life and He will take a stand with you and for you.

I have not been perfect in integrity. Surprise, surprise! I have really missed it in integrity at times in my life. Have you? If you are so absolutely perfect and have never missed it in this area, then you may have already died and gone to heaven. We have all missed it at some point in our lives.

Lying was a big sin in my life. I could weave some real elaborate lies. I was a liar and more before I came to the Lord Jesus. After I accepted Him as Lord and Savior, I had to retrain my mind, mouth, and body with the Word to get into a life of integrity. I still messed up from time to time, but then it was no longer the “normal” thing nor was it a “habit.” Thank God for repentance, His forgiveness, and cleansing in the Blood from all unrighteousness, even when we do sin. It was out of character, and out of step, with what the Lord had done and was doing in my life. Over the years, that sin became less and less frequent a problem. It was whipped and stopped being a temptation for me. Here is another saying that believers should adopt, *“I would rather die than lie!”*

One prominent thing that began to change my life as a Christian was when I discovered this truth through the ministries of other men and women of God.

Jesus said of the operation of faith:

“...If you believe in your heart that those things which you say will come to pass, you will have whatever you are saying.” Mark 11:23

I learned years ago from other Bible teachers that faith will never work from the heart of an unfaithful person, one that cannot believe in their own life and words. It takes integrity of heart and life for faith to work. *People with no concept of keeping their own word will always struggle with believing the Word of God.*

Why will it be that way? They have little or no concept of the significance of the fact that “a God that can never tell a lie” has given us His own personal Word.²⁰⁶ How can people have faith in their heart that what they are saying will come to pass if they don't keep in their own word? Just as their word cannot be trusted, they will never trust that what they are saying will come to pass! In the same manner, they will have difficulty in trusting God. Why is that? Their own trustworthiness is in question.

²⁰⁶ Hebrews 6:13, 17, 18

The opposite of that is, if your word is good, then the concept of the integrity and incorruptibility of the Word of God brings the power of faith into focus in your heart. If you are a person of your word, then when your words are in line with God's word, and you say what He said, you will not have the struggle to believe that your words of faith will come to pass.

Look at what integrity of heart did in these cases. Integrity of heart will be evidenced by integrity of life. What is on the inside will come out to the outside. That is the fruit of the spirit translated as “gentleness” that we are discussing. It starts in the heart and comes forth from the heart into your life. That is fruit!

Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in my integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord, therefore I shall not slide. Psalms 26:1

But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me. Psalms 26:11

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on you. Psalms 25:21

The story of Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech is a case in point.

And God said unto him (Abimelech) in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her (Sarah). Genesis 20:6

Integrity of heart and life can protect you when you have really fouled up but didn't know it. I know this is so not only from the Word, but also from my own experience. When I fouled up in years gone by, I did it on the premise of being true to what I thought I was supposed to do. God saw that integrity in my heart and protected me from a premature death.

This was the case with Abimelech. Abraham and Sarah had lied to him, and said she was Abraham's sister. That gave Abimelech the opportunity to take the pretty woman into his harem. He did it honestly and truthfully. He was not trying to commit adultery. Abraham's response when confronted by Abimelech was that she was his “half-sister.” This tells us that half a lie is just as bad as a whole lie. It is not consistent with integrity. There is no such thing as a “white lie.”

God takes integrity extremely serious. God is like that. His Word is His bond and it is forever. That is why we can trust God's word without question. He said it, and if we will trust Him in it, He will bring it to pass.

I am Jehovah and I change not. Mal. 3:6

The Word that lives and abides forever... 1Peter 1:23-25

I will not break my covenant, nor change the thing that has gone out of my lips. Psalms 84:11

There has not failed one word of all His good promise which He promised... 1Kings 18:56

For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself... Hebrews 6:13

Do you realize that God's promise to bless Abraham was based on God swearing by His own self? That shows us that for God to violate His Word would require self-annihilation! God would have to self-destruct to lie or to back out of His Word! Talk about integrity, God is the picture and image of integrity in every realm.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.” (v.13, 14)

Just as sure as the fact that God can never lie because if He did He would self-destruct, that is how sure is the promise that we are heirs of the promises God made to Abraham and his seed!²⁰⁷

Gentleness as Bible Morality

Let us discuss the meaning of the word “gentleness” as Bible *morality*. *Moral goodness* is one of the definitions of the Greek word translated gentleness.

I read after one misinformed individual that said that good morals and good ethics are not the same. They said that they had seen morally upright people that lacked ethics. As far as I can tell, there is no such thing as being unethical and being morally upright at the same time. I almost feel like saying, “DUH!” One does not exclude the other. Look at the dictionary definitions of *morality* and *ethics*.

Ethics is defined as: *The doctrines of morality or social manners; the science of moral philosophy, which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it.*

Morality is defined as: *The doctrine or system of moral duties, or the duties of men in their social character; ethics.* (Webster's Dictionary)

²⁰⁷ Jesus and us are joint-heirs with God! See Hebrews 6:13-16, Galatians 3:13, 14, 16, 29, 4:7, Romans 8:17.

Anyone can look at these definitions and see that they are referring to the same thing. Morality includes ethics, and ethics includes morality, regardless of those that attempt to separate them.

In a class I took on business ethics, when I was working on a Master of Business Administration at one university, the book we used said that, “*The background of all ethics stems from the moral concerns of a society.*” I wrote an interesting study on the origin of moral laws as my essay final for that class. The bottom line of what I concluded was that unless people see morality as originating from a source higher than themselves, then their morality will be whatever they “feel” is right at the moment. In other words, their morality will not be a principle to live by, but the convenience of doing “whatever” they want to at the moment. That is why it is easy for many to violate moral principles. Without faith in God and His Word as the rule of life, a person develops the kind of thinking that has no moral direction. They lack a moral compass, and they are actually amoral.

Some think that to “just follow your heart” is right under all circumstances. Hollywood, humanistic ideas, and amoral philosophies have taught a whole generation that “be true to yourself” and “do whatever feels right” are the best things to do in all circumstances and situations. These are not the best thing to do if they violate in any way God's moral standards as revealed in His Word. “Following your heart” will not work if you were never taught moral principles in your home, or if you chose to ignore them! Naturally speaking, no untaught human being will automatically know what to do according to moral principles. True morality must start early in the home, or learned later in life. True Bible morality will not just happen. It is learned in power from the Word of God.

God's moral and ethical standards are revealed in the *dos* and the *don'ts* in Scripture. Some teach that in Christ we do not have any *don'ts* because we are no longer under law but under grace. One TV teacher goes so far as to say that the Ten Commandments are not relevant for us under grace. Many years ago, I heard one preacher/comedian say that, “If you do the *dos* you really don't have to be concerned about the *don'ts*.” I have heard this in the mouth of other ministers as well. Really? Is that the truth? Many *don'ts* in the New testament are not pointed out in the *dos*! Instead of quoting from the many *don'ts* found in the teaching ministry of Jesus, let me quote from Paul's writings. This may help those that believe that Paul's teaching, and none other, is pertinent for the Body of Christ. Here are some of Paul's more obvious *don'ts* from only three of the chapters in the short six-chapter epistle to the Ephesians :

Do not walk any longer as the Gentiles (*heathens* or “those without God”) walk- 4:17

Do not sin- 4:26 (See also Romans 6:1, 14, and 1 John 2:1.)

Do not let not the sun go down upon your wrath- 4:26

Do not give place to the devil- 4:27

Do not steal any longer but rather work- 4:28

Do not let any unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth- 4:29

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit- 4:30

Do not let these things even be named among the called out ones (saints)- 5:3-5

Among the things Paul mentions in Ephesians 5:3-5 that should not even be named among the saints are: fornication, impurity, greed, filthiness, silly talk, and coarse jesting. Then Paul adds the following warning:

“For this you know with a certainty, that no fornicator, impure person, or covetous man (or woman), who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom (dominion and rule) of Christ (the anointed One and the anointing He gives) and God.” Ephesians 5:5

I am sorry to say that the church of the living God has those in it that are practicing these sins. Fornication and adultery are frequent among young and old. Pornography is running wild in many sectors of the pew and the pulpit! Young people and their youth leaders, hollering “grace and unconditional love” are going to meetings, working the altars, then having sex, and watching pornography after their evangelistic gatherings.

One supposed “prophet” goes to a church, and he can tell you what you ate for lunch yesterday! Then, he seduces woman to go back to the hotel room so he can have his way with them. He does this repeatedly, but the pastor keeps inviting him back because he draws big crowds! That is as perverted and full of covetousness as it comes. If this “prophet” operates under anything from God, it will wane and disappear from him before long. The HOLY Spirit doesn’t put up with ungodliness for extended periods of time. He expects and demands holiness out of those that are to be used by Him.²⁰⁸

Frequently, the secular and Christian news media reports about spiritual leaders having sex and running off with their secretaries, having sex with young boy and girls (pedophilia), choir members or directors, and so on. Paul says these things should not be even heard of (named) in our churches!²⁰⁹

The Christian music industry is in need of a spiritual overhaul, and a revival of holiness. Ministers that live a holy life are revolted at the sin and darkness among some Christian musicians. Some of these musicians travel from city to city having sex with different people in every city that they go to!

Theft and lying are commonplace. One reads about ministers stealing from their congregations and running away with church funds. The things that happen away from the public eye at some ministries, churches, and among some ministers are damnable.

²⁰⁸ 2 Timothy 2:15-19- The HOLY Spirit of God is THE Spirit of holiness. (Romans 1:4) Our hearts are strengthened by the preaching and teaching of God’s Word AND by living in holiness according to His Covenant. (1 Thessalonians 3:13) It is truly deception of the highest kind for one to think they can live an unholy life and still expect the HOLY Spirit to manifest Himself through them. It’s not going to happen! We have been called to holiness and not impurity! (1 Thessalonians 4: 7)

²⁰⁹ 1 Corinthians 5:1

Folks, this is not hearsay. Men and women of God have been witness to these things. Pastors and others talk about what they have seen. It is a shame to the cause of Christ. We have all witnessed the leaders that have fallen due to adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, incest, and other abominable things. These are just the ones that have been caught!

I know that these things are not pretty. It is stuff many wish would just go away without mention. Some may argue that there is no benefit in hanging out people's dirty laundry. I agree that when people repent, and change their ways, they should be forgiven and restored. The Lord forgave them, and so must we. We don't remind them of their past, nor bring condemnation on them. That is good and right, but what do you do with all those that continue to practice evil in the church? Should we just ignore them and not say a word? Many would have you counsel, hug them, give them a 12 step plan, sweep it all under the rug and hide it, but not rebuke or correct them! Jesus and Paul believed and taught differently.²¹⁰

A purging and pruning must come to the worldwide church! Judgment must begin with the household of the Lord!²¹¹ A massive revival of holiness, and living a clean and upright life, is absolutely necessary. If the Lord should choose to come today, the Body of Christ is not ready to meet Him. The wrinkles, spots, and other ungodly things have got to go! (Ephesians 5:27) The Body He presents to Himself will be a glorious, holy, and blameless!

One of the reasons these evil things are happening in the church is because what is preached and taught from pulpits is no longer compelling people to live according to strict New Testament morality and holiness. Most messages you hear are all around the themes of "bless me, my four, and no more", and "how to have a good relationship at work or school"! It is all about getting your blessing, manifesting your vision, stepping into you destiny, receiving your harvest, and getting your life together. Strong moral messages are avoided by most pastors and ministers. I have assisted many week-long conventions that all that was ever taught was about faith, how to receive, receiving your blessing, and a few other things I FULLY agree with and teach, so don't misunderstand my comment and think I am putting them down. The problem is that there was rarely anything said about the holiness factor. Faith for living a holy life ALSO comes by hearing the Word on it. (Romans 10:17) It is time that the church includes holiness, purity, and Bible morality in their preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

²¹⁰ Luke 17:3, 1 Timothy 5:19, 20, 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, Titus 1:9, 13, 2:15- The Word of God is also for the purpose of bringing correction, rebuke, and instruction in righteousness (being and doing right). (2 Timothy 3:16, 4:2) Even the Lord rebukes those He loves. (Revelation 3:19) Many ministers will not rebuke or bring correction. In this, they are not like Jesus. They do not believe one can be speaking the truth in love and bring a rebuke at the same time. (Ephesians 4:15) Too bad that Jesus did not know that in the book of Revelation! If someone is heading down a slippery slope of sin to destruction, and you say and do nothing to help him or her when it is in your power to do it, and possibly save them from an early grave or hell, then you do not love him or her, and were a contributing factor in his or her demise.

²¹¹ 1 Peter 4:17

A lack of teaching and preaching holy living has caused many to relax their moral standards, and have no faith to stand strong in Biblical morality. Instead of repentance being taught as Jesus did, “unconditional love” and a wrong emphasis on “grace” is taught.²¹² Instead of holiness being taught as a scriptural requirement of ALL followers of Jesus, the message among many is, “It’s OK if you sin. (*John said he wrote the things in 1 John so we would not sin- 1 John 2:1*) The Lord loves you and has forgiven you. (*That sounds good and right until you hear the rest. Deception is added immediately after that statement.*) He will not even hold you accountable for sins you may commit in the future because, in His grace, you are already forgiven of all future sins.” That, my brethren, is a damnable heresy that is today producing licentiousness and loose morality among many.

Paul’s record of *don’ts* continues in Ephesians chapter 5 and 6:

Do not let anyone deceive you with empty words- 5:6

Do not be partakers with them- 5:7

Do not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness- 5:11

Do not walk as unwise men 5:15

Do not be foolish- 5:17

Do not get drunk with wine- 5:18

Do not provoke your children to wrath- 6:4

Need I go on? That was 15 *don’ts* in three short chapters from the book of Ephesians, and there are dozens more in his other epistles. There is a flood of moral and ethical imperatives in the New Testament, both as *dos* and *don’ts* in the words of Jesus, Paul, and in the rest of the New Testament. In the New Testament there are requirements, responsibilities, conditions, and there is accountability! Do not be deceived by foolish preachers and teachers!

The law of God given to Israel was full of moral standards to live by. Paul gives us entire lists of things Christians should shun or run from, and things Christians must do! (See 1 Corinthians 6, Ephesians 4 & 5, Colossians 3, Galatians 5, and others.) So much for all the foolish people that thought we no longer have rules and moral principles because we are under grace!

Do not commit murder; do not commit adultery, and all the rest of the commandments did not go away with the grace (favor) that came through Jesus. Some have misunderstood the teaching of Jesus. They think Jesus relaxed the demands of law, and made the moral standards under grace more lenient for the Christian. Are we to be walking in more moral purity now that we are under grace, or are we to walk in less moral purity under grace? Most people do not know the answer to this VERY basic question about the ministry of Jesus, and His expectations of those that call themselves His disciples. Hear the words of the Master!

²¹² Matthew 4:17, Luke 5:32, 24:47, Mark 1:15

“You have heard that it was said (under the law), ‘You shall not commit adultery;’ but I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Matthew 5:27, 28²¹³

Here is the question? Is Jesus’ requirement for discipleship and “kingdom living” in this verse more demanding than walking under the law, or is it more lenient? Are His requirements LESS than the requirements of law, or are they stricter and weightier than those under the law? ‘An idiot with one eye and half sense’ should be able to answer this from the above scripture reference!

The love commandment under grace is not less stringent a command, but it is tougher and stronger than the law ever was. We have a commandment of love that supersedes all the commandments individually because no one that loves will commit murder or adultery. You certainly will not covet if you are walking in love, and you will never steal either.²¹⁴ The love commandment sums up all other commandments because if you keep it intact you will never violate the rest. Love is like a fence or wall in the spirit world around the commandments. It protects the commandments from being dishonored and disobeyed. One never even gets close to violating His commands. Love will keep a man from gazing at a woman to lust after her. Our requirement as to moral purity is stricter than it ever was under the law.

No, moral law was not thrown out the door, or even watered down, because we are under grace or God’s favor. To the contrary, we uphold the moral commandments without breaking them because we walk in the commandment of love! This is a very important point to keep in mind because nowhere are we told to shuck or throw out moral commands. We are taught that morality will be a fact, IF we walk in love. Walking in love is integral to walking in the spirit, which is walking in the fruit of the spirit.²¹⁵ If we will keep our love intact, we will not be subject to the “law.” Walking in love or in the spirit keeps us from every work of sin and death.²¹⁶ Faith works by love.²¹⁷ By this faith that works by love, we do not make the moral law of God void.²¹⁸ Through faith that works by love, we establish the (moral) law according to Romans 3:31.

What has happened to Christians is that when we are born again, the Holy Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts.²¹⁹ His love commandment has been written in our hearts, and if we will walk

²¹³ Study Matthew chapter 5 in the Sermon on the Mount. Notice that Jesus refers to the greater and more stringent demands of following him than for those that were under the law in 5:21, 22, 31, 32-39. There are other places in the Gospels where Jesus’ teaching was more demanding than the moral commands of law.

²¹⁴ Study Romans 13:9-11

²¹⁵ Galatians 5:13-18

²¹⁶ Romans 8:2

²¹⁷ Gal. 5:6

²¹⁸ Rom. 3:31

²¹⁹ Rom. 5:5

by it,²²⁰ then we fulfill the moral aspects of law without having it as a yoke upon us.²²¹ We will keep the moral aspects of law because of love in the spirit that is required of all Christians. We have divine Holy Spirit deposits in us! We walk in the new creation in Christ Jesus. This does not water down the requirements of law. It actually elevates moral requirements through the practice of love to a spiritual level unattainable before Jesus went to the cross and was raised from the dead.

God's moral law is essential to keep this planet in check from complete moral decay and anarchy. Much of our society and its laws are based on moral principles that were gleaned from the Bible. That is why murder is still punishable by death in many places, and why theft is universally condemned. The moral law of God is righteous (just), holy, spiritual and good, and it always will be.²²² Never think otherwise! Some think, and other teach, that God's law was carnal, "works minded," fleshly, or evil. The Apostle Paul teaches the exact opposite.²²³

Many misunderstand Paul's phrase "the works of the law". They do not know Paul uses that phrase when referring religious tradition without faith, as was the case among most Jews of his day. Judaism in the time of Jesus had made a religion out of circumcision, the temple, the synagogue, and animal sacrifice. There was little to no faith among them like the faith of Abraham. Their religion was far removed from God's original intention of living by faith in the Covenant.²²⁴ Not only that, but Christian Jews wanted to force circumcision among the gentile converts to Christ as a prerequisite to salvation. That was masterfully opposed by Paul in the book of Galatians. The early church concluded in Acts 15 that gentiles that came to Jesus were not required to be circumcised and keep the law, the exception being a few basic commandments required of all believers. Yet, in Paul's epistles, one can read the rules and regulations he taught the churches. He imposes MANY moral and ethical commands and moral standards. Any unbiased reading of the epistles will make that abundantly clear.

Moral law was established by God to make sin apparent or obvious.²²⁵ It pointed out the sinful nature in man before Christ and his tendency towards rebellion and disobedience to God's moral

²²⁰ The Holy Spirit shed His love in our hearts (Rom. 5:5). Love sums up God's moral commandments (Rom. 13:9). Follow the progression. The result? God's moral commandments were written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit when love was shed abroad in our hearts (Hebrews 8:10). Get this truth. These moral commandments were not written in our hearts with ink or engraved in stone as they were in the Ten Commandments, but they were written (engraved) in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 3:3-7).

²²¹ Gal. 5:1, 14

²²² Rom. 7:12, 14, 8:4

²²³ Rom. 7:12, 14

²²⁴ Habakkuk 2:4, Rom. 1:17, Heb. 10:38

²²⁵ Rom. 7:13- Study the very important book, "*Faith that Receives the Grace of God.*" Go to <http://danalanrodriguez.com> for more information. It will answer many questions on faith, and bring much needed correction to the pseudo-grace-false teaching being taught in many churches to one degree or another.

standards.²²⁶ The righteous one in Christ Jesus has a rule of morality that sums up, encompasses, and fulfills (does not do away with, change, modify, reject) all the rest of God's moral commands. That is the love commandment!²²⁷

Gentleness as Kindness

I have met some that called themselves Christians and were as nasty as they come. Some were in leadership positions in Spirit-filled churches and ministries! They may in *some* moral ways be Christians, but they are far from this word *kindness*. I have seen how some Christians mistreat other Christians (and even non-Christians) and never admit their wrongs in a million years. They really need to forget about being a witness to heathens because they are pictures of everything (*in attitude*) that many heathens do not want to be. I know this is a serious indictment.

Unfortunately, I have known Christian business owners that were like that. They mistreated and disrespected their employees and yet called themselves children of God. Paul found some Christian slave owners that were like that and he rebuked them for it. They should have been rebuked even more so if their slaves were Christians.

Masters, do the same things toward them, leaving off threatening, knowing that your Lord and theirs is in Heaven, and there is no partiality with Him. Ephesians 6:9

Paul was saying, “Stop threatening them! Quit treating them like dead meat! They are living breathing human beings.”

Even though slavery was abolished, some business owner’s act like hard slave masters towards their employees. They can never see anything good that they do. They magnify every mistake (regardless of how small it is) and minimize any achievement. They berate and badger their employees and treat them like dirt. They think that is ownership and management!

There are parents that mistreat their children that way. Some parents need their mouth shut with duct tape or some other permanent adhesive! They speak negatively about their kids and to them. Shut that junk up! They will never rise to be anything if you get angry with them and tell them “You will never amount to anything,” “you will always be a bum like so and so.” None of that is the nurture and admonition of the Lord! (Eph. 6:3, 4) None of that is developing them for God!

Do not even get me started with husbands that mistreat their wives, treat them like excess baggage, and speak to them evil words. Call her ugly, fat, a no good this or that, berate her, put her down, and

²²⁶ 1Tim. 1:8-11

²²⁷ Gal. 5:14, Romans 13:8

soon enough you will be on your own. Men and women should not run their mouths in a disrespectful manner against their husband or wife, and especially never in public.

One of the most uncomfortable things I have ever witnessed was a woman and how badly she spoke about her husband right in front of my wife and I. It was very disconcerting and offensive. It makes a man feel like garbage. The adage that says, “Behind every good man is a better woman”, should be a rule in the home. The pendulum swings both ways according to Ephesians 5:21-33. Husbands need to learn to treat their wives with honor, love and respect. If you are in ministry, not doing so will hinder your ministry.²²⁸

At one convention center in Texas, I went to a Christian conference with over 10,000 people in attendance. Because I speak Spanish fluently, I got into a conversation with a number of the Hispanic employees serving the convention center kiosks and food stands. I received the same complaint from all of them. They said that they were looking forward to the sport event the following week so that these nasty “Christians” would go home. They said that they dreaded this yearly conference because they were treated badly by these Christian people that came to the conference. I was shocked to hear all this, and felt ashamed that my Christian brethren treated these workers so poorly. I have been going to many of these conferences at this location since they began to have them in the early eighties! These employees actually preferred to serve the basketball game patrons, even though they were drunk half the time, than to spend time around so many offensive Christians! The Hispanic wait staff at some of the restaurants in the area confirmed it. They believed ALL of these kinds of Christians at the convention were cheapskates, stingy, and some were demanding, irritable, and they rarely left good tips! I know not all are like that, but that was their perspective, and they concluded all of these particular “brand” of Christians were like that. They made more money from the heathens, and liked them better!

It is a serious indictment against the condition of the Body of Christ, and how the world is seeing us. We should be the most lovely and full of joy. We should be the kindest, most forgiving for the cause of Christ, and we should be the best tippers!

²²⁸ 1 Peter 3:7-9

Goodness

The fruit of the spirit is GOODNESS... Galatians 5:22

Goodness is the Greek word *agathosune* (*αγαθωσύνη G19*). Thayer Defines it as: 1) *uprightness of heart and life, goodness, kindness.*

We already looked at the *kindness* side of *agathosune* in our study of the word translated as *gentleness*, so we are not going to look at that side again. The definition of *agathosune* reminds us of integrity and leading an honorable life according to God's Word and Covenant. Uprightness of heart is another way of saying "integrity." We taught about *integrity* under the heading of the word *gentleness*, so we will not be repeating that side of "goodness" here. Remember that I mentioned to you when we started this study on the fruit of the spirit that some of the meanings of the words would overlap. Here is another good example of that.

In the Hebrew of the Old Testament (the older part of God's Word) we see the use of "uprightness" as meaning; *integrity, right, just, righteous, innocent, complete, proper, fitting.* Notice how the word "uprightness" is connected intimately with other words on Scripture.

Let purity and uprightness keep me for I wait on you. Ps. 25:21

...Before the Lord; for He comes to judge the earth; with righteousness He shall judge the world, and the peoples in uprightness. Ps. 98:9

...Standing fast forever and ever they are done in truth and uprightness. Ps. 111:8

I will praise you with uprightness of heart when I have learned your righteous judgments. Ps. 119:7

He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, but *he who is* perverse in his ways despises Him. Prov. 14:2

The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned away many from iniquity. Mal. 2:6

These verses should get you studying along the lines of righteousness, truth, purity of life, peace (shalom), the fear (*reverence, respect, honor, awe*) of the Lord and more. Paul had all these things in mind when he used this word *agathosune*. He was using it in the sense of our reverence for God and the Lord Jesus, living in a purity of life, having good and right intentions and motives, being truthful,

staying in the truth, keeping the truth on our lips, walking in righteousness, and manifesting “shalom” peace.

“Goodness” is an all-encompassing word in our study that affects all the rooms and corners of the heart and soul. It gets down to the spirit and the depths of motivation and intention. Goodness should be that which stands behind our actions and words. What motivates you to do what you do and what are your true intentions? Goodness should be the foundation of whatever we do or say. Goodness is the reason we do it or say it. The Word actually unveils and reveals intentions and motivations.²²⁹ They must be pure.

Jesus taught often about motivation and intention of the heart. The Pharisees made long prayers and used certain God-ordained objects, not with their heart turned towards God, but so men could see them?²³⁰

Why do you do what you do? Are you out to please men or so that they think better of you? Are you in the service of God and to brethren for the glory of God? Do you want to be a blessing to people? Are you looking for the praise of men? If goodness is flowing in you then you will do things for the praise, honor, and glory that can only come from God.²³¹

Goodness is the quality of God that separates Him from all evil. God is the epitome of what is good.²³² He is a good God! Jesus said there is none good but God. He is the embodiment of the word “goodness.” God is good and all He does is good. He never does evil. Even in His wrath, it is all good and according to His core quality of goodness. These thoughts should get you to studying deeper along these lines.

Satan is the antithesis of all that is good. The devil is bad, evil, and against all that is good. He is the exact opposite of good, the embodiment of that which is opposed to “goodness.” There is no goodness in Satan just like there is no evil in God. Just as Christ is the embodiment of all the goodness of the Father, in the same way the *antichrist* will be the embodiment of all the evil of the adversary.²³³ Each of these is an absolute truth that cannot be changed or amended.

Goodness as uprightness of life signifies living and walking in the truth and being truthful. *Truthful* is another way of saying to be “full of the truth.” Both terms would be incomplete unless you also walk in the truth.²³⁴ Truth is connected intimately to God and His Word.

²²⁹ Heb. 4:12-14

²³⁰ Matthew 23:5

²³¹ John 5:44, 7:18, 12:43

²³² Gen. 1:31, Ex. 33:19, 34:6, Psalms 145:7, 9, 25:7, 27:13, 107:8, 9, 15, 21, 31, Jer. 33:9, Rom. 2:4, James 1:17

²³³ Also known as the son of perdition or the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 8-10.

²³⁴ Look up the following verses about staying and living in the truth; 3 John 2-7, John 16:13, 17:17, 8:31, 32. Note the difference between the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error in 1 John 4:1-4.

A study on the fear (*reverence, respect, honor, awe*) of the Lord is important in the study of goodness. Find all the verses you can on the subject.

These are all a part of goodness as a fruit of the spirit.

Faithfulness

The fruit of the spirit is FAITHFULNESS (faith)... Gal. 5:22

We could discuss under this fruit of the spirit many aspects of faith. It is a BIG subject. In most Christian circles *faith* is belief, assurance, confidence, and believing. If these parts of faith are discussed at all, most leave out other important aspects of faith.

Here is an area of faith rarely discussed in evangelical churches. Many Charismatic-Pentecostal type churches do not teach on the authority and power of the words of your mouth. Faith has to do with the words of your mouth being in line and according to the Word. The power of life and death is in the tongue.²³⁵ Jesus said that we would be judged for every word that comes out of our mouths.²³⁶ He also said in the same passage that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. James said that the tongue is like the rudder on big ships and that it has the power to steer your entire life!²³⁷ We should emphasize, study, and not minimize these aspects of faith.

What about other aspects of faith? Newer Bible versions translate the word “faith” in Galatians 5:22 as “faithfulness” instead of using the word “faith” as does the old King James Version. *Any study of faith is incomplete without understanding that faith and faithfulness to God and His Word are inseparable.* Most church people have not explored the definition of faith as faithfulness, loyalty, and obedience to God and His Word. We do so in this chapter to get an understanding of this fruit of the spirit called faithfulness.

Faith is MORE than Believing or Conviction

Then he (Abram) *believed* in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. Genesis 15:6

Paul quotes this verse from Genesis in Romans 4:3, 9 and Galatians 3:6 and in the book of James 2:23. Paul teaches that Abraham is our example of faith and believing. (Romans 4:1-25, Galatians 3:6-9, 14, 29) Some think and teach that Paul came up with a new definition for believing and faith in his writings, and that it was fundamentally different than the meaning of the words *faith* or *believing* from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). To many, these words imply to ‘just believe’ or have an assurance of Bible truth. If that is all faith and believing indicates, then why did Paul use the example of Abraham’s faith? If he taught a new kind of faith and believing, then why not use some other example? Why would he use an example from the Hebrew Bible if he had in mind a new definition for the *faith* (believing,

²³⁵ Proverbs 18:21

²³⁶ Matthew 12:34-37

²³⁷ James 3:2-10

believe) group of words? There has been a fundamental error espoused from pulpits around the globe for many decades. So many assume that to believe or to have faith implies that one ONLY has a conviction of truth concerning God's promises and of the Lord Jesus. They think that is all the Bible reveals when using the word *faith*. Have we got news for you!

The Hebrew word translated in Genesis 15:6 as *believed* is *heemin*. Now, again, keep in mind that Paul quotes this verse, and uses it as an example of the meaning of faith and believing. *Heemin* comes from the Hebrew root word *aman*. To get an accurate definition of this word, we need to study the original Hebrew word. The most accurate definition will not be from the New Testament Greek word because Paul quotes an Old Testament passage originally written in Hebrew. That should be obvious, but many have overlooked this truth altogether. To look at it only in Greek would be to do an injustice to the text he quotes. It may shock our Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Charismatic systems to find out that *belief* or *to believe* is a byproduct of Bible faith and not the core essence of these words in Hebrew. Truthfully, if you dig deeper even into the Greek root words translated *faith* and *believe* you will notice this as well. Let us prove it. It is one thing to spout off some stuff and it is another thing to prove it. Here follows the proof.

The Kiel and Delitzsch Hebrew Commentary of the Old Testament is a recognized authority from the pens of two scholars that refused to follow the formerly acclaimed German textual criticism school that plagued scholarship in the 19th century. Kiel and Delitzsch staunchly believed that it was error to attempt to divide up the Bible through the J, E, P, and D textual criticism principle and divest the Scripture of its supernatural revelation status. Today, German textual criticism is widely recognized as a very flawed and outdated system of Bible scholarship. Many modern scholars reject it because of all the new textual evidence found in the 20th century from the Qumran scrolls and in other places. It has taken many years for scholars to come to these conclusions, and many have resisted change vehemently. For many decades, it seemed like the gross errors of German textual criticism was going to be with us forever! It has been a slow and torturous death of a very ungodly system of Bible interpretation. Thank God for its passing! It is almost inconceivable that in some Bible schools it is still taught as a course and they use books by scholars that were proponents of it!

Kiel and Delitzsch were forerunners that stood for the truth of God's Word in a day when many were stripping the Bible of all miracles and supernatural events through that false scholarship. I give you this background so you understand the purpose behind their commentaries on the Scripture. They had this to say about the Hebrew language in Genesis 15:6 and the context in which it was written:

In what way did Abram make known his faith in Jehovah, and in what way did Jehovah count it to him as righteousness? The reply to both questions must not be sought in the New Testament, but must be given or indicated in the context. What reply did Abram make on receiving the promise, or what did he do in consequence? ... By this readiness to perform what God commanded him, Abram gave practical proof that he believed in Jehovah... "On that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram." (v.18) Consequently, Jehovah reckoned that faith to him as righteousness, by making a covenant with him, by taking Abram into covenant

fellowship with Himself. *Heemin* (translated as “believed”) from *aman* to continue and to preserve, to be firm and to confirm, in Hiphil (a form of the Hebrew root) to trust and believe, that state of mind (heart- in the case of faith) which is sure of its object, and relies firmly upon it; and as denoting conduct towards God as a firm, inward, personal, self-surrendering reliance upon a personal being, the source of all being... Faith is therefore not merely *assensus* (assent or approval) but *fiducia* (confidence) and also, unconditional trust in the Lord and His Word, even where the natural course of events furnishes no grounds for hope or expectation. *Tzedakah*, righteousness... is correspondence to the will of God both in character and conduct, or a state answering to the divine purpose of a man’s being. This was the state in which man was first created in the image of God; but it was lost by sin, by which he placed himself in opposition to the will of God and to his own divinely appointed destiny, and could only be restored by God. When the human race had universally corrupted its way, Noah alone was found righteous before God (Genesis 7:1) because he was blameless and walked with God. (Genesis 6:9) This righteousness Abram acquired through his unconditional trust in the Lord, his undoubting faith in His promise, and his ready obedience to His Word. This... was reckoned to him as righteousness, so that God treated him as a righteous man, and formed such a relationship with him, that he was placed in a living relationship with God. (From the 1866 Edinburg edition, Volume 1, The Pentateuch, First book of Moses (Genesis), Chapter XV.1-6, pgs. 212, 213)

So here we have these truths from these Bible professors, truths that I have presented in one way or another whenever I have written about faith. In Hebrew, the word “faith” is associated with having a readiness to perform what God has commanded, unconditional trust in the Lord and His Word, self-surrendering reliance, and a ready obedience to God’s Word. Did you notice all this in their commentary from the original text? To have a Bible faith in God is then defined as: *trust, reliance, having a readiness to perform or act on His Word or commands, and obedience* to Him, as much as it is “to speak to the mountain.” (Mark 11:22, 23) People that are unfaithful (or do not have a readiness to do what He says) will not get results when they speak to the mountain. *One cannot expect the principle of faith to work without honoring the principle giver (God) in trust and obedience.* Some may try, but they will get no results. Faith conveys “to stand firm (continue) on the Word”, and to have a life *unreservedly committed* to the Lord. Keil and Delitzsch said it like this when writing about the righteousness that was accounted to Abraham as a result of this God-kind of faith: (It is) *correspondence to the will of God both in character and conduct, or a state answering to the divine purpose of a man’s being.* Those are the ones that truly have faith in God. Once the basis for faith is in right order, then Mark 11:23 and other Scriptures on faith will work for those that follow its instructions.

Check out the definition of the root word *aman* from Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew dictionary and any other reputable Hebrew dictionaries. If the BDB Hebrew language Bible dictionary is coded to the Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance numbering system, *aman* is number H539. The very first definition given is *support, confirm, and faithful.*

Also look at W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words under the entry for the word *faith* (Greek- *pistis*). Vine's also refers to the Hebrew noun for *faith* (*emunah*), also derived from *aman*. Vine wrote important points on this subject. Here is an excerpt for your study.

Concerning *pistis* (the Greek word for "faith"): (1) a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgement of God's revelation or truth, e.g., 2 Thess. 2:11-12; (2) a personal surrender to Him, John 1:12; (3) a conduct inspired by such surrender, 2 Cor. 5:7. Prominence is given to one or other of these elements according to the context. All this stands in contrast to belief in its purely natural exercise, which consists of an opinion held in good "faith" without necessary reference to its proof... A. (Hebrew) Noun. *emunah* (H530), "faithfulness." In the Hebrew Old Testament, the noun occurs 49 times, mainly in the Book of Psalms (22 times). The first occurrence of the word refers to Moses' hands: "But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun" (Ex. 17:12). The basic meaning of *emunah* (faith) is "certainty" and "faithfulness." ...In these verses (Hosea 2:19-20), the words "righteousness," "judgment" ("justice"), "loving-kindness," "mercies," and "faithfulness" bear out the conclusion that the synonyms for *emunah* are covenantal terms expressive of God's "faithfulness" and "love." The assurance of the covenant and the promises is established by God's nature; He is "faithful." Man's acts (Prov. 12:22) and speech (Prov. 12:17) must reflect his favored status with God. As in the marriage relationship, "faithfulness" is not optional. For the relation to be established, the two parties are required to respond to each other in "faithfulness." Isaiah and Jeremiah condemn the people for not being "faithful" to God: "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon [this city]" (Jer. 5:1; cf. Isa. 59:4; Jer. 7:28; Jer. 9:3). Faithfulness will be established in the messianic era (Isa. 11:5). The prophetic expectation was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, as his contemporaries witnessed in Him God's grace (cf. *chesed*) and truth (cf. *emunah*): ...It is significant that John puts these two terms side by side, even as they are found together in the Old Testament. (John 1:17, 18) The Septuagint (ancient translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek) translations are: *aletheia* ("truthfulness; dependability; uprightness; truth; reality") and *pistos* ("trustworthy; faithfulness, reliability; rest; confidence; faith").

Did you note that faith is also a personal surrender to the Lord and conduct inspired by this surrender as much as it is conviction? Vine's points out that belief consists of an opinion held in good faith that requires no proof. He goes on to state that the Hebrew noun *emunah* (from *aman*) means ***faithfulness*** and the fact that, as in a marriage relationship, it is not optional. Faithfulness is not optional!

I hope you don't think I am trying to be too heady by quoting these dictionaries. The reason for quoting from these scholarly works is to straighten up our thinking on the meaning of Bible faith. As we can see above, faith (believing) is MUCH more than having a belief or to "believe" alone. When you dig deeper into the meaning of the Greek word for faith (*pistis*), you find that it does refer to conviction of truth or to "believe." That is not the end of the story! It is also defined by obedience and trust. Here is the proof. The Greek root word *peitho* (from which is derived *pistis*, *pistos*, and *pisteuo*) includes

faithfulness and obedience in its definition according Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon (coded to Strong's numbering system- G3982). It says the word also is defined as: "to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with, trust," and so on. Vine's said that *pistos* means to be "trustworthy; faithfulness, reliability, rest, confidence, and faith. Are you seeing how all these are connected and inseparable?

Let me harp on this some more. As we saw above, the Hebrew root word *aman*, and its other grammatical forms (*heemin* as in Genesis 15:6, *emunah*, and others) are not properly defined by the phrase "just believe" or the word "belief". Let me give you some examples from the Hebrew text for study, and one also pointed out by Vine's Expository Dictionary, so you can clearly see these truths.

If you will not *believe*, surely you will not *last*. Isaiah 7:9

Both words "believe" and "last" are from the root word *aman*. In Hebrew, there is a play on the word in this verse. It can be translated: "If you do not have a firm (committed) confidence, you will not be confirmed (or established)."

He swallows the ground with quivering and trembling, and he does not stand still (imin from the root word *aman*) for the sound of the ram's horn. Job 39:24

"Stand still" is better translated as "stand firm" according to the Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew lexicon. This sounds like Ephesians 6:10-17 to me. The concept of faith in the Hebrew language was what Paul was describing in Ephesians 6:11-14, when he mentioned the phrases and words: stand firm against, resist, to stand firm, and stand firm once again.

O Lord, you are my God, I will exalt you, I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things; even counsels of old, in faithfulness and truth. Isaiah 25:1

Faithfulness and truth in Hebrew are *emunah imen*. The same root word twice to emphasize faithfulness. Maybe a better translation is *faithful faithfulness*. Faithfulness means that whatever God instructs us to do we do. It is impossible to be faithful to God and be disobedient at the same time. There is no such thing! This should be obvious, but very strange doctrines are being taught in our day that severely minimize the faithfulness and loyalty side of faith and overemphasize "believing alone." Modern proponents of a pseudo-grace have twisted the Bible concept of faith and hold a viewpoint that is contrary to God's Word. They minimize godliness, faithfulness, and loyalty to God and put in its place a "believe only in His grace" doctrine that is leading many away from Bible truths. "All you have to do is believe God," as these pseudo-grace proponents say, is a severely incomplete statement without faithfulness to God and living a godly life. To be faithful to God is to obey Him. To have Bible faith is to be a DOER of His Word and not a hearer only so that we do not end up deceiving ourselves. (James

1:22) The faithful will do what God says. The unfaithful (those with no faith) will disobey Him and refuse to follow His instructions!

But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were *steady* until the going down of the sun. Exodus 17:12

Here *emunah* (faith) is translated “stayed up,” again as Vine’s points out, from the same root word (*aman*) as “believed” (*heemin*) in Genesis 15:6. Notice how this word is used. Aaron and Hur supported Moses’ hands and his hands were *emunah* or “steady.”

Notice how the NASB version translates this root word *aman*: Proverbs 11:13 - *trustworthy*... Isaiah 22:23, 25 - *firm*... 2 Samuel 7:16 - *established*... Isaiah 33:16 - *sure*... 1 Kings 8:26 - *confirmed*... Job 12:20 - *trusted*... Psalms 101:6 - *faithful*... Nehemiah 13:13 - *reliable*... Isaiah 33:6 - *stability*...

2 Kings 18:16 speaks of the doorposts that King Hezekiah overlaid with gold and gave to the king of Assyria. The Hebrew word for *doorposts* is from the root word *aman*. In Hebrew it is the word *emmunot*. Isn’t that interesting? The underlying idea is that of support or standing firm in its place because doorposts are what support a door. So faith also indicates to be steady or consistent. Paul taught us about another word often mistranslated as “patience” and its connection to faith. Do you remember that we saw that patience is described as perseverance, consistency, endurance and more? Evidently, Paul used the words *faith* and *patience* in Greek to further define for the Greek speaking churches the definition of faith from the Hebrew tongue. I am sure glad that he did that for us.

Jesus said, “Have faith in God,” in Mark 11:22. This statement is similar to the Genesis 15:6 phrase, “he believed in the Lord.” With all we have learned so far about the Hebrew understanding of faith, what was Jesus saying to His disciples about this subject of faith? He was telling His disciples to have “*faithfulness* (be reliable), *dependence* (unreserved commitment and surrender), *trust*, *a firm stand*, *stability* (be steady), *and obedience in God*.” Plug this definition into every place the words faith, believe, or believing are used in the New Testament. Do this especially in the writings of Paul and John and see how it dramatically enhances incomplete interpretations of the verses that contain these words.

Genesis 15:6 could be translated in an amplified form as follows:

Then he (Abraham) had unswerving trust, unreserved loyalty, unshakable faithfulness, stable confidence, unrelenting obedience, continual steadfastness, and an unmovable readiness to perform (do) His commands. That kind of faith was recorded to his account and for his benefit as righteousness.

We can get a picture of this definition in Paul’s explanation of Abraham’s faith in Romans 4. A few verses point out the different nuances of the word faith. Verses 17-21 are particularly enlightening. Now,

remember to include the other important definitions of the word faith in each place that the faith and believing of Abraham are mentioned or you will miss much of the message Paul is teaching us.

Believing in Jesus is MORE than Belief

So what are we saying with all this instruction from the Hebrew and Greek? What is the bottom line here? To believe in the Lord Jesus is not a mere belief. People have been fooled into thinking *belief* in Jesus is what saves them. If that were true then the devil could be saved because he believes in God and even trembles.²³⁸ Yet, we all know Satan is condemned forever.²³⁹ His believing does not lead him into action according to God's Word and Covenant. The devil's believing is only a knowing some realities of the spirit world and about the supernatural existence of God and the Lord Jesus. That knowledge alone can never save or deliver him because he lives contrary to it. It is in Satan's nature to disobey God. He violates all of God's principles. The devil can never have Bible faith.

Christianity has many among its ranks that only believe in God as a creed or doctrine. They believe in Jesus as a matter of historical fact, but they do not serve nor obey the Gospel and they are as lost and as without God as the devil.²⁴⁰ To believe in Jesus in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, and confess Him with your mouth as your Lord means that you made the decision to become loyal, faithful, unreservedly committed, dependent, trusting, and obedient to Him. This is in addition to the fact that you have confidence and assurance, and that you "believe" (as a firm conviction) in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead!²⁴¹

To have faith in the Blood of Jesus means that you trust in what Jesus did for you through His awesome sacrifice for your salvation, wholeness, and deliverance, that you are faithfully dependent on Him and His provision, and that you are loyal and committed to Him, in addition to the fact that you believe (trust and have assurance) in His finished work.²⁴²

These elements are undoubtedly associated in Paul's definition of *faith and believing* because he uses an Old Testament example to define faith and believing. Let no one fool you. To make faith a belief or "believing alone" is to strip real Bible faith of its definition and character. Every time *faith and believing* occur in the New Testament writings, we must add these elements to the equation of faith. It must include trust, loyalty, faithfulness, obedience and committed dependence to God, His Word, the Holy Spirit, and the Lord Jesus. Bible faith includes MORE than conviction, assurance, believing, and belief. I am not belittling these other aspects of faith, but if they are all you practice about faith then your faith is lacking in other vital areas.

²³⁸ James 2:19

²³⁹ Revelation 20:10

²⁴⁰ Romans 10:16, 1Peter 4:17, 2 Thess. 1:8

²⁴¹ Romans 10:9

²⁴² See Romans 3:21-26.

Belief alone without firmly standing on God's Word is a religious lie. Belief without loyalty to God and His Word is meaningless and self-deception. Belief or believing without faithfulness will NEVER please God or the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁴³ Belief without endurance to do His will is fleeting.

It takes a real heart commitment to Jesus as Lord to be born again. To be born from above is when you lay down your life in surrender to Him, invoking His Name (authority), and decide to follow Him, the resurrected Lord of Glory!

As a personal habit of mine, almost every time I see the words faith, believe, believed, or believing, I include the summarized definition of faith as “trust and obey”. For example: “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever will believe (and trust and obey) in Him, will not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) “These signs will follow those that believe (trust and obey)...” (Mark 16:17, 18) “Faith (trust and obedience) in His Name, the Name of Jesus has made this man strong...” (Acts 3:16) “If you continue in the faith (trust and obedience) firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the expectation of the gospel...” (Colossians 1:23) “For by grace you have been saved through faith (trust and obedience); and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (Eph. 2:8) “This is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith (trust and obedience).” (1 John 5:4) “...That the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through faith (trust and obedience)...” (Galatians 3:14)

Faith, loyalty, faithfulness, trust, and unswerving confidence in God's word or covenant, are a spiritual law.

Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. Romans 3:27

When this spiritual law is practiced, it will always bring unequivocal victory into your life, but there is a catch. The inner parts or workings of the principle cannot be separated from each other or the whole system breaks down. Separate faith from faithfulness, trust, and obedience and the system will not function. Leave off faithfulness from faith and you have a car with no tires, an airplane with no wings, or a boat with a massive hole in its hull. It will not drive, fly or float! It will stay parked, crash, and sink!

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. 1John 5:4

Faithfulness to God in a committed trust and a persistent loyalty (a ready obedience to His commands) will produce a life of victory. It will overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

²⁴³ Hebrews 11:6

Again, the areas of faith we have discussed above are essential for our understanding of faith as the fruit of the spirit named “faithfulness.” It is not enough to “speak the Word” or make a positive confession of the Scripture, though that is a definite part of what the Bible teaches about faith. We must LIVE according to the Word and allow God’s Word to live in us. (John 15:7) It is not enough to pray in faith and yet be disloyal to Him and live an ungodly lifestyle. Faith will never work that way. True Bible faith is based on a foundation of trust, loyalty, perseverance and a commitment to Him as your Lord, Savior, Healer, baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Head of the Church, Provider, Protector, and Deliverer. True faith is based firmly on “whatever He tells me to do I will do, wherever He tells me to go I will go, and whatever He tells me to speak I will speak.” That is the kind of faith and believing that Abraham had, and it was recorded to his account as righteousness! No other kind of faith is recorded to anyone’s account as righteousness. Remember that Paul taught this.

One cannot “speak of things that are not as though they were” and continue in disobedience and unfaithfulness to the Lord. (Romans 4:17) Forget about believing that you have received what you have prayed for if you reject the leading or direction of God for your life. (Mark 11:24) Mountains of evil circumstances and sickness and disease will not respond by faith if we refuse to walk in love and forgive people their trespasses against us. (Mark 11:23, 26, Galatians 5:6)

Bible faith is consistency and obedience to the Lord as much as it is receiving, taking, laying hold of, and appropriating the promises of God by faith. Disobedience to God and His Word will never mix with Bible faith and it will never work in the same environment. Disobedience and unfaithfulness will short-circuit faith just as much as a refusal to believe God’s Word will stop any activity of God from taking place in an individual’s life.²⁴⁴

*Believing in Jesus is also obeying Him faithfully and doing it from the heart.*²⁴⁵ A person can’t disobey Him and say out of the same mouth that they love Him. If we love Him we will keep (do or obey) His Word.²⁴⁶ Loving God and the Lord Jesus means that we hear, and we obey.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. (Romans 10:17) What many do not understand is that for Paul *hearing* is connected with obedience. Read the context in which Paul wrote that statement and notice its connection to obeying the gospel. (Romans 10:16) Paul says that *obeying* the gospel is equal to *believing* the report in Isaiah 53:1. In Hebrew, the word to *hear* includes the idea of obeying that heard. The person that truly hears will obey. The disobedient did not really hear! Those that hear the gospel will obey the gospel if they are obedient to the Lord!

My book, “*Faith That Receives the Grace of God*” deals in depth with steps to faith taken by the woman that had the issue of blood. She was healed when she heard of Jesus, spoke, acted, and then testified about her miracle. (Mark 5:25-34) This book also corrects much of the wrong thinking being

²⁴⁴ Study Hebrews 3:12-19 and 4:1, 2 for a clear Scriptural reference on this.

²⁴⁵ Eph. 6:6, Romans 6:17, Luke 6:46

²⁴⁶ John 14:21, 23, 1 John 2:5

taught by some concerning grace, faith, and works. As an addition to that book, read my newer book, “*A Call To Return*” for more in depth information. Avail yourself of these mighty resources. In addition, our podcasting website has numerous studies under the category of faith. Go to <http://danalanrodriguez.com> and study with us.

Meekness

The fruit of the spirit is MEEKNESS... Gal. 5:23

The Greek word for meekness is *praotes*. Strong's Concordance defines it as: “*gentleness; by implication humility: - meekness*”

The wrong concepts of *meekness* and *humility* abound in traditional teaching by the truckload. Neither word ever expresses self-deprecation, financial poverty, or accepting and tolerating Satan's works. True humility is being like Jesus. That is probably the easiest description of humility in the Bible.

All things are delivered to me by My Father. No one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son will reveal Him. Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke on you and learn of me, for I am *meek and humble* in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Matthew 11:27-30

Jesus uses the phrase “*meek and humble*” to describe His own self. *Humble* is synonymous with *meek* in the words of Jesus. *Meek* is associated with *gentleness*. *Humble* is associated with “make oneself of no reputation” or “go low,” as opposed to expressing oneself in arrogance and pride. Both words express the same basic character trait of submission to God, His will, His covenant, His Word, His Spirit, the Lord Jesus, to godly elders and pastors, between husband and wife, and to one another in the love of God.

Jesus called Himself humble and meek. He cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead, worked miracles, had a treasurer²⁴⁷, cast out the money changers from the temple compound, walked on water, rebuked the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Peter and others, stilled the sea and wind, fed the multitudes, turned water into wine, taught the gospel of the kingdom, preached the Word, prayed, etc.

For some devilish reason tradition believes the truly humble are to be “wimps” and “road kill”- the doormats of the world. Jesus portrays a different image as being meek and humble. Jesus was extremely self-aware of His status as Son and His rights and privileges before God. He knew He had a right to do what He did, say what He said, and act the way He did. He even said in John that He and the Father are ONE!²⁴⁸

In the above Scripture portion from Matthew, Jesus says this:

²⁴⁷ This tells us that He had a prosperous ministry or, why would He need a treasurer if He had no money?

²⁴⁸ John 10:30-36- also read His prayer in John 17. Everything He prayed there was according to meekness and humility!

My Father delivered all things to me. No one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son will reveal Him.

If you or I said anything like that, the majority of Christians would say, “Look at the arrogance and the pride of those people!” Yet Jesus was meek and humble even as He said this mouthful! If your interpretation of meek and humble is according to tradition, then there is no way to reconcile this in your thinking. Our minds need to be renewed to understand *true humility and meekness* according to the pattern Jesus laid out for us. He believed, spoke and did only what the Father revealed to Him. That is true humility and meekness. He was in complete and absolute submission to the Father and His will and that put Him at the top of the list of the truly meek and humble.

Arrogance and pride refuse to believe God and His Word. Arrogance goes about trusting in itself instead of the living God. Arrogance and pride refuses to make Jesus Lord over its life. Arrogance and pride goes about to make a god in its own image and according to its own likeness. Instead of submitting to God as the Creator, arrogance thinks it knows better and becomes a god unto itself. The arrogant and prideful are the ones that refuse to serve God and follow His commands.²⁴⁹

The truly meek and humble will cast their cares over on God, resist the devil firmly, and trust God.²⁵⁰ It is pride to hang on to worry because, basically, you are saying that you trust more in your ability than in God's ability.²⁵¹

False humility thinks that they are humble by putting up with every evil thing that comes along. That is a lie! True humility will submit to God and His Word, resist the devil and he will flee!²⁵² True humility is when you know your rights and privileges in Christ and act upon them. These are taught all over Paul's, Peter's, and James' writings.

True humility obeys God and the Lord Jesus and refuses to be rebellious or disobedient. Arrogance and pride is NOT obeying the Lord and doing things your own way. That is the exact opposite of the humility.²⁵³

Humility will open the door for a greater manifestation of the grace of God in your life!²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ Many Scriptures prove this all over the Bible. You should have no problem seeing that these thoughts are in line with Scripture. Look at Romans 1, Isaiah chapters 1-5, Jeremiah 17, as examples. These alone, should point out these truths in abundance to you.

²⁵⁰ 1 Peter 5:5-9

²⁵¹ Study Mat. 6:24-33.

²⁵² James 4:6, 7

²⁵³ Prov. 29:23, Mat. 23:12

²⁵⁴ James 4:6, 7

Self-Control

The fruit of the spirit is SELF-CONTROL... Gal. 5:23

The Greek word for self-control is (G1466) *egkrateia*. Thayer's Definition is *self-control (the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites)*.²⁵⁵

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says that the reflexive meaning of the word is “self-mastery” and “self-restraint.”

In 1Corinthians 9:25, Paul uses the training of an athlete as an example of self-control. If you have ever trained in some athletic discipline you know that to excel in it you will have to be dedicated if you are ever going to be any good at it. It will require doing things that you may not like but are necessary to train in it. It may indicate to abstain from things that others can eat and do, but you cannot eat or do them in order to reach your goals.

The central idea is that one is determined to do God's will in whatever calling or mission He may call one to do, and it demands that one stay away from everything that might hinder any of these endeavors. Whatever interferes with one's calling or the plan of God is removed regardless of emotions and feelings concerning it.²⁵⁶

Sometimes it may involve leaving your entire family to follow God, as was the case with Abraham.²⁵⁷ Whatever He asks of you to do, you determine to do it regardless of what you must abstain from and what you may have to change. Self-control adopts a “whatever it takes, whether I like it or not” (as long as it is in line with God and His Word) attitude.

No, I didn't like to train for competition 5 hours a day and 8 hours on Saturdays, every week for 6 months! It was not easy! I had to change my diet. I ate stuff that is not a part of my normal diet. I had to make sure to go to bed early every night. I had no time for TV and no time for other activities. It paid off at the competition. It was worth it all in the end because I won!

Self-control is discipline, but it starts in the spirit and soul of a person first and flows out from there into the physical. The will is involved along with a strong and firm decision. One writer calls it a quality decision. It becomes deep-seated determination. It is when you “set your jaw,” as the old timers used to say it. In the Scripture it calls this strong decision-making a “setting your face as flint.”²⁵⁸ It also uses the phrase “steadfastly set His face” to tell us of this strong determination that would not be dissuaded from its purpose.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁵ This word is also used in Acts 24:25; 2 Pet. 1:6; 1 Cor. 9:25 in the Greek.

²⁵⁶ 1 Cor. 10:31

²⁵⁷ Gen. 12:1-3

²⁵⁸ Isaiah 50:7

²⁵⁹ Luke 9:51, 53

Self-control is:

“The power and decision to abstain with reference to some fixed end, and the use of the impulses of physical, as servants for the moral life. It does not refer to any one class of objects that meets us, but to all; to what concerns speech and judgment, as well as to what appeals to sense. It is properly an inner spiritual virtue, working into the outward life, incapable of being counterfeited or replaced by any abstinence limited to that which is external.” (ISBE)²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Chapter 3: Kingdom Manifestations of the Holy Spirit

Each one of the fruit of the spirit we studied in the previous chapter is essential for the Christian life and walk. To be without these things is to be blind and useless according to Peter. (2 Peter 1:3-9) We cannot function in the supernatural realms of God's kingdom without the fruit. If I taught nothing further in this book, you can see already the reason why I call the fruit of the spirit "the foundation for the supernatural." These temper us and make us available to be used by the Holy Spirit in the earth. If we walk outside the realm of the fruit, the Holy Spirit is grieved in us, and cannot flow through us as He desires. (Ephesians 4:29-32) He is limited in the ways He can use us without fruit production in our lives.

Power without character is ugly and something God doesn't allow for long. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul calls it a bunch of noise. It is VERY dangerous to attempt to walk in kingdom power and authority without the insulation of the fruit. Power in the kingdom is as real as electricity in the natural world, except that kingdom power is MUCH greater than anything in the natural realm. The fruit serve as the wire insulation. Just as one would never put a stripped electrical wire into service, one should be cautious about manifesting kingdom dominion and power without the wire of your life being insulated by the fruit of the spirit. People that continue to attempt to operate in kingdom power without the fruit will eventually get a short-circuit, and an "electrical shock" is the least they will get. There are serious consequences to power being manifested through a stripped spiritual wire. Again, the fruit of the spirit is the insulation, and your protection! You may think I am exaggerating, but I am not. We read in the Scripture about people that were unprepared to meet the glory of God. They usually met with disaster or death because they did not have the proper respect, fear (reverence), and honor for God and His power. God's kind of power being manifested in and through us will demand proper insulation! Take this to heart and keep it there.

The most precious thing in life is to be used by the Lord to minister to others. To see the captives set free and the sick healed, to see lives restored is precious beyond words. To have His holy anointing that breaks every yoke and removes every burden flow through you unhindered is incomparable. I don't want the Lord to be grieved with me in any way, and I desire that He to use me freely to help others. How about you?

Let's begin to look at the mighty manifestations of the Holy Spirit available for ministry through believers to others. You may think you know much about this subject, but the gifts or manifestations of the Holy Spirit are even more important today than they ever were in the past. I trust that the teaching perspective the Lord has given us, and the examples given, will benefit you and help you get into a position where you yield more readily to the Holy Spirit.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit a word of wisdom; and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit; and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these works the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will. 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7-11

Verse 4 calls these gifts, and verse 7 calls them manifestations of the Spirit. God desires that we profit from manifestations of the Spirit. The Greek word “*sumphero*” (profit) is defined as: “*advantage, be better for, bring together, be expedient (for), be good, and (be) profitable for.*” God wants the believer to have the advantage in life for others and for themselves! We are to be the better for these manifestations of the Spirit, as a Body in the Lord, and as individuals. Another Greek dictionary says the word means: “to help, be profitable, be expedient.”

The Holy Spirit gifts and manifestations are to help you and others so you can BE a blessing just like God told Abraham, and we are the seed of Abraham by faith in Christ Jesus.²⁶¹ We are not limited to the world’s limitations. We do have supernatural help, but there is an important distinction. We will see this later in this study.

None of these manifestations of the Spirit are natural. Dead theology of the spiritually dead has tried to do away with the super-naturalness of our God. They have tried to strip the Bible of all supernatural occurrences. They deny the power of the Gospel and mainly only have a dead and dry religious form!²⁶²

Dead and dry religion looks for some natural way to explain the splitting of the Red Sea. They look for a way to explain away the crossing of the Israelites right through the middle of it on dry ground. One “brilliant” theological mind came up with the answer. He said that where the Israelites crossed, the water was only ankle deep. I heard one preacher say that if that were true, then the miracle was even greater. The hardened Pharaoh and battle toughened army of Egypt was drowned in ankle deep water! No, we believe it happened just like the Bible said it did.

Thank God you are not like that! You believe in a supernatural God that wants to bless and help His people with supernatural power. You still believe the Word regardless of dead and dry tradition that wants to do away with a God interested in helping you right now. He is still the great, “I AM” as He told Moses.²⁶³ He is not the “I was” God. He is in the right now of your lives as the great I AM! God never

²⁶¹ Genesis 12:3, Galatians 3:13, 14, 29

²⁶² 2 Timothy 3:5

²⁶³ Exodus 3:14

changes nor alters the Word of His Covenant, and He is still the right now God of I AM, and He wants to be that to you today!²⁶⁴ He is still the God that split the Red Sea! (Exodus 14) He is still the God that created the heavens and the earth! (Gen 1) He is still the One that delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from a fiery oven, and stopped the hungry mouths of lions from eating one of His prophets! (Daniel chapters 3 and 6) He is still the God of Elijah, and Elisha, Moses, David, Jesus, Peter, and Paul, and He is the right now God to you! Praise Him right now for all His great goodness and His desire to work on your behalf!

From 1 Corinthians 12 verses 4 and 7, we learned that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are also called manifestations of the Spirit. They are for profit, advantage, for making our world and those around us better. God desires to manifest His power in us and through us. It brings Him glory when His supernatural power is expressed through us. The definition of the word “manifestation” is: *exhibition, that is, (figuratively) expression, (by extension) a bestowal - manifestation.*

The Holy Spirit wants to exhibit the supernatural power of God for our benefit, and the blessing of those He instructs us to minister to. That is what these manifestations are all about. God wants to “prove” to those all around you who He is, and He wants to do it through you! This is the reason we were baptized in the Holy Spirit to start with.

You shall receive power, the Holy Spirit coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

I send the promise of my father on you but you sit in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high. Luke 24:49

The purpose of the day of Pentecost experience with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4 is so we can have supernatural power from God in operation in and throughout our lives as we minister to others. Why is power necessary for us? *The world can receive a witness from us!* A witness is one that comes with evidence. We come with supernatural evidence and power, the kind that cannot be denied. Because the church has mostly not walked in manifested power is the reason the world has mocked the church, and thought Christianity was a farce. The truth is that Christianity without the supernatural element of God in it is no better than the dead religions of the world and their dead gods. Christianity is different from all the rest of the world’s religions because we serve a supernatural God that is willing to show Himself strong among us!²⁶⁵

We have a supernatural God that wants to manifest Himself in our lives. He is just looking for those that will say *yes* to Him! He will get glory through us as He acts on our behalf to confirm His great

²⁶⁴ Psalms 89:34, Malachi 3:6

²⁶⁵ 2 Chronicles 16:9

promises!²⁶⁶ Our supernatural God has supernatural manifestations He desires to perform in and through us. They are for our advantage over the world, the flesh and the devil. They are for supernatural protection, wisdom, knowledge, healing, and miracles. They are so we can carry out the great commission with signs accompanying our lives as we give witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

The resurrection was a supernatural event and we can have supernatural manifestations to prove His resurrection to the unbeliever and the unrepentant.

And the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power. And great grace was on them all. Acts 4:33

This power that was manifested through them brought forth all kinds of supernatural events. Healings, signs, wonders, miracles, supernatural provision, wisdom, and much more came forth through them. As a result, thousands came to the Lord Jesus. Study it out in the book of Acts.²⁶⁷

“Yea, but that was only for the Apostles,” some religiously brainwashed people say. That is extremely Scripturally illiterate to think that way because two of the references we give you in the notes below from Acts 6:8, 10 speak about two that were not apostles, and were really only chosen to serve tables. Yet, God used them to shake their world! Nowhere does it say that these kinds of miracles and signs will follow only apostles and prophets or the like.

And He said to them, Go into the entire world; proclaim the gospel to all the creation... And miraculous signs will accompany those believing these things: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them. (Note: This refers to supernatural protection from harm.) They will lay hands on the sick, and they will be well. Then indeed, after speaking to them, the Lord was taken up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And going out, they proclaimed everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word by miraculous signs following. Amen. Mark 16:15-20

These signs are to follow the believing one! Are you a believing one? Do you believe and obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Then these signs are to accompany you! The Supernatural God wants to manifest the supernatural through you! Will you let Him?

We have discovered that none of these manifestations or gifts of the Holy Spirit in 1Corinthians 12 should be confused with natural abilities. These are supernatural abilities of the Holy Spirit available to

²⁶⁶ 2 Corinthians 1:20

²⁶⁷ Here are a few to get you started: Acts 4:34, 35, 5:12-16, 6:8, 10, 8:5-8.

the believer to perform them as He leads as proof of the power of God in demonstration. As we have repeated, God wants to demonstrate His power, and He wants to do it through us!

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5

In order for the faith of people not to stand in man's wisdom but in the power of God, there has to come demonstration of the Spirit and power. No demonstration equals NO FAITH in God's power. The Word of God, PLUS the demonstration of God's power, will cause people to STAND with trust in God's ability to put them over.

Preaching the FULL Gospel

For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ did not work out by me for the obedience of the nations in word and deed, in power of miracles and wonders, in power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem, and all around to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Yea, so I have been eager to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation... Romans 15:18-20

Notice that heathens (*the nations*) respond in obedience to the gospel when it is presented with the Word AND with deeds of power. Did you see above about what kind of deeds Paul was talking? He said that the deeds were in the power of miracles and wonders, in the power of the Spirit!

The largest evangelistic meetings on the planet have always been around the men and women that demonstrated God's power. Why is that? *A miracle goes a long way in revealing not just the words of the Gospel but its power to the un-churched and the non-Christians!* People flock to where Jesus shows up as the Healer! It demonstrates that Jesus Christ is still alive and well among His people!

A healing, miracle, sign, wonder, speaks every language and all understand it! You do not have to explain the cripples walking, the blind eyes opening, the deaf hearing, or the dead raised up! Everybody gets it! It is heaven's great advertisement agency! The heathen (*nations without God*) respond favorably to miracles, signs, and wonders. It opens the door for the preaching of the Gospel as nothing else does.

Christianity without the miraculous is no better than the false religions of Islamism, Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, Paganism, Socialism, Humanism, or any other “ism” for that matter. The miraculous is what separates Jesus from the false gods and religions of the nations. The supernatural manifestations of God are what separate Jesus from the venerated ethical and moral philosophers. Demonstrations of power are what make Christianity easily distinguishable from the rest of the world's religious errors. Without the power of the gospel, all you have is a religious form with no ability to convince anyone of its reality.

Notice the last statement we underlined from Paul's own words. He said that he had FULLY preached the Gospel of Christ. Listen closely: There is no full preaching of the gospel of Christ without the power of the gospel in demonstration by signs, miracles, wonders, or the power of the Spirit of God!

Paul wrote this. Don't fuss with me about it if it hurts dearly held traditions. Saying that all you do is preach the Gospel, but there is never any demonstration of God's power, is not preaching the full gospel at all. Dead, traditional, non-believing churches that talk about Jesus, but never have proof of the power of the Gospel are a dime a dozen! They deny the power of the Gospel with their dead religion that does not demonstrate a resurrected Savior.²⁶⁸ To hear the dead sermons of some preachers on TV with all their polished talk of no power is disgusting beyond words.²⁶⁹

I am completely against church as “accustomed” or “church according to a set pattern.” God is too powerful and too awesome to be a part of dead, boring, unbelieving “church as usual.” Jesus shook the established religious order then with healings, signs, and wonders, and He will do it in even a greater way in our days.²⁷⁰ Jesus brings life and life more abundantly. Tradition is death.²⁷¹ We will take Jesus!

All the theatrics, advanced technology used to impress the masses, high-powered music with strangely poor lyrics, uninspired programs with little to no teaching from God’s Word in them, and the Vegas show atmosphere of some churches are nothing more than an attempt to substitute the power of God. It is all *entertainment-based* dead religion instead of Spirit-led and anointed services designed to minister the power of God to the people. Many sectors of Christianity have substituted the power of God with entertainment! That is why worldly forms of dancing have become so prominent in some churches. I have seen everything from ballet to hip-hop being called “prophetic dancing” or “worship”. Other churches have pageantry, acrobats, runners, shouters, flag wavers, and “shofar” blowers to interrupt the message being preached by calling attention away from God’s Word!

One friend of mine was preaching at one church in Texas that had 12 or so of these “shofar” blowers on the front row. While he was preaching, and after making a powerful statement, they all got up and blew their horns right in the middle of his message! My friend just stood quietly in disbelief, but he waited for them to finish their flesh driven tirade. My wife and I visited that church to hear him preach and minister in the power of the Spirit. I was shocked when these horn blowers interrupted him, but I noticed my preacher friend was cool and collected. Later he told me, “Oh Dan, that is nothing to me. I have seen it all. At one church I ministered at they had circus acrobats!” I don’t know if these unscriptural things are distasteful spiritually to you or not, but they stink to high Heaven to me!

I worshipped at one church that rarely laid hands on the sick or cast out demons. They used to do it, but they stopped. I seldom saw a call for people to be saved or baptized in the Holy Spirit. I am talking

²⁶⁸ 2 Timothy 3:5, Acts 4:33

²⁶⁹ Romans 1:16

²⁷⁰ John 14:12

²⁷¹ John 10:10

about a “full-Gospel” church that supposedly preached the Word! I am not referring to a dead denominational church. What has happened to so many full-Gospel churches that are in the same boat spiritually as many denominational churches? Some full-Gospel churches stopped preaching a solid Bible message AND praying in public for people to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak with tongues. It is almost as if they are ashamed of the Holy Spirit and His manifestations. They relegate it to some back room, if they even go that far. Some regulate it to a back room because of time restraints.

“Brother Rodriguez, the people get hungry and will not sit down for more than 1 hour and 30 minutes,” some pastors have said to me. Baloney! If the power and presence of the Lord are manifesting in a service, people of all colors and races will stay till midnight. All the natural junk with no power is what is boring and cannot keep people’s interest! I have proven it in my own ministry time and again. When the anointing is flowing freely, and the power of God is at work in a service, people stay for hours without complaint. The problems start when you try to keep them for hours in a service with no anointing! That is when the moaning and groaning starts.

If a church has altar calls for salvation, prayer for the sick, and ministers the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and tongues, there will not be time for the foolishness many call “spiritual” yet has no basis in the New Testament. Usually, flesh-driven instead of Spirit-led churches incorporate what is trendy, instead of listening to the Holy Spirit and the Word of God on what to do in their services. If churches will just do what the New Testament church did in the book of Acts, it will rid them of unproductive and foolish social agendas, classes, and activities that produce no power and offer no help to suffering people. Revival can only break out if a church is acting on God’s Word and doing what Jesus said we were supposed to do. There is no substitute for the teaching and preaching of the Word without compromise, and the demonstration of the supernatural power of God. Without these a church is weak and filled with a bunch of puny Christians!

Pursuing Love and the Manifestations of The Holy Spirit

Here is another important point for us in preparation for the gift-manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Be earnest (zealous, striving, and desiring) **in the pursuit of the more advantageous gifts: and yet I am going to show you a more excellent way.** 1 Corinthians 12:31 (Literal)

The more advantageous gift-manifestation is always the one you will need at a specific moment in time in order to carry out your assignment. If the Lord told you heal the sick in a certain scenario, prophecy is not the advantageous gift at the time. If some needed encouragement, then a miracle may not be the gift to their advantage at the time. Our pursuit should be for gifts of healings when people are sick and need healing. If you are in a storm with your boat about to sink, you do not necessarily need healing or tongues! You need the gift of special faith and working of a miracle to speak like Jesus and say, “Peace! Be still!” Desire and be zealous for the very best gift that will meet the situation.

When they needed more wine at the wedding feast, Jesus did not need to give a prophetic word to the headmaster of the wedding entourage. He needed a miracle! The same can be said of when the multitudes of thousands of people were hungry. Jesus did not need to teach another parable with His teaching gift. They needed a multiplication miracle.

Some have misunderstood Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 13. This is especially true of those that deny supernatural manifestations of God as being available today. They point to chapter 13 and say, "See, Paul taught that LOVE is more important than the gifts." Paul is not saying that we should not desire and be extremely zealous for these supernatural manifestations. He is instructing on how to direct our faith in the matter. The last phrase in chapter 12 teaches that faith and desire alone will not put you in the right place for these manifestations. Chapter 13 continues by expounding about walking in love.²⁷² The more excellent way is to have faith and a strong desire for supernatural manifestations WITH love. Faith works by love (Gal. 5:6), so it is being zealous and desiring by faith these things AND staying in love and ministering with compassion. These are the ingredients to having a life through which the Holy Spirit can pour His great gifts and manifestations.

After Paul expounds on love and the part it plays in spiritual manifestations, he repeats something similar to 1 Corinthians 12:31 at the beginning of chapter 14.

Pursue earnestly love, and earnestly desire the spirituals ... 1 Corinthians 14:1 (Literal)

Paul tells us to pursue earnestly love AND spiritual manifestations of God. "Spirituals" is literal in this verse and in 1 Corinthians 12:1. "Gifts" is not found in either verse in the original Greek. We are to seek earnestly and be zealous to maintain love, compassion, AND the spiritual things of God. We are to desire them! We are to set our hearts on them as one translation says. This is why you need to hear good teaching on these spiritual manifestations. In this case you are reading it, but you are hearing it on the inside as you read it. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word. (Rom. 10:17) Desire for God and His things come in the same way. You hear the message and it strikes a fire in your heart. You become "on fire" for all these things. It stirs your heart and moves you to act in faith as the Spirit leads you.

²⁷² Study chapters 12, 13, and 14 together. They are teaching about spiritual manifestations and gifts. The translators that assigned the chapter numbers often interrupted the flow of teaching in numerous places. These three chapters are a case in point.

A word of wisdom

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit a word of wisdom... 1 Corinthians 12:4, 7-11

Wisdom from God is supernatural, and we can have it operating in our lives. It is available to all believers by asking and believing they receive it.

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask from God, who gives to all freely and with no reproach, and it will be given to him. James 1:5

A word of wisdom is a further manifestation of wisdom. It is *a word* of the wisdom of God. It is a specific word given at a specific time. God's wisdom for a specific task is given. Wisdom is when you know what to do about something future. The Spirit of the Lord designs a word of wisdom for divine instruction and divine direction in order to obtain a supernatural result. It could be the immediate future or a little further on down the road, as was the case with Joseph in Genesis. There is more on that in a moment. A word of wisdom is a gift for others that flows through you.

It is important to differentiate between wisdom and knowledge in this context. Knowledge is instruction about something in the present. Wisdom is when you know what to do about something future. Can we prove this? Yes, we can. One very important key to Biblical interpretation is what some have called "*the law of first mention.*" Many times, we can get an *initial* interpretation on a particular word by finding out the usage in the Bible of the first place it is mentioned. I wrote that we get *initial* interpretation because there is another key to Biblical interpretation. The Bible is progressive revelation. This tells us that the initial use of a word in Scripture may not be all a word reveals in its definition. It is a very important starting point and foundation, but there may be more to the word as you continue to study the scriptural context.

The first time the word *wisdom*²⁷³ is used is in the story of Joseph's rise to prime minister of Egypt. (Genesis 41) When the "wise" men of Egypt could not interpret Pharaoh's dream, God's man Joseph, received the interpretation of it. That dream's interpretation was to save the entire nation from starvation, due to a severe famine that was yet to come. God's wisdom through Joseph saved an entire nation. That revelation proved to be the salvation of his family from dying in the famine.

God showed Joseph what to do to avoid dire consequences. This is what a word of wisdom will do. God designs it for divine protection and divine direction to help another person besides you. Others get the benefit of this word when ministered through you.

²⁷³ Hebrew transliteration: *chokmah*

We must inject here, these gifts or manifestations of the Spirit are not directly for you, though you may benefit from its implementation as Joseph did. He also was saved from the famine, but by and large, it was to keep Egypt from ceasing to exist as a nation and to save the seed of Abraham. *A word of wisdom is a gift for others that flows through you.*

For your own personal protection and direction, the wisdom of God is available everyday of the week, 24/7! Proverbs chapters 2 through 4, and 8 & 9 are beautiful passages to prove this. God's wisdom is available without reproach if we ask for it in faith. (James 1:5-7)

The purpose of this *word of wisdom* is for ministry to someone else! When you get wisdom from heaven in your own prayer time, through a revelation from the Word, or in your daily life, it may seem like a manifestation of this gift, but it is not. It is just as supernatural as a word of wisdom in the manifestation gifts. But, the gift of the Holy Spirit is for ministry, at times to the world as it was with Joseph, and at other times to the Body of Christ.

When we need wisdom, we ask for it by faith according to James 1:5 and then we receive it. As we said, receiving any wisdom from God is just as supernatural as this gift of a word of wisdom, but it is not this gift in operation. Distinguish between the two. Wisdom from God in our daily lives is our right and inheritance by covenant in Christ.²⁷⁴ *These gifts in 1Corinthians 12 are the supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit in and through us for other people.* As we move into individual study of these gifts, it will clear up many questions if you keep this in mind.

We will give you three examples from the New Testament of the operation of this manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Then Jesus lifted up His eyes and saw a great crowd come to Him. He said to Philip, Where shall we buy loaves so that these may eat? And He said this to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. John 6:5, 6

Jesus was about to perform the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. A working of a miracle needed a word of God's wisdom to bring forth the miracle. Even though this text uses the word "knew," it was used in reference to a divine provision miracle that was to be done in the future. It had not happened yet. It was a "knowing" of what to do in the near future. It was divine understanding on the "how to" work the miracle. It was not a supernatural knowledge of the present situation. It was supernatural wisdom for the future provision, similar to what Joseph received.

A vision appeared to Paul in the night. A certain man of Macedonia stood, begging him, saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us"! After he saw the vision, we immediately

²⁷⁴ 1 Cor. 1:30, Col. 1:27, 2:3

tried to go into Macedonia, gathering that the Lord had called us in order to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16:9, 10

Supernatural direction came for the future. Godly wisdom came through a special word of wisdom in a dream. The “night vision” was clear, and the meaning was understood. No dream interpretation book and no “dream guide” were needed! They knew the Lord was calling them to minister the Gospel of God among the people of Macedonia. Praise the Lord!

The third example we will give you of a word of wisdom is again in Paul's ministry.

Paul warned them, saying, “Men, I perceive that this voyage is about to be with much harm and loss, and not only much cargo and of the ship, but also of our souls.” Acts 27: 9, 10

Paul received this perception by a supernatural revelation through a word of wisdom and not any natural human understanding. There was no natural way for anyone to know the future. It was a revelation of a word of wisdom to Paul. No one paid attention to him, and they sailed right into a severe storm, and got into a crisis. In those days, they did not have the Weather Channel or radar to let them know what was ahead of them. Paul got it by the Holy Spirit.

Then standing up in their midst, Paul said, O men, being obedient to me you ought not to have set sail from Crete, and to have come by this harm and loss. And now... there will be no casting away of life among you, only of the ship. For tonight an angel of God stood beside me...saying... Paul... God has given you all those who sail with you. Therefore... I believe God, that it will be so, according to the way it was told me. Acts 27:21-25

Paul just couldn't help telling them, “I told you so.” I probably would have done the same thing! God warned them through Paul, but they chose to ignore the man of God, and faced the peril of almost losing their lives. Paul was praying, and got further instructions from the Lord. He always prayed in tongues. (1Cor. 14:18) Anytime one faces peril, you better pray in tongues and get some direction from God. In Paul's case above, the wisdom came from the Holy Spirit as a manifestation of a word of wisdom for all the crew and passengers. Dangerous times like these would even make anybody pray in tongues!

This is another very interesting manifestation of a word of wisdom together with another gift that we will study later- *the discerning of spirits*. Paul saw into the realm of spirits and saw this angelic being. The angel let Paul know that they were going to lose the ship but that their lives would be saved. Paul believed the word of wisdom given him and it was so!

A word of knowledge

To another a word of knowledge... according to the same Spirit... 1Corinthians 12:8

In *a word of wisdom* and *a word of knowledge*, notice that they are not called “the” word of wisdom or “the” word of knowledge. These are not ‘the gift of wisdom and knowledge’, as some have misunderstood them. These are the sudden supernatural giving of a “*piece*” of God’s great and eternal wisdom or knowledge. It is just “A” word, and not “ALL” of it!

These are not a “*gift*” in the sense that, once you have it, you can turn it on and off whenever you please. These gifts are not for you as such. Generally, they are for somebody else, though they may be ministered through you.

Note that we are teaching about the operation of these manifestations in the life of any true believer. We have not discussed the ministry gifts and their relation to these manifestations. The apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and the teacher should have them in operation as the Spirit leads and directs. Each ministry office will have certain manifestations that will be more prominent according to the particular office.

Before we get into a word of knowledge, we will give you a grouping of the gifts in categories that are useful for study. I did not come up with these. These were first introduced to the body of Christ through the writings and ministry of Howard Carter.²⁷⁵

Howard Carter received from the Lord that the nine gifts of the Spirit are easily divided into three categories: the revelation gifts, power gifts, and utterance gifts. The *revelation gifts reveal* something, the *power gifts do* something, and the *utterance gifts say* something.

The revelation gifts are; a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits.

The power gifts are; the gift of (special) faith, gifts of healings, and working of miracles.

The utterance gifts are; the gift of prophecy, (special) tongues, and the interpretation of (special) tongues.

The categorizing of the gifts is very useful for study purposes. In actuality, through experience, I can tell you that they will overlap and function at times in conjunction with other manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

Again, this is not the “gift of knowledge.” This is a special revelatory manifestation of the Spirit where a piece of God’s supernatural knowledge is given in order to minister to someone concerning

²⁷⁵ 1891-1971, and not to be confused with the famed archaeologist of the same name, the one that discovered the tomb of king “Tut” in Egypt, among other things. The Alfred Howard Carter we are talking about was one of the mentors of Lester Sumrall. God gave him powerful revelations of the gifts of the Spirit.

people, places, circumstances, and things. It is knowledge that goes beyond human knowledge, or it is something unknown to the person it comes through.

We will give you three examples, though many more are found in Scripture.

Example #1:

And the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, “In such and such a place shall be my camp”. And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, “Beware that you do not pass such a place, for the Syrians have come down there”. And the king of Israel sent to the place of which the man of God told him and warned him, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. And the heart of the king of Syria was enraged for this thing. And he called his servants and said to them, “Will you not show me who of us is for the king of Israel”? And one of his servants said, “None, my lord, O king, but Elisha the prophet, who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom”. 2 Kings 6:1-12

No one but God knew what the plans of this Syrian King were to ambush and defeat Israel. Elisha received from the Holy Spirit exact details of their plans and warned the king of Israel in order to avoid a slaughter. God gave supernatural knowledge that only He could give! This is a manifestation of this gift.

Example #2:

The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may not thirst nor come here to draw.” Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband’ for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband. In that you spoke truly.” John 4:15-18

Jesus had never seen this woman before. He did not have natural knowledge of this woman at all. It was supernatural knowledge given to Jesus by the Holy Spirit in a word of knowledge. It came suddenly, and it opened a door to the ministry of Jesus among the Samaritans.

I have learned through experience that this gift may come as a knowing, a seeing it unfold before the inner eyes, a mini-vision, and open vision, a night vision, or a sudden revelation. We have seen this manifestation of the Spirit in operation with such precision at times where you could tell someone by the Spirit some very exact details about a certain person (s), place, circumstance, or some other thing that only God could know. It didn't come to make you a show off, but to bring deliverance and the ministry

of the Holy Spirit to an individual or to a group of people. This gift came to bring deliverance to the entire army of Israel!

Why do these manifestations come? The manifestations come to bring evidence of our great God and for His glory, and never for our own aggrandizement. One sure way to quench the Holy Spirit is taking the glory for yourself and getting puffed up like a toad frog when He uses you. Humility will get you more manifestation of favor (grace), but God resists the proud!²⁷⁶

If you have ever had the Holy Spirit give you supernatural instruction, direction, or revelation that was for you personally, then you are witnessing the wisdom, revelation, and instruction that is available from the Holy Spirit to all believers. One could refer to these as personal manifestations of the Spirit that come for your benefit. On the other hand, we believe that the usage presented in 1 Corinthians 12 is dealing specifically with the gifts of the Holy Spirit given through someone in the Body of Christ to minister to someone else. Let's say like this, "*They are gifts given to minister.*" It is NOT a gift to you as much as it is a gift ministered through you. Note that!

The usage of tongues in this context is for ministry to the Body, and not the personal tongues used in your prayer life. Personal tongues are for edification of the Spirit Baptized believer.²⁷⁷ The same goes with interpretation of tongues and prophecy. One needs to understand the difference between personal usage of tongues, and tongues used as a ministry tool for the Body. They are not the same in usage as when the Holy Spirit anoints you to stand publicly and bring forth a tongue. A public word given in tongues will demand an interpretation. Public tongues needs interpretation so the church is edified.²⁷⁸ 1Corinthians 14 clearly instructs on these differences.

Every believer has a right to receive light, wisdom revelation, comprehension, and understanding from God in a supernatural way.²⁷⁹

The operation of a word of wisdom is to be distinguished from wisdom available to every believer in Christ. A word of knowledge is different from revelation knowledge. Revelation knowledge is the privilege of all Christians from the Word and the Spirit. We must see the differences with tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, gifts of healings, working of miracles, and (special) faith along the same lines.

These gifts or manifestations of the Spirit in 1Corinthians should be abundant among us, but their manifestation is subject to the direction and control of the Holy Spirit. There is no "ON" switch to get them to operate. We have to depend on the Holy Spirit for their operation and implementation. Though that is true, we should increase in them more and more!²⁸⁰ Yet one cannot push a button and make them

²⁷⁶ James 4:6

²⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14, 15

²⁷⁸ 1 Cor. 14:5, 27, 28

²⁷⁹ Ephesians 1:17-18, 3:14-20, 5:15-17, Colossians 1:9-11

²⁸⁰ 1 Cor. 1:7

work even though you can put yourself into a position where you yield readily to the Holy Spirit. The more we yield to the Holy Spirit, the more He can use us as He sees fit to minister to people. These spiritual gifts are available for ministry through any yielded vessel, but they will come forth as the Spirit wills and not how we want them to come forth.

But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each as He wills. 1 Corinthians 12:11

You will have no control over how the Holy Spirit wants to manifest Himself with these gifts. He does want to manifest Himself, and He will, but we do not get to choose what gifts He wants to use at a certain time and for a particular person. These are tools of ministry for others. They are dispensed and given as the Holy Spirit wills it.

Again, if you need wisdom on a personal level, you can get it by asking in faith and not wavering or doubting, and the Lord will give it to you.²⁸¹

If you need understanding or instruction, you can get it the same way, by faith in God's Word, and by the ministry of the Holy Spirit to you. If it comes through somebody else by the Spirit then that is a manifestation gift that ministered to you.²⁸²

If you need healing for your body, you can get it just as the woman got it that had the issue of blood—by your faith. She got healing by exercising her faith and not by gifts of healings.²⁸³ What are we saying? Healing is a settled fact according to Isaiah 53:4, 5 and 1 Peter 2:24. It is available to you personally 24/7 through your stand of faith on the Word of God. You can stand on the Word for one of His promises any day and at any time! Individually, healing is available to you because Jesus shed His blood, went into Heaven with it and sealed our redemption from sicknesses and diseases. It is a Covenant fact that healing is a provision for you. Anytime we take a stand on the Covenant of healing, we can expect healing power to come forth from God and drive out sickness and disease. That is our divine right.

You can even minister to others the Word on healing and get them healed based on the Word without a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It will work every time if you can get them to believe the Word, receive it, and act on it.²⁸⁴

If you have ever been to a Holy Spirit healing meeting, where gifts of healings were in manifestation, and healing came that way, then you were the recipient of a manifestation gift of the Spirit.

²⁸¹ James 1:5-7

²⁸² John 15:26, 16:13-15, 1 Corinthians 2:7-16

²⁸³ Mark 5:34

²⁸⁴ Matthew 13:15, Proverbs 4:20-24

We have taken the time in this study to bring these differences out to you so you do not ever confuse these issues. We can all believe the Word and receive a manifestation from the promises of God on our own.²⁸⁵ We should aspire to get to a place where we can pray and believe God for ourselves. In the mean time, while you get there, there is always available the prayer of faith of the anointed and appointed elders of a powerful church. They can believe God with you for your healing. The Word says that the prayer of faith of these kinds of elders will heal the sick person and raise them up. It never said that the prayer of faith and the anointing with oil *might* heal the sick. NO! It *will* heal the sick!²⁸⁶

We trust you got how we said all that. True elders know how to pray the prayer of faith that will get you healed! Religious elders that are tradition bound do not know how to pray the prayer of faith to minister healing, and should not be elders at all! Out with the false elders and in with the real elders that know the Word of the Covenant and how to pray the prayer of faith for healing!

Example #3 of a word of knowledge follows below.

And a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the price, his wife also knowing, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart for you to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own authority? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men, but to God." And hearing these words, Ananias fell down and expired. Acts 5:1-5 (Please look at the rest of this story in verses 6 through 10.)

A man and his wife came to bring as a gift as part of the amount of money they received from the sale of their property. That was OK as long as that is what they told Peter. They decided to say it was the entire amount of the sale they were giving as an offering. They lied about it and the couple covenanted together to say the lie before the anointed man of God. This is an unusual manifestation of the Holy Spirit that came for the purpose of carrying out judgment right on the spot. The Holy Spirit revealed to Peter the lie, he exposed it, and Ananias fell dead. Normally, people don't die when you call them a liar! This was a supernatural revelation by a word of knowledge to reveal the deception of Satan. This happened right in the middle of a powerful outpouring of the Spirit!²⁸⁷

Learn this: the greater the manifestation of the power of God in our midst, the quicker sin will be exposed and judged. As the power of God and His glory increases in these last days, we will see more of these kinds of things happening. This reference to sudden judgment was a result of a word of knowledge

²⁸⁵ Mark 11:24, John 16:23, 2 Peter 1:4, 1 Kings 8:56

²⁸⁶ James 5:14, 15

²⁸⁷ Acts 4:29-37

and a working of a miracle. One other gift was in operation. We will see it later. Just as it takes a miracle to raise a dead person to life, multiply loaves and fishes, and turn water into wine, it takes a miracle for someone to drop dead when they hear the word from an anointed man or woman of God!

Later Sapphira, Ananias' wife, came in with the same lie. She had not heard the news about what happened to her husband earlier. In her case, Peter received a revelation that she was going to die right then, and she dropped dead. That was a word of wisdom with a working of a miracle. Wisdom concerning what was going to take place in the near future was revealed to him, and the miracle judgment happened again. No one really wants this miracle at church! Some powerful things resulted from it. It did have a powerful effect on the entire congregation, and even among the unconverted. Talk about a situation that will put the fear, reverence, and respect for God in people! ²⁸⁸

²⁸⁸ Acts 5:11

Discerning of spirits

For to one is given through the Spirit... discerning of spirits... 1 Corinthians 12:7-10

The third revelation gift is the discerning of spirits. This is not the *gift of discernment*. I have heard people say, “I have the gift of discernment on that person.” They are talking about *suspicion* and not a manifestation gift of the Holy Spirit! Suspicious folk are following the flesh and not the Spirit because they refuse to believe the best of people, which is one of the characteristics of love.²⁸⁹ Love refuses and rejects suspicion.

The Holy Spirit shed the love of God abroad in our hearts, and His manifestations are not discordant with the love of God. Love is the principal key in the operation of the gifts. If we do not extend the love of God towards others, all we have left is a bunch of noise with no lasting power.²⁹⁰ Sometimes it may not look like our mental image of love but it is.

The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira by divine judgment affected all the church and even the heathens. More was involved in their sudden passing than their individual lying. It was a congregational issue of corruption trying to “worm” its way into a holy place of God. It happened in the middle of a powerful release of giving and receiving. God's love and compassion for the entire Body of believers separated the evil in a dramatic way, a covetous evil that was trying to gain ground among them. The miraculous deaths were actions that brought respect for the church at large among the heathens. One very prominent thing it did for everyone was that they learned respect and honor for the anointing, the man of God, the powerful revival in their midst, and even for God. Nobody disrespected the anointing for a long time after that!

That manifestation of the Holy Spirit also had to do with discernment. The definition of the word *discerning* is: *distinguishing, discerning, and judging*. Peter said, “**Ananias, why did Satan fill your heart for you to lie to the Holy Spirit... You did not lie to men, but to God.**” It was discerning of the condition of the spirit of Ananias, and it was a divine judgment. Normally, it is impossible for one human being to know the intimate things inside the spirit of another human being.²⁹¹ One can get an understanding of the condition of the heart from the words someone speaks out of their mouths according to Jesus, but much about their secret conditions stays hidden.²⁹² In God's presence, everything is naked and open with Him, and so it is with this manifestation of the Holy Spirit when it is

²⁸⁹ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

²⁹⁰ 1 Cor. 12:31, 13:1-3- Understand that the apostle Paul was not teaching in chapter and verse. This was all originally written in a letter format, and the old middle ages translators should never have divided up 1 Corinthians chapters 12 through 14 because they are all speaking about gifts, ministries, workings, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. See 1 Cor. 12:4-7.

²⁹¹ 1 Cor. 2:11

²⁹² Matthew 12:34-37

in operation.²⁹³ One gets a view from God's perspective, and as in the case of Ananias, it is not always pretty.

Did you notice that another definition of this word "*discerning*" is "*judging*"? What I am about to say now is NOT babyhood or even adolescent Christianity. This is for the spiritually mature. I trust that misinformed and immature people do NOT ever attempt what I am about to tell you. It could be detrimental to your health if not fatal!

Did you know there is a judging led by the Holy Spirit and is a spiritual gift in operation? What we just read about in Acts 5 about Ananias and Sapphira was a demonstration of the Spirit of God giving a judgment. Peter decreed a judgment by the discerning of spirits after the Lord revealed to him the spirit of Ananias and Sapphira. As I said, there were at least three gifts of the Spirit in operation all at once at that moment in time.

Here is one more manifestation of this gift of the discerning of spirits in operation to pronounce a judgment on someone else. Again, never think you can go around judging people on your own. That is wrong and it will get you judgment.²⁹⁴ Jesus spoke of judging righteous judgment, and as mature saints, we are to judge what is prophesied, and taught. We are to examine and determine if it lines up with the Word and the Spirit of truth.²⁹⁵

There are some sides of the manifestations of the Spirit that some may prefer to never discuss. Today it is more necessary to examine these parts of the manifestations of the Spirit that are not pleasant, especially as things get wrapped up on the earth before the coming of the Lord.

Everywhere it is heard that fornication is among you, and such fornication which is not named among the heathen, so as for one to have his father's wife. And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that did this deed might be taken from your midst. For as being absent in body, but being present in spirit, I have already judged the one who has worked out this thing, as if I were present: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together with my spirit also, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

This is a disturbing portion of Scripture. Many avoid talking about it. I really don't find it too much fun either, but it is a truth the church must face head on. The guilty man above was having sex with his father's wife. Talk about a messed up, ugly, sin situation that needed correction and rebuke! Paul said

²⁹³ Hebrews 4:13

²⁹⁴ Matthew 7:1, James 4:11

²⁹⁵ John 7:24, 1 Cor. 10:15, 7:40, 6:2, 3, 14:29, Hebrews 4:12

they should have been fasting and praying²⁹⁶ until this person was removed from their midst. It did not say to hug, counsel, or give some encouragement to the brother! NO! He was saying, “You should have prayed for his removal from your church!”

While I am on the subject, we removed from our church a few in just that way. We prayed, fasted, and used our authority in the Name of Jesus. We commanded that such and such a person that that refused to repent to be removed from our church. Within a day or in a few days they left! Some actually repented and straightened up quickly after they found out they were spiritually in hot water!

This situation at Corinth had gone beyond the stage of dealing with sin through fasting and prayer until the person is removed. In Corinth, a public removal was required because it had become a publicly known sin. If pastors and ministers of God would learn from the first part of this narrative what to do to remove the unruly from their midst, they may never have to deal with the public removal of people that call themselves Christians and persist in public sin.

Again notice what Paul said was now to happen.

For as being absent in body, but being present in spirit, I have already judged the one who has worked out this thing, as if I were present: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together with my spirit also, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Though Paul was not physically present, the Lord manifested through him the discerning of spirits. He saw the situation through this manifestation gift as though he was present. He saw the heart of this man that committed this atrocity. This manifested gift of discerning of spirits empowered him to bring judgment on the situation as though he were present, similar to the way Peter brought judgment on Ananias and Sapphira. Paul instructs the Corinthians to get together, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was instructing them to come together in the power of agreement²⁹⁷ with this gifting that he was ministering through the written page and in the spirit, and under the authority and power of the Head of the church, to turn the sinful man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. How could Paul possibly judge this man in any other way? He couldn't in the natural except by the manifestation of discerning of spirits.

The discerning of spirits is a distinguishing between spirits and a judging between spirits. Some think that all there is on earth are demons in the realm of the spirit, but they are wrong. What about the angels that were sent into the earth, and the Holy Spirit, God, Jesus, and human spirits? Are these not also in the realm of the spirit, the realm beyond the natural?

There is more to this word “discernment” than meets the eye. No pun intended, for those of you that know where we are going with this. Webster’s dictionary gives us the first definitions of discern as, “to

²⁹⁶ This is what *mourning* is referring to.

²⁹⁷ Matthew 18:19

separate by the eye, or by the understanding. Hence, to distinguish; to see the difference between two or more things...”

Teachers and pastors often use this definition of “*discerning*,” and call this gift a “seeing into the realm of spirits.” *Discerning of spirits can be God increasing your natural eyesight to include the supernatural realm, if only for a time.*

It can be exciting, glorious, wonderful, revealing, useful, and so on. Sometimes, it can be downright bewildering and unnerving. Here you are walking down the street minding your own business and, all of a sudden, you see an angel and he begins to talk to you! That is not a normal day at the park. Ask Daniel, Ezekiel, the apostle John, and many others. Ask the three apostles that went up with Jesus to the mount of transfiguration when He transfigured before them. God even spoke to Jesus out of heaven, and they all heard it! It was unsettling to say the least. The discerning of spirits can also be hearing into the realm of spirits, and there is even more to it than what we will discuss in this study.

If all you ever “see” are demons, then you are not operating under the manifestation of this gift of the Holy Spirit. The other side is that if all you ever “see” are angels, you are off into some phony weirdness and not any spiritual manifestation. Let us get it straight in our thinking. If every day or a few times a week you get a vision of Jesus or angels, you are deceived. Something is way off. Read the New Testament and you will understand that these kind of supernatural visitations by heavenly beings are not everyday occurrences. Jesus, Mary, Zacharias, Paul, Peter, James, or John did not have them every day, and neither will you. The truth is that visitations by heavenly beings are not common, *period*. If you are favored with a visitation by an angelic being or the Lord Himself, consider yourself blessed! Personally, I believe we will see and hear about more visitations like these the closer we get to the catching away of the church. We have heard many reports already of the Lord Himself visiting people of false religions, like the Muslims, Hindu, etc.

Here is another truth and a warning. Do not ever ask for or try to get visions or dreams. These may occur at the behest of the Spirit, as He wills, but you cannot pray and believe God for them. That is outright dangerous. True, young men will have visions, and old men will dream dreams under the power of the Holy Spirit, but you have no Scriptural basis to stand on as to when nor how many you will have during the span of your life. If you have to conjure something up by sheer volition, it is not the Holy Spirit's gifts in operation. It is as He wills that these special manifestation gifts occur, and never as you want them.

Personally, I have had some very powerful visions, and some clear Holy Spirit inspired dreams, but I have never asked for them. They came by the Spirit, according to the will of God for my life and ministry, and not by my will.

In 1982, while teaching a class at our Bible school in Puerto Rico, about 8 P.M., on Calle Las Palmas behind the U. S. Post Office at “*parada 18*,” in the schoolroom next to our offices and bookstore, I had a special visitation from the Lord. If I could go back into that building today, I can tell

you exactly where it happened. Manifestations like these mark you for life. Just writing about it causes me to see it clearly on the inside once again.

Suddenly, the visible glory of God as a bright, shiny, and hazy fog came into the room without any warning from the rear of the building through the closed window. I stopped teaching immediately and began praying in tongues. I was in “shock and awe.” That is an understatement. That was a first for me. I had read about the glory of God in Scripture, and had heard and read the testimonies of many that have witnessed it, but I had never seen a physical manifestation of His glory until that day. The visible (to me) bright fog came in and headed in my direction. When it reached me, it enveloped me and I was suddenly in the spirit. I remember falling to the floor, and that is the last thing in the natural I remember. I lost all consciousness of time and space, but I perceived that I was no longer on the earth as far as I was concerned. A very large window appeared there before me wherever I was in God's presence. The Lord showed me through it some things concerning ministry that I will not get into now. I was shocked by what He showed me, and began to scream and holler as loud as I could, “I don't want it! I don't want it! Give it to someone else! No! No! No! I don't want it!”

I know that sounds similar to stories you may have heard or read concerning other ministers. A few years before this visitation of the Lord in my life, I read the book of one man of God that Jesus appeared to numerous times. I remember thinking then, “Lord, you gave this prophet many supernatural visitations, and I have not had any visions at all.”

Right at the moment when I was in the middle of this supernatural visitation, I was not so sure I was enjoying it! It was awesome, remarkable, surprising, and a “wow” experience, but it was not any fun! Let me tell you why.

The Lord spoke in a voice that shook and rattled me to the core after my tirade. He said, “YOU WILL DO WHAT I TELL YOU TO DO!” With that, I bowed before Him even more than I already had, and said, “Yes Lord! I'll do whatever you tell me to do!” I am sorry to say that I didn't do what He ordered me to do and it cost me dearly, but that is another story for another book. Thank God for restoration, and the fact that He still has a good plan for my life!

After this experience, I have not again heard His voice in the same way. His glorious voice is difficult to explain in the natural. The majesty of it is beyond my ability to describe it.²⁹⁸ David heard the voice of the Lord, and it was not easy to put words to it. Moses heard it and said it was like thunder, lightning, the blasting of a trumpet, and more. I can humbly add to that a mighty river, a raging thunderstorm, hurricane force winds, the roar of large ocean waves crashing on the shoreline one after another, and a flood of sound like rushing water. Now think of all that rolled up into one voice, and that only begins to describe His voice! I know that may sound exaggerated, but my description is inadequate. Language has no words to describe His voice. They all fall short.

²⁹⁸ Read Psalms 29 to get an idea about it.

After He spoke and I spoke back to Him trembling like a leaf in a tornado, I began to be aware in increments of my surroundings. All twenty or so bible school students were on the floor or kneeling by their desks, and the presence of God had overwhelmed most of them. Though none saw the shiny fog but me, they all perceived the mighty presence of the Holy Spirit. All of them were praying in other tongues as hard and fast as they could.

Then it hit me. I had been yelling like a mad man in the vision. What were the students going to think of me? Later, I found out that none of them heard me yelling. All they heard me do was pray in tongues! This was the first surprising thing I learned after that mighty visitation.

The second thing that was extraordinary was what happened to time itself. I thought that maybe 10 minutes had gone by in the vision. About an hour and twenty minutes had passed! Everybody was amazed that so much time had passed. The students that were present that day also thought it was a much shorter span of time. That was remarkable to me.

The third thing that happened was the fact that I could not speak in English or Spanish when I got back to being aware of my surroundings! For hours, every time I opened my mouth to speak, all that would come out was tongues. I tried very hard to speak in a known language, but it would come out very garbled and I could only continue speaking in tongues. I finally gave up trying to talk in a known language. This heavy presence of God and unusual manifestation stayed on me for hours, until well after midnight. I began to get concerned, and finally I was somewhat afraid that I was not going to be able to come back to myself again! So you see that it is not all “peaches and cream” when the supernatural happens and it affects your body. Finally, hours later, I was able to speak again in my known languages. It was a relief!

In early 2008, came the first time in my life where I had a night vision that Jesus audibly spoke to me, and I caught a glimpse of Him! I have heard Him speak to me in my spirit, sometimes very clearly and forcibly, but never had I seen Him as in this vision. Again, it had to do with direction for ministry.

I am only reporting what happened in the context of our study on the gifts of the Spirit. I believe that both times there was a manifestation of a word of wisdom and discerning of spirits. This was a special discerning by the Holy Spirit, a seeing into the realm of spirits, where my eyesight was temporarily supercharged by the Holy Spirit.

In 2009, my wife and I visited the church of a well-known man of God with a very powerful ministry. We sat about three or four rows from the front. We went there just to participate in the service and enjoy the ministry of the Word and the Holy Spirit. I never met this man of God before though I sat under his ministry once at another location. I was rejoicing in the Lord at the opportunity, when suddenly, this man of God was next to our chairs and wanted to meet my wife and me. We shook hands and told the brother who we were and from where we had come. He was very gracious, kind, and welcomed us to this powerful church he pastors.

I noticed something interesting about this pastor. Before the visit, I saw a DVD of this pastor preaching at a camp meeting in the 90’s. The thought ran across my mind, “He hasn’t changed much.”

He was sporting a dark mustache and dark hair. I thought maybe he colored his hair, and got a facelift. His skin looked tight and youthful. You do know that some preachers get facelifts? I am not knocking it.

I let the thought of what he looked like leave my mind and forgot about it. About twenty minutes later, he walked up to the pulpit and I almost fell out of my chair. The brother looked 20 years older and had gray hairs all over his head! I just looked amazed at him. What had I just experienced?

I asked the Lord about this. Wouldn't you do the same thing? This was the first time this ever happened to me. The Lord immediately responded and said that it was the manifestation of the discerning of spirits. Yet, it was as natural as looking at somebody. There was no glory cloud, no unusual anointing, goose bumps, and no euphoria of any kind. It happened with no preparation and no intention on my part. I felt absolutely nothing and yet it was as supernatural as anything I have ever witnessed! What did I see? The Lord said that I was seeing the inner man that is renewed day by day! That is why he looked so much younger to me at the moment. (2 Corinthians 4:16) I mentioned this incident to my wife and she just looked at me. She had no earthly idea what I was talking about because she did not see what I saw. After the service, I told her what happened. It is part of the Lord training me in discerning of spirits.

December 26, 2011, the glory of the Lord came into my room as a fog. I was lying in bed. The fog was thick so the cloud covered the ceiling fan and everything in the room. I could not see anything else in the room. Suddenly, the Lord spoke and said, *"At times, the glory of God will come like this and you will be in the spirit. You will see and know things by the discerning of spirits, and you will minister to the people."* This is more training!

Within the last few years, my wife, mother, and I went to hear a woman teach the Word. This sister is a well-known teacher. When she came out on the stage to minister, she had on what looked like armor to me. I know some ministers like to use props for some of their messages. I thought she was wearing some props. The armor looked like it was made of acrylic or something like it and the auditorium lights would reflect off it. It made the armor dance with color and light. It almost looked alive. It was quite beautiful. I thought her ministry had gone to a lot of expense to get these props because they did not look cheap! I got my mother and wife's attention and asked them what they thought of the armor. Again, they just looked at me because they could not see what I was seeing. The Lord spoke up in me and said I was seeing the sister in the spirit wearing the armor of God and carrying the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God! (Ephesians 6:10-17)

For many years since that initial manifestation of the glory of God in 1982, I have seen the glory of God come in as a fog or a cloud into some services. I have seen it on people as they ministered. I have seen light coming out of the faces of those walking in the anointing. Sometimes it was thick on those walking in a great degree of the anointing. On others, it was a lighter fog, like a haze of light. Some had this on half or a quarter of their face. The Lord got my attention and later taught me what He was showing me. Again, the Lord has been training me in this over the years.

In 2002, I went to a meeting of a prophet of the Lord in Atlanta, Georgia. There were a few thousand people at that meeting. In the brother's message, he began to preach about Peter walking on the water. I was in the center section, about five rows from the platform. He came right over to where I was, leaned over a couple of people to get in my face. His eyes had the fire of the Spirit and his face was shining with great strength. He said in what sounded to me like a loud thunderous roar, "You have to step out the boat to walk on the water! Are you listening to me?" I answered emphatically, "Yes sir!" Literally, he was yelling in my face. I had been to dozens of his meetings over the years and never heard him talk in that tone of voice to anybody that I can remember. It was an answer to me. I knew exactly what the Lord was telling me through this man of God. I purchased all the videotapes of that meeting. I called my wife and someone else over to the TV to see the footage of what happened. I told them the story of how this man of God had come up to me, got in my face, and yelled at me those words. They were eager to see it. Sure enough, we saw in the recording that he came to where I was and leaned over to speak right into my face. The great difference was that he spoke normally and not in a loud voice! The Lord was teaching me some more. This time it had to do with hearing in the spirit through discerning of spirits.

There was one occasion when God spoke from heaven concerning Jesus, but some thought an angel spoke to him, and other thought it thundered. (John 12:28, 29) This was a case of hearing in the realm of the spirit. The same thing happened when the Lord Jesus was baptized in the Jordan. A voice came from heaven (the supernatural realm of God) saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." (Matthew 3:17) At his birth, the shepherds saw an angelic choir and heard them singing! God granted discerning of spirits to all that saw and heard in these cases. (Luke 2:8-14)

I rarely discuss these things publicly. They are pretty heavy and unconventional, but they are real and true events. These manifestations of the Spirit do not make me in any way super spiritual or better than anybody else. I can take no credit at all for them. I was not praying for them, asking for them, believing for them, nor was I even looking for them. I did ask the Lord in 1980 why I had no manifestations of the Spirit like one particular prophet I studied after, but I was not praying for them. I knew they were scriptural, and I believed the Lord would use me in them, but I did not specifically believe for discerning of spirits in any of these ways I have shared with you.

Here's a great example of this gift in operation in an entirely different setting.

And he sent horses and chariots there, and a heavy army... And the servant of the man of God... went out. And... An army was surrounding the city, and horses and chariots. And his young man said to him, "Alas, my lord! What shall we do?" And he said... "Those with us are more than those with them." And Elisha prayed... "Open his eyes so that he may see..." and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 2 Kings 6:13-17

Elisha prayed for the opening of the eyes. We know his servant had good eyesight from his own report of the siege around the city. What was he praying for? He was praying for this gift of the Holy

Spirit to manifest in his servant. He was asking God supercharge the man's physical eyes to see into the realm of spirits. The army had come to carry Elisha away and kill him if they could. God had His own army there in the supernatural realm, but the servant could not see them. As far as the story reveals to us, it seems that not even Elisha could see the army of God. He may have had a word of knowledge about the army of God, but there is no Scriptural evidence to suggest that he saw them with his own eyes.

Many lessons could be learned from all this concerning God's angelic protection, faith, trust in God, and so on. What I want you to see here is that God opened the servant's eyes to the realm of spirits, and he saw God's vast armies surrounding the prophet. That is one part of this manifestation gift. There is "more to it than meets the eye," as we have seen. Though you can't see it, the supernatural realm of spirit beings is real. There was certainly more than meets the eye around Elisha.

Here's a note for your study. The discerning of spirits can only see into the realm of spirits such as human spirits of living people. Never are they departed spirits of the dead. They are of people still in the flesh on this earth. You and I both know that speaking to dead departed ones by conjuring them up (as in a séance) is Satan's deception by having demon spirits impersonate the people that died.

I remember one séance loving lady that told me how she had talked to some departed loved one. She was surprised when the "spirit" told her about some intimate details concerning her life that she had never revealed publicly. She didn't understand that evil spirits have been around for ages. Demons that are familiar with the life of a departed individual or the life of the participant can regurgitate the information. It is all deception and not used to minister freedom or deliverance to anybody. Their only purpose is to control, enslave, and deceive. It is used to get people involved in the occult. We know this from many Scriptures. Consulting and conjuring the dead is an abomination to God.²⁹⁹

What about spiritual visions of heaven where the Lord shows you people that have gone to heaven? Have you read and heard about people that have gone to heaven in a vision and spoke to Paul, Peter, or some other man or woman of God? What about those that saw family members in heaven and had a conversation with them? Is that the same as conjuring or consulting with the dead? Unfortunately, some have that idea and teach it firmly because they do not believe spiritual visions are for today. Notice some

²⁹⁹ Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, Deuteronomy 18:11, 2 Kings 21:6, Isaiah 8:19- I know that there may seem to be a contradiction in the story of Saul and the witch or sorcerer of Endor. (1 Samuel 28) Did God intervene in this abominable practice? Was Saul confronted by a prophetic word from the prophet Samuel? Truthfully, I have wondered about this story. I believe it was a demon impersonating Samuel and regurgitating what God had already said through him while he was still alive. He certainly didn't get any new revelation except that the Philistines were going to defeat Israel. Really, anybody could have told him that. He should have already known that was what was going to happen. His rebellion to God was judged and he was turned over to his enemies. God told Moses what would happen to the disobedient under the curse in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. National disaster and defeat in war was under that curse enunciated upon the rebellious. It should not have been a surprise to Saul. The bottom line is that Saul was judged for going to the woman with the familiar spirit because it was an abomination before God. (1 Chronicles 10:13, 14) That is what we can learn from the story. Consorting the dead was (and is) an abominable practice and God despises it.

facts here that should help you see the difference. Firstly, NONE of the people I have heard relating about visiting heaven were in a séance conjuring up the dead! Secondly, they were not even asking for the vision, nor were they praying for it specifically. They may have been praying but not asking for a specific vision. Thirdly, if God wants to give you a vision of heaven and you meet people you knew either in life or read about in the Bible, that is His prerogative. He can do that and does not need our permission to do it! Fourthly, we have it on the authority of God's Word in the New Testament that seeing prophets that passed into heaven is not consorting the dead. Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus and spoke to Him regarding His departure from this world (Luke 9:28-33). Even the three disciples with Jesus saw Moses and Elijah.

Discerning of spirits goes beyond the supernatural discernment that every believer can receive for their own lives by the power of the Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We need, again, to differentiate between the spiritual powers of discerning that every believer can have and develop as a part of growing up in the Lord, and when the Holy Spirit graces you with a manifestation of this gift.

For indeed because of the time you are due to be teachers, yet you need to have someone to teach you again the rudiments of the beginning of the Words of God, and you came to be having need of milk, and not of solid food; for everyone partaking of milk is without experience in the Word of Righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for those full-grown, having exercised the faculties through habit, for *distinction* of both good and bad.
Hebrews 5:12-14

The same Greek word "*diakrisis*" is used for "discerning" in 1 Corinthians 12:10, and for "distinction" in the verse above. They are used in two very different contexts.

The Word of God will cause us to grow up spiritually, just like natural milk and solid food will cause a child to grow up. Paul admonishes them to move up from the babyhood stage into the stage where they can handle the solid food of the Word. We could really stay here for a while, and tell you of baby Christians that spit up half of what you give them because their tradition has a strangle hold on their spiritual throats! Did you know that most of what we are teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit is a class that we can call "Holy Spirit 101?" This is not real deep teaching, though it does contain within it some elements that will help mature Christians.

You can grow up through the Word of righteousness to such a degree that, as you get into the habit of hearing, applying, and doing the word, even your senses can be trained to discern or make a distinction between good and evil.³⁰⁰ It is available to all believers. Every Christian should be moving into this with every passing day in ever-increasing degrees.

³⁰⁰ 1 Peter 1:23-25, 2:1, 2,

To the Word of God in the life of the believer must be added the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the revealer of truth, as the one that leads and guides us into all truth. Actually, without the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit into the supernatural Word of God, spiritual maturity is impossible.

But when that One comes, the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you into all Truth... and He will announce the coming things to you... He will receive from mine and will announce to you...
John 16:13-15

Whatever the Holy Spirit hears in the Throne Room is what He will relay to us. The Holy Spirit will lead and guide us into ALL truth. Jesus called God's eternal Word THE truth!

Your word is truth... John 17:17

The Word is not “a” truth, but THE truth, as much as Jesus is THE truth, and THE truth is in Him as the living Word.³⁰¹ Someone recently said to me that the truth is not always the best thing. Are they joking? If the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, Jesus is the truth and truth is in Him, the Word of God is the truth, and if we continue in the Word we will know the truth and it will make us free, then what are they saying?³⁰² Are saying that somehow a half-truth or a partial truth is best? It is not ever best. There is the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.³⁰³ You function either under one or the other. There is NO middle ground and there are no grey areas with God. There is no compromise of the truth in God.

Many will balk at this, but why do parents lie to their children about Santa Claus, the Easter bunny, and the tooth fairy? Many believe that it is healthy to lie to your children about these fantasies. Some lie to them about many other things. If you teach them lies now, they will believe lies later. Deception will have an easy access to them. You teach them to believe in a fantasy with no basis in truth now, and they will end up believing that God is also a fantasy as is Santa Claus. One person told me that you have to teach them to believe in something. My response was that you have an entire book called the Bible to teach them to believe in something that is TRUTH. Why not teach them from day one about the reality of Jesus and God the Father?

In order to get spiritual understanding of the Word it will take the ministry of the Holy Spirit to unveil the truths of God to your spirit. The Word of God is spirit, you are first a spirit being, and the Holy Spirit will escort you into the spiritual truths of the spiritual Word! The Bible you hold in your hand is a copy of spiritual words that are discerned spiritually only by the help of the Holy Spirit.

³⁰¹ John 14:6, Ephesians 4:21, John 1:14

³⁰² John 8:31, 32

³⁰³ 1 John 4:1-4

Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard... But God revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God... no one has known the things of God except the Spirit of God. But we have... received... the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God... but in Words taught of the Holy Spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13

You can't hear it, see it, or know it without the Holy Spirit breathing on it!³⁰⁴ Since the Word is spiritual, it takes the Spirit of God to teach you by comparing spiritual things with spiritual things for you.

Brain, intellectual, or head knowledge is never enough. If all you have from the Bible is memorization and theological commentary knowledge of the dead, you are one sorry Christian. That is the reason you can have such intelligent scholars that are spiritually blind! A lot of brainpower with no spiritual power, and no revelation! They depend on head knowledge instead of spiritual revelation knowledge from the Holy Spirit! They judge everything by head knowledge and do not allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them into interpretation and understanding.

It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh does not profit a thing! The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life. John 6:63

Spiritual words need spiritual revelation from the Holy Spirit, or we can miss it by a thousand miles! My God, we have a lot of missing it by light years in churches with all their natural interpretations and theological “hogwash” commentaries. I refuse to read dead commentaries from traditional folks that explain away the supernatural, and think the Bible is just an ethical work written by men! NO! The men that wrote the Bible wrote as the Holy Spirit moved upon them.³⁰⁵ There is NO naturally weak and useless revelation here, but it will take the infusing power of the Holy Spirit to bring the Word to life in you, and make it life and power to you.

You may think that we have left our subject. We are saying all these things to strike a clear difference between the two, discerning of spirits as a special manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and the discerning or distinguishing developed through the Word and the Spirit in our daily Christian walk.

The Word is truth and the Holy Spirit is the guide of every believer into ALL truth. It takes the anointing or the breathing of the Spirit on the Word of God to bring forth in you a clear distinction between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.³⁰⁶ It takes sitting yourself down under the anointed ministry of those in the Word that are also moving by the power of the Holy Spirit, and dedication to

³⁰⁴ 2 Timothy 3:15-17

³⁰⁵ 2 Peter 1:19-21

³⁰⁶ 1 John 2:20, 27, 4:1-6

study and prayer to stay hooked up to truth and to reject error. Unfortunately, many churches do not yet have that and are struggling terribly with the separation of light and darkness because they have a mixture of faith and tradition, or even straight up tradition that robs them of the realities of the Word and our redemption in Christ.³⁰⁷ Instead let us be the ones that mix undiluted faith with the word so it can profit us!³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Mark 7:13, Hosea 4:6

³⁰⁸ Hebrews 4:2

Special faith

We now begin to study the power gifts of the Holy Spirit. The first one is this special faith of God manifested by the Holy Spirit's operation.

To another faith, in the same Spirit... 1 Corinthians 12:10

In the same Spirit of special manifestations as the others we have studied, this special kind of manifestation of faith is mentioned. In the same way that we have seen a clear difference between these special manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and their spiritual counterparts available to every believer, this gift is no different. This is not referring to the faith that is to grow and develop in the life of all believers through the Word. This is not talking about the measure of faith in all believers when they are born again.³⁰⁹ It took that faith to even receive Jesus Christ when you surrendered your life to Him and made Him Lord over it. That faith was the faith you received when you initially heard the Word concerning Jesus, you believed it, received it, acted on it, and the Holy Spirit moved on it and caused the creation of the New Birth in your spirit.³¹⁰

Just like we saw that a word of knowledge and a word of wisdom are a piece of God's supernatural wisdom and knowledge used for ministry purposes, and discerning of spirits is seeing things even for a short time from God's perspective, so this is God's personal faith going into action in a certain situation. It is perfect, pure, undiluted, powerful, unstoppable, unchangeable faith. It is God's personal faith that cannot be denied.

The general faith we read about in the New Testament is NOT a manifestation of this kind of special faith as used in the context of spiritual gifts. This is a special faith that goes into operation in conjunction with the manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit.

I have experienced this special faith in operation together with many of the special manifestations of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit wills a special manifestation, and suddenly you are filled with an unshakable confidence that the miracle, the sign, the wonder will be carried out. This is especially true in the manifestation gifts of power such as gifts of healings and working of miracles. Usually, when gifts of healings go into operation this special faith works together with them.

One recent example involved a woman on her deathbed at the hospital. She was totally unresponsive, so it was not her faith that received healing. I was determined to pray by my faith in the Covenant, but I knew in my spirit that in her case it was not going to be enough. As I approached the bed, suddenly, the gifts of healing came on me, all hesitancy left, a rush of God's power flowed out of

³⁰⁹ Romans 12:3, Ephesians 2:8

³¹⁰ Rom. 10:17, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 1:23, 2 Cor. 5:17

my hands when I laid them on her head, and the power of God drove the sickness out of her body! She instantly responded, and was released soon from the hospital with no trace of the disease that was killing her. She was raised up by the power of the Holy Spirit manifesting gifts of healings and the special faith that accompanied the gift. Praise God for His wonderful spiritual gifts!

If you have ever been involved in the working of a miracle, when the manifestation of this gift of special faith comes for the sign or wonder, all doubt, uncertainty, and hesitation goes out the door. This is why I am completely convinced that with many operations of the Spirit, especially in the power gifts, this special faith accompanies them.

Gifts of healings

To another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit... 1 Corinthians 12:10

This is the next power gift of the Spirit. It is not the “gift of healing.” That is a misnomer. No one has a gift of healing. Each healing ministered to others under this operation of the Spirit is a manifestation of a variety of gifts. I am going to venture to say that they are gifts of healings, in the plural, because of the following reasons:

1. There are many different kinds of sicknesses and diseases.
2. They are “gifts of healings” because they can operate in conjunction with other gifts, such as a word of knowledge, gift of faith, etc.
3. There are innumerable methods for their delivery and manifestation.

It is not every day that you put mud on a blind man's eyes as Jesus did. He spit on another man! These were operations of the gifts of healings. They were delivered in odd manners at times that made no earthly sense. Many times, the gifts of healings were administered in the ministry of Jesus through the laying on of hands.

This proves to me that all believers can have the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, because we are all commanded to lay hands on the sick and they will recover. (Mark 16:18) Even though this is true, it will manifest by different degrees, depending on the call, the anointing in manifestation, the amount of yielding to the Spirit by the individual, the honor given to the ministry gift, the faith and expectancy of the people, and other factors. A whole study needs to be done in this area. May the Lord grant us the opportunity to teach on these points in greater depth.

What about Naaman's healing from leprosy under Elisha's ministry? Dipping seven times in a river has never healed anyone. That is not what did it. Naaman got healed through his obedience to the word spoken by a man of God that was operating under gifts of healings. I heard one preacher say that someone today would be trying to sell the “holy” water from the Jordan, and some have actually done that! Others would be trying to incorporate the “Seven-Dipping Healing Waters of the Jordan Evangelistic Outreach”! Why? They have a general misunderstanding that the delivery of the gift is by the Holy Spirit's operation, and the fact that it may never be done in the same way again. God does not marry a method! There is no other record in the entire Bible of healing being ministered to a leper that particular way again.

Mostly, when people were receiving healing in the Bible through someone else, you are seeing gifts of healing in operation. The exceptions are those that by the exercise of their own faith drew on the anointing to heal on Jesus to receive their own healing. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and

power to bring deliverance and healing.³¹¹ Some laid hold of God's power flowing through Jesus by using their own faith. Remember the woman that had an issue of blood?

For she said, “If I may but touch only His clothes, I will be cured.” Instantly the fountain of her blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. Knowing instantly within Himself that power had gone out of Him, Jesus turned Himself around in the press and said, “Who touched my clothes”? ...He looked around to see her who had done this thing but the woman... fell down before Him and told Him all the truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be whole from your plague.” Mark 5:25-34.

Jesus had healing power on Him (Acts 10:38), but the faith of this woman drew it out of Him and healed her. This was not gifts of healings, but the manifestation of God's power through the faith of this woman making the right connection. It was not then faith of Jesus that healed her. Jesus said it was HER faith that did it. A special manifestation of the Holy Spirit did not make her well. Her faith connected to the healing power of God. She got healed through her own faith!

The woman connected her faith to God's healing power. Jesus didn't even know who touched Him until the woman came before Him and told all the truth. Jesus did not give His permission for the healing. He was never consulted on the matter. The woman just acted in faith and got it! This is the lesson learned in this story. Keep this revelation in your thinking. Gifts of healings used to minister to others the healing power of God is not the same as the healing power of God available to all believers by their exercise of faith in God's Covenant of healing (Matthew 8:17, Isaiah 53: 4, 5). The Holy Spirit is the same One that manifests the healing, but the usage is different. One is for ministry to others through the believer, and one is for your own personal healing. Why is it so important to make this distinction? People confuse the issue because of what it says in 1 Corinthians 12:11 that the Spirit distributes these manifestations as He wills.

So, many think that if they don't get healed that it may not be the will of God for them to get healed. That is foolishness! Jesus shed His Blood so we would receive healing. He suffered our pains and sicknesses, and by His stripes we are healed.³¹² Healing is a provision of the Covenant, and the right of every believer in Christ.

³¹¹ Luke 4:18, Acts 10:38

³¹² Isaiah 53:4, 5, Matthew 8:17, 1 Peter 2:24

Working of miracles

And to another workings of miracles... but all these works the one and the same Spirit... 1
Corinthians 12:10, 11

Have you ever had the miraculous power of God do something in your personal life that totally defied all natural logic? Something happened, and you realized that a miracle was performed that changed everything? How about a miraculous change in the weather, or a miracle provision that was impossible in the natural?

Some of you may be thinking, "I have never had a miracle happen in my life." How about the time that an accident was avoided right before your eyes, and you had no natural explanation for it? That was a miraculous provision of God's power for you. This is available for every believer. When you take a stand on God's Word, and do not back off or back down from it, God's power will come on the scene to change things, even if it takes a miracle!

Here are some good examples for your study.

Abraham and Sarah were old and in their 90's. That was long past the age of normal human ability to have kids. God promised them a son, but Sarah had never even had a child before. The natural chance of them having a child was long gone for them. Yet, God did something miraculous in their bodies and rejuvenated them. Sarah had a baby in her 90's! Do you want to know HOW much of a change took place in their bodies? Let me spell it out for you.

And Abraham pulled up stakes from there... and stayed in Gerar. And Abraham said with regards to his wife Sarah, "She is my sister". And Abimelech the king of Gerar sent and took Sarah, but God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Look, you are about to die because of the woman you have taken, she being married to a husband". Genesis 20:1-3

Two chapters before this, the divine visitors that came to Abraham said that Sarah and he were to have a son. Sarah laughed about it thinking it was a far out idea because both her and Abraham were both in the 90's!³¹³ Two really old folks having a baby is a funny idea. Are you kidding me? Abraham refused to back off that promise and something miraculous happened in both their bodies. As they say, "It takes two to Tango!" Use your imagination here and don't make me have to get too graphic with this. We don't need to get an "R" rating here.

You don't think this miracle only happened to Sarah do you? The miraculous happened in both their bodies and they were rejuvenated. Sarah was not the recipient of a virgin birth here. That one was

³¹³ Gen. 18:11, 12

reserved for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Abraham and Sarah both had a part to play in this birth! They had to have intercourse for a conception to take place! Uh-huh! At 90 and (over) 99! Romans 4 says that Abraham was about 100! Is that plain enough?

What are we telling you? Well, besides the fact they did have a son in their old age, and called him Isaac (laughter), look at the above verses we just quoted from Genesis 20. A king thought Sarah was Abraham's sister and sent to take her as his wife. Wait a cotton-picking minute here! Why would a king want to take a woman to be his wife that was 90 years old when he could have any “young thing” he wanted in the kingdom? No, he chose “grandma!” Why in the world would he do that? He could have been blind but I don’t believe that and the text makes no mention of it. Something else was going on here. Rejuvenation had been performed by God's miraculous power and she looked good to him! This king obviously thought she was one hot mama! The story goes on to tell how God intervened and shut that down because Sarah was actually Abraham's wife. God put a stop to the hormones on the king before he could even touch Sarah.

Let me tell you how powerful this rejuvenation miracle was on Abraham's body. Sarah lived on to be 127 years of age.³¹⁴ Abraham was at least 137 years of age when Sarah died. Do you think the old man went into retirement? No! He married Keturah a few years after Sarah’s passing.³¹⁵ What? You heard me. He married a much younger woman. Why do I say that she was much younger than Abraham? No miracle was required for Keturah's body. She gave birth to five children! This woman was of a natural child bearing age. She was under fifty, and probably well under 40! This ‘old man’ was so rejuvenated by God, that even at around 145 years of age, he could still get his younger wife pregnant FIVE times without any drugs to enhance their sex life!³¹⁶ That is doing pretty good! There is hope for you older folks!

I am not saying to shock everybody by having a baby in your old age, but at least there are available rejuvenation forces in God's miraculous power. We don't have to live worn out and decrepit lives in our old age!³¹⁷ We are heirs of the same blessing that was on Abraham, and we should be trusting God for our health and strength even in old age.³¹⁸ That is another subject, but it should not be overlooked. We do not have to go the world’s way of Alzheimer’s, dementia, blindness, deafness, and crippling arthritis. We can live out the full number of our days in health and strength just as Moses did.³¹⁹

Though we are talking about the working of miracles as a spiritual gift to minister to others by the direction of the Holy Spirit, we wanted to, again, instruct you on the side of faith and the availability of

³¹⁴ Gen. 23:1

³¹⁵ Gen. 25:1

³¹⁶ Gen. 25:1-8

³¹⁷ Psalms 103:2-5

³¹⁸ Galatians 3:7, 9, 14, 29

³¹⁹ Deuteronomy 34:7

God's miracle power for your own personal life. Your faith can activate a miracle in your life, whether in your body or in your finances. There is miraculous power available for the believer's own life. When we take a stand on the Word, God's power will come eventually into manifestation, if we do not back down from our place of faith. God will do whatever it takes to fulfill His Word in the life of a faithful believer, even if it takes a miracle. That is our point in all this.

Now let's talk about the other side of the miraculous, when God anoints you to work a miracle for the benefit, primarily, of other people. There are many examples of the working of miracles in the Gospels through the ministry of Jesus. You can also study the many miracle stories in the Older Covenant.

Let us state this fact: *There is no limitation to a miracle, in either size or scope.* All things are possible with God. He is unlimited in His power and ability. Here is another fact: *Nothing is too hard for Him.*

Two miraculous events that come immediately to mind are the splitting of the Red Sea so the children of Israel could walk across as on dry ground, and the sun being stopped in its track under Joshua's ministry.³²⁰ Both were extraordinary manifestation of the working of miracles.

If you think that the splitting of the Red Sea was the greater one then that would be incorrect. The greater of the two is by far the commanding the sun and moon to stay in their place for 24 hours. Do you realize that miracle meant that God literally had to stop the earth and our moon from moving? Really, it took the stopping of the entire motion of our solar system, and it was done in such a way that humankind was not crushed or flung off the planet in the process. This was a miracle beyond the scope of all human comprehension. This is why so many dead theologians have attempted to relegate the miracle stories of the Bible to legend or "good story telling," and that the miracle stories were all an attempt to drive home some moral or ethical point. For the spiritually dead, if these stories are true then that makes the Bible too preposterous for the humanistic or Godless mind.

The natural man thinks that the things of God are foolishness and wishful thinking, especially in the realm of miraculous occurrences. (1 Corinthians 2:14) Call us foolish if you want, but we actually believe that the Bible was reporting the truth about miracles and our miracle working God. We know that you believe God's Word yourself or you would not even bother to read all this now.

For with God nothing shall be impossible. Luke 1:37

Yes and amen!

Notice that this spiritual manifestation of God's power is named the "workings" of miracles. The "workings of miracles" means that there is a working involved in each miracle. Divine and human interaction to perform the miracle is involved. I trust the following will clear this up.

³²⁰ Exodus 14, Joshua 10:12, 13

Notice how each time a miracle was performed, there was a part played by the one through whom the miracle was manifested. In other words, the miracle did not just happen without human involvement. Look up the following stories.

Jesus used a boy's lunch to feed the multitude of 5 thousand. (Matthew 14)

Jesus commanded the water pots to be filled with water, and for the servants to pour out the water turned into wine at the marriage feast of Cana. (John 2)

Peter and his partners cast in a net into the sea for a miracle catch. (Luke 5)

Peter cast in a hook, caught a fish, opened its mouth, and found a coin in its mouth to pay the taxes for Jesus and for him. (Matthew 17)

The synagogue ruler's daughter was raised from the dead after Jesus spoke the command and lifted her up by the hand. (Mark 5)

Elijah commanded the rain to stop and it did for three years. Then he commanded it to rain and it did. (1 Kings 17 and 18)

Elisha threw in a branch into the pond, and the lost axe head floated to the surface and it was recovered. (2 Kings)

Elisha threw in flour into a stew made from poisonous gourds and it was made safe for human consumption. (2 Kings)

There are many more! Find them and study them out.

Also look up the ones in the book of Acts. Here are a few:

Dorcas was raised from the dead by the word of Peter. (Acts 9:36-42)

Phillip was divinely transported for about 20 miles instantly! (Acts 8:39, 40)

Elymas was blinded by a miracle because he opposed the Word of God preached by Paul to a Proconsul. (Acts 13:8-12)

You may not think of that last one as a miracle but it was! It opened the heart of this Proconsul towards the message of the Gospel. Sometimes a miracle needs to be done to shut up the gainsayers and the opposition. They will respect God and His Word one-way or the other. That was the attitude of the apostles and people of God to them.

This Elymas the sorcerer story reminds us of Elijah's confrontation with the prophets of Baal. He challenged them to a contest by fire, and whatever "god" answered by fire would be the real God. They were dumb and blinded enough to accept the dare imposed by the prophet of God. Fire came out of heaven after Elijah's prayer and consumed the sacrifice before all of them. Their dead god failed to pass the test! By a miracle, they found out that day that the real God is Jehovah!

There was no pity patting around.

Of course, Paul didn't go around working this "making your enemy blind" miracle on everybody that opposed him. He probably wished he could have blinded a few folks on other occasions. He was smart enough in spiritual things to know that this was a special manifestation of God's miraculous power granted for that day in a particular situation. Saul (Paul) was filled with the power of God's Spirit at that

moment to manifest the miracle through him. (Acts 13:9) It was a manifestation of this gift of workings of miracles through him, as the Spirit willed it.

Prophecy

We now begin our study of the utterance gifts, which are those that say something. Remember, the revelation gifts reveal and show us something, the power gifts do or work something, and the utterance gifts say or declare something.

As we have seen, all the manifestations of the Spirit are a gifting that flows through believers to and for other people as the Spirit wills. These utterance gifts are the same in that respect. They have a personal level of operation in the life of every believer, and then they can function as the Spirit wills to manifest for others through you, often in a public setting. Let's discuss the differences.

And to another prophecy... but all these works the one and the same Spirit... 1 Corinthians 12:10, 11

The manifestation of prophecy and foretelling the future are not the same thing. Getting all this balled up into one manifestation is where many have erred. Some believe that all prophecy should contain some revelatory element in it to qualify as true prophecy. That is not what is taught in the inspired writings of Paul.

But he who prophesies speaks edification, exhortation, and comfort... but he who prophesies edifies the church. 1 Corinthians 14:3

Edification, exhortation, and comfort have no element of revealing the future in them. Pure prophetic utterance delivered to the Body (the Church in public assembly) is only for the purpose of bringing edification, exhortation, and comfort. Study the Greek words and note that a revelation of the future is simply not found in their definitions.

Why has this issue been so confused? Many don't understand that the prophecy in the Bible we often associate with the revealing of the future are prophetic utterances given through the office of the prophet. Prophets that are truly called and anointed by God will have other revelatory supernatural equipment in order to carry out their ministries. In addition to prophecy, a prophet will minister with manifestations of the Holy Spirit that may come wrapped in a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom, and/or discerning of spirits. The life of all the prophets of the Bible should be enough to amply prove the point. Revelation gifts flowed through them in conjunction with prophecy at times, and apart from prophecy at others.

There is a very dangerous error creeping into some sectors of the Body of Christ. Some have the gall to think that everybody in the Church can be a prophet. They say that the whole church is prophetic and they can all prophesy to one another. I can agree that there are prophetic elements in all Christians because all Christians have the Holy Spirit in them. The Lord desires to use any of us to prophesy for

edification, exhortation and comfort. We should desire to move into prophesying for the edification of the Body. That can only happen though as the Lord wills, as we have repeatedly pointed out. True prophetic utterance to edify the Body is not activated by the human will.³²¹

Never attempt to prophesy without the moving of the Spirit. We have no business prophesying from our heads. God never speaks through to your intellect. Prophecy comes from the Holy Spirit via your spirit. God is not a mind and He will not talk to your mind. He is a spirit being and His communication will come through your spirit. That is the realm and place where true prophecy comes from. If the prophecy is to have any anointing on it then it must come through the power of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, through the reborn human spirit, and spoken with the tongue under His guidance.

These “prophesying till midnight” churches are very different from Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 14, and his teaching that prophesying, tongues, and interpretation should be limited in any service to two or three utterances. “I thought that only referred to tongues in a service.” Well, that is what you get by not reading the full context.

According to Paul, tongues plus interpretation in a service equals a prophetic utterance. (1 Cor. 14:5) Paul is correcting the idea that everybody and anybody should just get up and prophesy and speak in tongues in a service. There must be decency and order. (14:33, 40) He is actually teaching that more than prophecy, and even more than tongues and interpretation of tongues, should go into a service. (1 Cor. 14:26)

What about the preaching and teaching of the Word? Some have left out the teaching and preaching of the Word in favor of these unscriptural “prophesy to everyone” meetings, and “singing until the cows come home” services! Please study the book of Acts, the epistles, and especially the ones to pastor Timothy³²² and notice that the emphasis was FIRST on the study, teaching, and preaching of the Word. Yes, I do know from the Word that it has to be a combination of the Word ministered by the power of the Spirit and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit that will meet the needs of people.³²³ True enough, but notice that the miraculous is to flow from the hearing of faith.³²⁴ Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God.³²⁵ Of course, it needs to be a real faith and not unbelief and tradition. That is criteria number one.

Not all Christians are prophets, and to believe that is to call Paul and the Lord that inspired him to write Ephesians liars. Only some, not all in the Body, are any of the ministry gifts outlined there.³²⁶

³²¹ 2 Peter 1:21

³²² 1 and 2 Timothy

³²³ 1 Corinthians 2:4-10, Hebrews 2:4

³²⁴ Galatians 3:5

³²⁵ Romans 10:17

³²⁶ Ephesians 4:11

Here is another important point in prophecy. “*Prophesying*” your own future through decree and confession based on the Word is not this prophetic gift. Sometimes inspiration will come by the Spirit in your own private life to declare or to prophesy. You become a “*prophet*” to yourself by your own words. That is not the gift of prophecy, nor is it standing in the office of the prophet.

Again, pure prophetic utterance is a gift that is brought forth in a public setting of some kind and is used to minister edification, exhortation, and comfort to the Body of Christ.

Whenever the Lord had used me in prophecy in a public setting, I have noticed a few things that I will mention here.

1. The Holy Spirit is the one that orchestrates when the utterance is to come, usually by providing a place for it during the service. The Holy Spirit does not expect you to interrupt the service and the man or woman of God while they are preaching and teaching. That is not decency and order. It is not even polite! It is not the Holy Spirit that brings interruptions when it is He Himself that is moving. The Holy Spirit does not manifest any gift by interrupting Himself. There will be an order and a progression to it, though it may not look that way in the natural. Sometimes the moving of the Spirit may look out of order to the uninitiated in the Spirit, but it isn't. Much more should be taught along these lines, but let this suffice for the wise at this time.

2. The anointing will perceptibly touch you, and possibly a stirring in you will occur to bring forth an utterance. Sometimes you may get the entire prophetic utterance all at once. That may happen on some occasions. Most of the time, this will not be the case. It usually comes as a word, a few words, or a phrase. Sometimes you only know the general theme. That is where faith kicks in. Don't be afraid and yield to the Spirit. He is bigger than our mistakes. Then comes the faith part of stepping out and speaking what the Lord gives you as you speak out what you already have in you. It can go for a minute or ten minutes.

3. Never become a “professional” prophesier! These have a word from the Lord every Sunday. That is not the Holy Ghost. They are not the pastors nor do they have the leadership of the church, and they should be told to sit down and be quiet.

Years ago, we had one come into our church. Every Sunday he would speak up and bring some word. I finally got a belly full of it and began to shut him down. People squirmed every time I would shut him up. I did it as kindly as I could at first. It was hard because the man was about 40 years my senior, but he was out of order and needed correction. God help us in all these areas.

Different kinds of tongues

And to another different kinds of tongues... but all these works the one and the same Spirit...

1 Corinthians 12:10, 11

We want to strike a difference here between the everyday use of tongues, and the manifestation of the gift of different kinds of tongues that is used to minister to the Body. We will first talk about your own private prayer language.

Light has often come up in my heart as I prayed in tongues over a particular situation. Praying in tongues is supernatural, though it comes forth through the natural organ of speech, your tongue. When we pray in tongues, we do not pray to people, but to God directly. Praying in tongues is a praying out of the mysteries, or as one translation says, the “*divine secrets.*” (1Corinthians 14:2) It is praying out of your spirit, by the anointing of the Holy Spirit within you, spiritual words that come out of the realm of God's Spirit.³²⁷ Then you can ask God for interpretation of tongues that you need for your understanding. Great light can come that way to you.

Notice these phrases in Ephesians 5:14-17:

- a) All things being exposed by the light are clearly revealed.
- b) For everything having been revealed is light.
- c) Christ will shine on you.
- d) Understanding what the will of the Lord is.

God is light, and the exposition of His Word brings light.³²⁸ The Holy Spirit will cause His Word to come alive for you, and He will lead you and guide you into all the Word, the truth of God.³²⁹ The Holy Spirit knows about the affairs of your life, what to do to avoid any pitfalls, and even traps the enemy may set out for you. His light comes out of you to bring light wherever you need it in order to dissipate any darkness.

But the one doing the truth comes to the Light, that his works may be revealed, that they exist, having been worked in God. John 3:21

Here is a great key to victory through the truth that will make you free from any hindrance in life. It is doing the truth that the Holy Spirit reveals to you, that is, the light that He gives you. Becoming a doer

³²⁷ 1 Cor. 14:13-15- See this in the Amplified Bible.

³²⁸ 1 John 1:5, Psalms 119:130

³²⁹ John 16:13, 17:17, 6:63

of the Word that He shows you on any given day is a power key to victory. Acting on His truth is acting on the Word, and it is doing the truth that drives out all darkness!

I started to tell you the powerful effect that praying in other tongues has in revealing the mysteries or divine secrets of God, and bringing forth the light of God in you and out of you.

Remember that it is the Holy Spirit energizing you Spirit as you pray in tongues. 1 Corinthians 14:4 says that we edify or build up ourselves as we speak and pray in tongues. The Greek word use for build up or *edify* is the word “*oikodomeo*.” It denotes “to build”, as in the example of a house or building. What does that say to us? You build a house in stages. A building begins by laying the foundation before the floors go up one on top of the other. When we pray in tongues over any situation, there is a “*building*” going up in the spirit. It comes up in you just like a building, literally comes up out of the ground in the process of time.

Have you ever seen a skyscraper go up? At first, nothing is visible to the outside world as they lay the foundation. In time, the beams begin to show over the perimeter fence, and soon one floor is built on top of the other quickly for all to see.

Such is praying in the Spirit over situations. At first, there may be no external evidence that anything is happening. But stick to it and watch how the revelation of the building comes forth. This is where the “Christ”³³⁰ in you, the anointing of the Anointed One Himself, rises up in you and reveals to you what you need to know to step over into victory! (1 John 2:20)

We saw how light and revelation is hooked up with the Spirit and the Word, and the powerful effect of praying in other tongues where light and revelation are concerned. “*Oikodomeo*” also connotes, “to promote growth in (God's) wisdom, affection, grace, virtue, holiness, blessedness.”³³¹ Speaking and praying in tongues promotes growth. It will move you into realms of the wisdom of God in the Spirit. Wisdom and light are intimately connected with revelation and exposition, and both are promoted into a process of growth inside you by the use of tongues in prayer. The Holy Spirit energizes your spirit to pray in tongues as you yield to Him, and you begin to speak out the tongues by faith.

But you, beloved, build yourselves up [founded] on your most holy faith make progress, rise like an edifice higher and higher], praying in the Holy Spirit... Jude 1:20 (The Amplified Bible)

As we pray in tongues or in the Spirit, we rise up higher and higher like a building! Look at these words; “make progress.” One of our prayer friends reminded us of this verse from this particular version. As we pray in tongues, we make progress. Glory to God! Does that sound good? It is great. No wonder the devil despises and abhors tongues.

³³⁰ The word is from the same Greek word that means anointing and anointed.

³³¹ We got these definitions from Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon.

Every time I pray in tongues, I am making progress. Say that aloud about ten times and let your own ears hear it. Let it get down on the inside of you. Connect your faith to it and accept it. Pray in tongues and make progress in Jesus' Name! Rise like an edifice higher and higher! There is no limit in the Spirit, so keep it going. Paul prayed in tongues more than all the Corinthians.³³² Take it up a notch and watch what happens!

To give you understanding that will bless you through and through, you must see the definition of the word *progress* that follows:

1. A moving or going forward; a proceeding onward.
2. A moving forward in growth; increase.
3. Advance in business of any kind.
4. Advance in knowledge; proficiency.
5. Removal; passage from place to place.
6. To proceed; to continue onward in course.
7. To advance; to make improvement.

There is so much spiritual food for study here that we recommend you meditate and think about all this. A consistent prayer life in tongues will move you forward, bring growth and increase, will cause you to advance, in business, God's knowledge, proficiency, and take you out of where you are into where you need to be! Praying in tongues will cause you to stay on course, but will also help you maintain the right course. You will advance and improve.

Again, praying in tongues is a big key to getting into higher and higher realms of God's wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of what is His will is for your life. Truthfully, you need to pray much in other tongues every day! Pray in your car, under your breath at your place of business, at your office, at your house, at the supermarket, at the gas station and everywhere. Things from God will come up and out of you that will empower you to prosper like never before.

Personally, we recommend that you pray in tongues no less than an hour or two a day. Here is a good thing to know: pray in tongues long enough until you hit the gusher of the river of God. Then pray in that river of life for a while. What does that tell us? If you will commit to pray in tongues for an extended period every day, soon, you will see it happening. No one will have to try to explain to you what we are talking about. It seems like a floodgate opens up in your spirit, and you enter into a higher realm of God where clarity and light comes. It literally begins to flow out of you like a mighty river.³³³ It is truly awesome! So get busy, and do it right now!

The other side of tongues is the use of tongues when a special anointing comes upon you to bring forth an utterance in tongues in a congregational setting or in a public meeting. Just like prophecy, it is never used to interrupt the leadership of your church, and when it is the Spirit, He will make an opening

³³² 1 Cor. 14:18

³³³ John 7:37, 38, Acts 2:4

for it in the service. If He does not, then just talk to your own self, and speak to God in other tongues. No big deal, and for goodness sake get that “offense” chip off your shoulder.

So what if you were not able to bring the tongues you thought the Holy Spirit gave you for a particular service. They missed it, you missed it or both missed it. How about if you were all wrong? It can be embarrassing but get over it, and trust God in this. Don't get offended, especially if you are corrected, rebuked, or if no place was given for “your” tongues. Listen up: they are not your tongues anyway, that is if it is the Holy Spirit moving on you to speak out an utterance in tongues. It is the gift of the Spirit ministering in tongues through your yielded tongue for the purposes of God for His Body, and then so that the interpretation can come and all can be edified.

The tongues that flowed through the 120 on the day of Pentecost were not only a manifestation of the everyday tongues the believer can use in prayer. It was a special manifestation of the Spirit that caused their tongues to be heard in different languages as they spoke out. (Acts 2)

1 Corinthians 14:2 tells us that tongues can be the tongues of men at times, and at other times the tongues of angels though they are spoken out in ways that are divine secrets. So what happened there that day when they were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues that all heard in their own languages? Special manifestations of the Holy Spirit went into effect that affected the speaker and the hearers.

So many true stories abound where people have heard the tongues of someone in a service in an unknown language to the one speaking, yet the hearer knew the meaning. I have been right in the middle of some of these things happening. You probably have too if you have been for more than a month in the things of the Spirit. They are not far-fetched and outlandish and have happened consistently among Spirit-Baptized folk since the day of Pentecost.

For the manifestation of this gift of different kinds of tongues, there must always be an interpretation, or they are invalid as a ministry tool in a service. Again, I refer you 1 Corinthians 14. I did not say tongues were invalid as some foolish and ignoramus traditionalists want you to believe. Please read all we said before so we don't have to repeat ourselves. There is great value to tongues when used correctly in prayer and for personal edification, progress, and advancement. In the church though, speaking an utterance in tongues out in public so everybody hears it, without its interpretation only edifies you and not the Body. Do you get it?

Interpretation of tongues

And to another interpretation of tongues... but all these works the one and the same Spirit...

1Corinthians 12:10, 11

We really discussed tongues and interpretation of tongues together. Here are some interesting observations on these utterance gifts as we close this series.

1. These utterance gifts can both flow through an individual, one right after the other, first the tongues, then the interpretation.

2. These can flow through two individuals in a service that do not know each other, one brings the tongues, and another interprets them.

3. I have seen these gifts flow through husband and wife, brother and sister, father and son and so forth.

We have seen these flowing through ministerial staff, and at times through other congregation members. The Lord will use whomever He wants. Let's be ready, willing, and understanding the manifestations so the Lord can be glorified and the Body can be uplifted.

Amen!

Chapter 4: Kingdom Ministry Gifts of the Spirit

Even though in this chapter we will emphasize public ministries, the supernatural ministry of the church is to be extended through every believer. Today, so many think God is only interested in manifesting His glory through the fivefold ministry, and possibly through a few others, but not through the entire Body of Christ. This is a big mistake and an assumption that has weakened churches and ministries. We begin this chapter by teaching on the fact that ALL believers are supposed to be manifesting kingdom power and authority. All believers are to be a supernatural witness to the world!

About 10% of the Body of Christ, statistically speaking, will be in the five-fold ministry. Why then are we spending and dedicating so much space regarding this facet of the kingdom? Shouldn't we spend more time teaching on the believer's ministry? Did you notice that the first three chapters in this book are relevant for everybody in the Body of Christ. No one is excluded from learning and practicing kingdom dominion and authority, the fruit of the spirit, and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. These are for EVERY believer! Whether one is in the five fold ministry or not, these apply to all the Body of Christ. So, why are we dedicating so much time to these, as many call them, the five-fold ministry gifts? There is much happening in the name of the ministry gifts of the Spirit in the kingdom of God that needs to be examined from the Scripture. Most church members lack instruction along these lines, and some are running around calling themselves this or that ministry gift without any understanding what they are saying or doing. We desire to help the Body of Christ gain the right kind of sensitivity in this area of the Scripture. How can we know the difference between true manifestations of the five fold ministry and the deceivers calling themselves this or that title to gain fame, places to preach, honor, prestige, money, and more? This chapter will answer those questions clearly, though succinctly. This is by no means a complete study on any single one ministry gift, but there is plenty of information, and many scriptural references, to help any believer identify the truth from error. May the Holy Spirit imprint these truths in your heart, through this anointed teaching, in the Name of Jesus!

These signs will accompany believers in My Name; they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, serpents they will take away, and if they drink anything deadly it will not hurt them in any way; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will recover. Mark 16:17, 18

Two of the most ancient complete manuscripts of the New Testament do not contain these verses. Based on that omission, most Bible translators bracket these verses and make a big deal about it not being recorded in these two ancient manuscripts. The supernatural manifestations these verses talk about are too strong for stuffy and unspiritual translators to accept. In their own twisted traditional minds they did everything they could to minimize the importance of these verses. One of these two ancient manuscripts that do not contain the verses is rife with omissions. Honest translators will tell you that the manuscript is suspect for that very reason, all of its excessive omissions. Most translators do not tell you that the evidence for the authenticity of these verses appears in just about every other manuscript of the New Testament. That is up into the thousands!

Wait a minute though. You do not need to know all that. All you have to do is read the book of Acts to know that these signs will accompany believers. If you can just read the New Testament, then there is no question as to the validity of these verses. Miracles, signs, and wonders are all over the book of Acts! In the last chapter of the book of Acts, we see Paul on the island of Malta ministering healing. Traditional translators have not been able to deny, fuss, and fight over all the healings and miracles found in the book of Acts. Even if we didn't have any manuscript evidence for Mark 16:17 and 18, we have all the evidence of healing and miracles we need in Acts, 1 Corinthians chapters 12 through 14, Hebrews 2:4, and Galatians 3:5, and in other places. Then, we cannot forget the ministry of Jesus, the 12 apostles, and the 70 that went everywhere to heal the sick and cast out demons. That is all the evidence we need! These are our examples of manifesting the authority and dominion of the kingdom of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Did you notice in Mark 16:17 and 18 that this is not for a few specially selected ones in Christ that somehow have an edge on the supernatural things of God. All believers are to cast out demons. All believers are to lay hands on the sick and they recover. All believers are to speak in a tongue, which means they are all to have the baptism in the Holy Spirit as in Acts 2, 10, and 19. All believers are to have supernatural protection from the possible harm caused by the elements (even though ingested unawares) or the animal kingdom.

What would happen if ALL church members were carrying out the teaching of Mark 16:15-20? Revival would break out in the streets!

I know somewhat about what I am writing. I have seen it to a certain extent. It happened in Puerto Rico in the 80's at the church *Fe es La Victoria* where I was the pastor. We saw healings, signs, and wonders. We saw thousands born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in

other tongues. Thousands received miracles outside the church walls as the congregation prayed for people, laid hands on the sick, and even cast out demons! People were born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit in homes, banks, restaurants, parks, grocery stores, gas stations, and on the streets. Most of the church mobilized, though you always had those that only warmed a chair on Sunday's, and that was the extent of their contribution. In general, the Lord used us to mobilize the body of believers.

Today many churches have evangelistic type teams that go "street witnessing." We found that evangelism church groups limit ministry to a few individuals. I am not criticizing outreach ministries at all. We had a church evangelism group too, but we took ministering to people outside the church walls to another level. It was (and still is) the key to citywide revival. In our case, it was island wide revival. Many came from every quarter of the island, and some came from the U.S. mainland. People would drive to church in 50 to 100 car caravans for two and three hours.

Was it just something special for Puerto Rico at that time or is it available to whoever will do it? This can happen anywhere, but a church is going to have to do what we did. Their members are going to have to come out of the pew. We did that by teaching our church consistently that they could do in the Name of Jesus everything they saw the pastor and the other ministers do. They learned by precept and by example. It was not just the pulpit telling them to do it with no demonstration. That will not work. I have seen pastors try to do that. They preach healing, but rarely if ever pray for sick. They preach the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but never lay hands publicly on people to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak with other tongues. That was not the case at our church. They saw evidence of the supernatural ministry of the Church week after week. They heard the testimonies. They saw the changed lives. The Word empowered them and the Holy Spirit backed them as they went in the Name of Jesus.

The Lord worked with them confirming the Word they announced with miraculous signs.

Mark 16:20

The Lord is the same today. (Hebrews 13:8) He will confirm the Word as we act upon it in faith and in His Name.

Again, the supernatural Gospel ministry is not only for the ministry. Each believer should be a minister carrying out the great commission. As a believer, have you ever laid hands on the sick? Have you ever led someone to Jesus and the new birth? Have you ever cast out a demon? Have you ever ministered to a saved person the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues? Some may say, "Oh we leave that to our pastor and the elders. We just give tithes and offerings. (Many do not even do this basic thing called *tithing*!) After all, we have to work Monday through Friday. We do not have the time. That is why we pay a salary to the pastor!" Jesus did not say these signs would only follow those that have a salary from the church, are retired, or live on a pension! Jesus said these signs are to accompany ALL believers. If you call yourself a believer, then these signs

are to accompany you. It makes no difference if you are a dishwasher at the local fast food restaurant or the CEO of a multinational conglomerate. The commission is for all believers!

Ananias the Disciple

And there was a certain *disciple* in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias!” And he said, “Here I am Lord.” The Lord said to him, “Get up and go into the street which is called Straight and ask in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus. For look, he is praying, and has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and laying his hand on him so that he might receive his sight.” Acts 9:10-12

This was the man that the Lord used to minister to Saul of Tarsus before he was known as Paul the apostle. The scripture above says that this brother was a disciple of the Lord. He was not some great evangelist or prophet. He was not an apostle of note. He didn't have the backing of some big ministry that sent him for this task. He was just a DISCIPLE of the Lord. Can disciples of the Lord without any 5-fold ministry call minister to others supernaturally? Yes they can in view of these verses. Not only did Ananias receive a vision, he was also given specific instructions where Saul was and what to minister to him. Read the rest of the passage. This disciple ministered healing and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to Saul. All believers can be led supernaturally and have supernatural manifestations of the kingdom around them. Ananias is not the only disciple of the Lord that He used to minister the authority and dominion of His kingdom.

Stephen the Table Waiter

They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit ... And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Acts 6:5, 8

Stephen was ordained to wait on tables. He had no other commission or calling that we can ascertain from the Scripture. He was an anointed table waiter! This table waiter was full of faith and power. This brother was a disciple of the Lord that stepped over into the realm of the miraculous. Notice that the verse mentions faith. Faith is an integral part of stepping into the miraculous. It takes faith to act on the Word and in the Name of Jesus cast out demons, heal the sick, and have miracles in manifestation. This man of God, though his call was restricted to a server, had so much of God at work in his life that people received healing and deliverance as he waited on them. The devil was in trouble when he came around this anointed man!

This presents us with a truth we need to accept in our hearts. Regardless if you have NO calling on your life other than help at your church to park vehicles, you can be so empowered by the Spirit that revival breaks out around you.

The other side to this is that you can walk in a mighty anointing to set the captives free and serve tables at your local hamburger joint! You can have miracles around you and manage the car wash. You

can have Jesus show up as you serve people as a teller at a bank. You can have God's Holy presence in manifestation and you are an insurance salesperson, a police officer, in the armed forces, or the head of a major corporation! God is no respecter of persons and He will use anybody anywhere that will yield to Him and live in high expectancy of His glory!

At the previous church I pastored, we received hundreds of testimonies of all kinds of miraculous events from our congregation as they interacted with people everywhere. One particular testimony that has always stood out was that of one brother when he went to the bank to make a deposit. Without laying hands on the woman in front of him in the line, he prayed for her, the power of God hit her, and she fell to the floor. The brother ended up praying for her and many others before he left the bank.

My mother does similar things quite often. Whenever I take her to a grocery store or the bank, I just leave her there for an hour or two. She takes her time and ministers to as many as will let her. She will talk to everybody about Jesus and pray for people. She has been an example of someone full of the Holy Spirit and faith for many years. I have seen her minister to someone on an elevator and even going through a drive-through! She shares the love and joy of the Lord wherever she goes!

My mother was for years married to my dad before he passed on to heaven, and he was anointed as an apostle and prophet of God. The miraculous followed his life and ministry, but my mother will be the first to tell you that she has no call to 5-fold ministry, yet Jesus shows up powerfully through her.

Every Believer a Minister

Every believer can be like that and should desire to move into the miraculous and the glory of God. Not every believer has a calling to a gospel 5-fold ministry, but every believer is supposed to be a minister of God to others. This means YOU are to be a minister of the things of God to others!

And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of ministering, to the building up of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11, 12

One reason the Lord gave some to be a 5-fold ministry gift was to prepare the saints to the work of ministering to others. They have a job to do. It is not all up to the pastor or prophet. The responsibility is for the 5-fold ministry to instruct and train the people of God (saints) so they can minister the things of God to others. What things of God are they to minister? We saw the great commission in Mark 16:17, 18. Read from verses 15 through 20. That is the responsibility of all church members. The laity is also to cast out demons, speak with new tongues, and lay hands on the sick.

The body of believers has each received from the Lord a variety of graces (divine favors) or anointings. No member of the Body of Christ can say they have received nothing from the Lord. Did you know that? Every member has some talent, gifting, and anointing they should be contributing for the growth of the church.

For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members do not have the same office: so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having a variety of gifts according to the grace (gifting, favor) that was given to us... Romans 12:4-6

Each member has different gifts to be used according to their faith. No member of the Body of Christ is without gifts. You have a divine deposit in you for the benefit of the Body of Christ. Whatever gift(s) the Lord gave you may be exclusively shared in your city or town, but it is a special gift entrusted to you for ministry to others. Most Christians do not understand or know the gifts they have been given. Many will not pray and ask the Lord what they are gifted or graced with. Never doubt that you are gifted from the Lord. Take the time to find your gift or grace (favor) and use it (or them) for the glory of God.

According as each hath received a gift, minister it others among you, as good stewards of the manifold grace (gifting, favor) of God. 1 Peter 4:10

Each one has received some gift. Now minister it to others as the Lord leads you to do it!

Public Ministry Gifts

And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* shepherds and teachers... Ephesians 4:11

Depending on the call, different ministries will have a variety of equipment as part of their call of God. Prophets will have more of the gifts that reveal something in operation such as the word of wisdom, word of knowledge and discerning of spirits. Others are endowed with the manifestation of gifts of healings, or working of miracles, or the gift of special faith. A study of the prophets in Scripture will bear this out. Two powerful prophets in this particular respect are Elijah and Elisha.³³⁴ We write more about them below.

All ministry gifts are supernatural and should have a manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit functioning through them. Yet, it will depend on the call as to which manifestations will manifest abundantly through a given ministry gift. All ministry gifts must have a demonstration of the Spirit and the power of God. Any human being that is called by the supernatural risen Lord to a place of divine ministry must have the evidence of the supernatural in their lives. If the risen Lord is doing the calling and the sending forth then evidence will come forth. If there is no evidence then God did not call the person and they were not sent. Ministry gifts or callings will minister with the supernatural!

In the New Testament, more than these five ministry gifts are mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. Some people may be called into administration, giving, mercy, gifts of healings, working of miracles, or helps as recorded in Romans 12:4-8 and 1Corinthians 12:28. By far, the most public in the Body of Christ are these five Paul mentions in Ephesians 4:11. *These are the major gifts anointed for public ministry.* Others may go public, but not like these five gifts in Paul's list in the book to the Ephesians. There are some exceptions, but mostly these are the leaders at the head of the spear in the church. These are the ones most often used by the Lord in a public setting.

Many have called these the "five-fold ministry gifts" and I often refer to them in that way. These are not the only ministry gifts God bestows on the church according to Paul's own writings. We will briefly mention some of the other functions and offices in our study, but we will major on the public five ministry gifts that Paul states in Ephesians. We will look at these in the same order that Paul gives them to us.

The order Paul gives in Ephesians 4:11 is an order of priority and not of prominence. That is an extremely important point. It will help people called to the ministry to stay humble and refuse pride and arrogance. The one that gets prominence and preeminence among us had better be Jesus or we will be in serious trouble. God had better get the glory and honor among us.

³³⁴ 1 Kings chapters 17, 18, 19, 21, and 2 Kings chapters 2-9, 13

Each gift has its proper place and no gift is more important than another one. No gift from God is more important than the one in manifestation at the time. Whatever gift the Lord is manifesting at a certain moment in time is the most important gift for the Body at that specific time. Honor and respect should be given the anointing of the Holy Spirit on a man or woman of God regardless of whether their office is found towards the beginning, middle or at the end of Paul's list. If God sent them, then they have a word for the Body of Christ that is of utmost importance for that moment in time. This lesson will keep you from exalting a minister because he or she is an apostle and demeaning a teacher. Some give more prominence to a prophet than an evangelist. We should never do that and recognize that each gift is valuable to the Body.

What is the purpose of any ministry gift? Paul outlines their purpose for the Body of Christ in Ephesians 4.

...To equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up the body of Christ, until we all arrive at the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Anointed One (Christ), so that we are no longer children, tossed back and forth by the waves and carried about by every wind of (unscriptural) doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into the Anointed One (Christ), from whom the whole body, fitly joined and held together by the supply of every joint, as each part is working properly, making the body grow up so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:12-16

Apostles

New Testament type of apostles will always have the miraculous as proof of the fact they are sent and anointed to do the work they are called to do. No apostle of God was ever sent to establish churches without the evidence of the supernatural coming forth to deliver, heal, and minister the miraculous. Without the supernatural in manifestation, they are either ignorant of their place and need to be instructed, or they were never sent and called of God in the first place. With the call and the mission always comes the anointing to fulfill the mission supernaturally. The life of the apostle Paul is clear evidence of that.

For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ did not work out by me for the obedience of the nations in word and in power of miracles and wonders, in power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem, and all around to Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. Romans 15:18, 19

The full preaching of the Gospel must have the miraculous in demonstration. An apostle will have the evidence of the supernatural in their ministry plus the other things they are anointed to operate in. Notice here how Paul identifies himself as an apostle.

Truly the signs of the apostle were worked out among you in all patience, in miracles and in wonders, and by works of power. 2 Corinthians 12:12

Miracles, wonders, and works of power in demonstration are the true signs of an apostle. Without these one is an orator or a philosopher. These are not a demonstration of Gospel ministry.

Missionaries sent by a church denomination are not apostles. They may be schoolteachers, doctors, nurses, construction workers, agriculturists, or something else, but God did not send them as apostles.

The word *apostle* means “a sent one.” Every time you see the word, it reveals that God is doing the sending of this person. When God sends you, He always equips you. The equipment of any called and sent apostle of God will be according to 2 Corinthians 12:12 and Romans 15:17, 18 just for starters.

Now look at the commission Jesus gave Paul.

...Delivering you from the people and the nations, to whom I now send you in order to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the authority of Satan to God, so that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me. Acts 26:17, 18

Two more Scriptures will put the work of the apostle into New Testament perspective. Take a look at first Corinthians 3:10, 11 and Ephesians 2:20. Apostles are to lay the foundation in the spirit for the establishment of churches. The foundation of any church must be Jesus Christ. That spells “supernatural” for us at every turn!³³⁵ All that Jesus died and arose to provide is included. An apostle or prophet of God is supposed to ONLY lay a solid and powerful church foundation by the revelation of His Word, and the power of the Holy Spirit in demonstration. Anything other than that will be a religious club and not a New Testament church!

For the sake of clarification, there are different ranks and files within each ministry gift and the apostle is no different. There were major apostles in the New Testament like Paul, James, Peter and John. There were other apostles. Have you ever heard of the apostles Andronicus and Junias? They are mentioned once, seemingly in passing.³³⁶ Unless you have been a student of the Word for some time, you may have never heard of them. They were as much apostles as Paul and Peter.³³⁷ Their ministry was possibly mentioned only once because they functioned in one particular geographical area around the city of Rome. They did not have an international ministry like Paul or some of the more notable apostles. That does not minimize their work. Their work was apostolic in nature though it may not have had the scope of ministry that Paul and other apostles had.

An apostle may be called to establish *one* church, and one church alone. Then the apostle will become the pastor of that church possibly until they go on and be with the Lord. Their apostolic work in that case would be limited to the assignment of establishing a local church. They stay on as the pastor of that church instead of establishing numerous churches as the apostle Paul did throughout his ministry. If God sent them and anointed them to begin a new church work, then evidence will accompany this person and fruit will become evident.

Never feel that establishing one church is less important a task than the one called to the nations because it is not. God does not look at things the way people do. God is no respecter of persons. He will look at each person according to the assignment that He gave to each one. On the day that we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, our rewards will be based on if we fulfilled our mission and accomplished the will of God on the earth.³³⁸ If you were called to be a local pastor with only one church in your charge, but decided to be a world traveler, your reward will be diminished because you did your will and not the will of God for your life and ministry.

If you believe you are called to the work of an apostle, but none of this is describing your ministry, I would spend much time in the Word, prayer and some fasting to find out from the Lord why these things are not manifested in your life and ministry. It may be that you have a call to do something else in the

³³⁵ 1 Corinthians 3:10, 11

³³⁶ Rom. 16:7

³³⁷ Yes, there can also be women apostles!

³³⁸ 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, 2 Cor. 5:10

Body. The Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus, will let you know. He will not withhold this vital information from anyone in His Body. Each member of the Body needs to know their place and go and get in it.

Each apostle has all the ministry gifts inside of him or her to some measure. You can see it in Paul's ministry in the book of Acts. We do know from the Scripture that he was a prophet and teacher as well as an Apostle. (Acts 13:1-3) He wore different ministry anointings throughout his ministry. That is a key to the apostolic call and anointing. Apostles can, as the Lord anoints and leads, weave in and out of the ministry gifts of prophet, evangelist, teacher and pastor, all within their apostolic anointing. It depends on what is needed for ministry at the time. An apostle must have these anointings flowing in the stream of the apostolic because they are responsible to establish churches and set them up in divine order and instruction. Sometimes Paul would stay in a place up to three years to establish a church in the truths of God. He did this by precept and by a consistent example of the manifestation of the power of the Spirit.³³⁹

My natural father was an apostle of God. I saw that anointing at work close up and personal. My mother saw it even more than I did because she traveled with him. He was bold and ministered with great authority and power. I witnessed the miraculous through him many times and learned a lot from him about ministering healing and deliverance from oppression. The cripples walked, the sick received healing, the demonized were set free, and many came to the Lord Jesus, and were Holy Spirit baptized through his ministry. I saw some outstanding creative miracles through his ministry.

My dad ministered mostly in Spanish speaking countries in the 70's, so you probably never heard of his ministry. Sometimes, he would minister as a teacher, at other times as a prophet, and then he would minister in miracles and signs. At other times, it was the ministry of the anointed evangelist at work through him. Then at other times, he flowed as a pastor. It seemed like he would weave in and out of these areas of ministry calls as the Lord led him and anointed him.

Good teaching or preaching is not enough. We must have the supernatural manifestation of God in our midst by the power of the Holy Spirit as recorded in 1Corinthians chapters 12 through 14. As I wrote earlier, what we call the "gifts" of the Spirit, more aptly should be called the manifestations of the Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:7) All nine of the manifestations of the Spirit are supernatural. By far, they are beyond any natural talent or human ability. (1 Cor. 12:7-11) They are not academic abilities, learning different languages, "miracles" of medical science, preaching in a service or teaching Sunday school classes. To think like that is an affront to the supernatural power of our God. It is the attempt of manmade religion and Godless theology to strip the Bible and our Heavenly Father of any supernatural power or His ability to interrupt the natural order or course of things.

³³⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5

Powerless Christianity is a sham without the supernatural element of God's Holy Spirit in action. Without that element of the supernatural in manifestation, then Christianity is no better than all the rest of man's abominable religions in the earth. Without the supernatural, Christianity is a formality, ritual, and a religion of death like any other religion without God. It becomes a lifeless tradition that robs people of any real encounter with a living God!

My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of (man's) wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on man's wisdom, but on God's power. 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5

I will say it again: Good preaching and teaching are never enough! There must be demonstration of the Spirit and power along with solid Bible teaching and preaching. There is something wrong if a church is without the supernatural. Something is off. Something is missing. God and His Spirit in manifestation are what are missing!

Manifestation is not showmanship. It is not some kind of pseudo- spiritual activity unfounded in God's Word. It is God "showing off" and not man. It is God showing proof of the resurrection of Jesus. Demonstration is God-activity in our midst. It is God working with us confirming the Word of God preached and taught. (Mark 16:20) It is undeniable evidence from the Father.

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses... Acts 1:8

A real witness is one that has undeniable proofs, and with undeniable evidence. We are to be witnesses with undeniable proofs of the fact that Jesus was raised from the dead. If He was raised from the dead immortal, then that reveals that He is alive. If He is alive today then He will do what He did in signs and wonders just as He did before He died. That is what it affirmed when it says that the Apostles gave witness of the resurrection of Jesus, and that signs and wonders were done through them.³⁴⁰

They prayed as a church that God would grant them that signs and wonders in the Name of Jesus.³⁴¹ Every single church on the planet should be trusting God to show up in their services with signs and wonders. This early prayer of the church should be a part of our prayers for every service. The church back then understood the fact that we need more than good teaching and preaching. We need our supernatural God to do the impossible for man. The church in Acts knew that they needed the miraculous among them. They needed supernatural signs and wonders as a testimony of Jesus' resurrection before an unbelieving world. Why is it that the world has not believed much of what the

³⁴⁰ Acts 4:33, 5:12-15

³⁴¹ Acts 4:29, 30

church has taught? It really is simple. They need a touch of the supernatural power of God to convince them. In most cases, they will never believe without it.

There are many other activities that apostles are anointed to do, like the following: establish churches, ordain elders/pastors, set in divine order that which is out of order, pioneer works other than churches to further the Gospel, serve as an example to pastors and others that can be imitated. Apostles also teach, exhort, correct, rebuke, instruct, edify, comfort, pray, preach, minister with the laying on of hands, are stewards of the mysteries of God, entrusted with the Gospel, and impart spiritual gifts as led by the Holy Spirit. These were all gleaned from Paul's many statements about what he did in the book of Acts and in his epistles.

Apostles are forerunners and founders. An apostle in the market place will be an entrepreneur.

Apostles use the funds the Lord puts into their hands to establish new enterprises, ministries, and so forth. These apostolic marks, characteristics or traits can be found all over the writings of Paul.

Apostles never manipulate churches or people so that the churches they establish are forced to give them money, pay them tithes and offerings. It is commendable and Scriptural for churches to send support to apostolic leaders, but it is not obligatory or by compulsion.³⁴²

Some so-called apostles come into a city and demand that churches come under their authority so they can “rape” them of money. These are false apostles. Firstly, they had no part in establishing those churches. Secondly, true apostles will not try to lord it over any church. Apostles come with authority and power from God, but they don't push and shove churches under them. Actually, true apostles will have a supernatural authority and respect from the churches they have established, but they will not demand that the churches respect and honor them. They may tell them why they should honor and respect the man of God that was used to establish that particular church (and Paul did this), but he will not demand submission from them. Study 1 and 2 Corinthians with this in mind and you will find abundant evidence there of what we are saying here.

The Father is pulling the plug on all deceivers, manipulators, and those that are full of greed and covetousness yet hide behind the mask of a fivefold ministry gift. There will be a marked difference between the deceivers and the real. God will show it. Some making the rounds today and calling themselves apostles are doing it for the belly's sake as Paul referred to them. They are on their way out! I know that in the latter times there will be those heeding seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. They have always been around, but the Father is getting ready distinguish the true from the false in ways that are undeniable. Mark it down in your little book, when these kinds of evil financial dealings creep into a church and ministry, loose sexual morality will break out as well. Every kind of evil will break out as well because the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.³⁴³

³⁴² Phil 4:10-19, 1 Cor. 9, 2 Cor. 9:7

³⁴³ 1 Tim. 6:10

People have taken me to task on teaching that it is the will of God to prosper His people, even though this is a truth taught ALL over the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Some have tried to quote Scripture by telling me that the Bible says, “Money is the root of all evil.” I challenge anybody to find that Scripture in the Bible. It does not exist! The Bible says that the LOVE of money is the root of every form of evil. (1Timothy 6:10) Money is not evil. It is when people want it or use it for covetousness that it becomes an evil tool in their hands.

All the people that believe that money is somehow evil in and of itself are, without exceptions, liars and hypocrites. How can I make such a sweeping statement? It is very easy. The same ones that say money is evil hold down jobs and get a paycheck! They borrow money to get a house, car, and many other things. If money is evil, do not dare go to a bank and get a loan, and for goodness sake do not go to work or use money to buy groceries! If someone really believes money is evil, they should do completely without it and go live under a bridge. If one is not a hypocrite and believes money is evil, they should go live in a cave and do without any modern conveniences. Whatever you do, if you believe that lie and are a pastor, do not ever receive an offering! Woe to all the hypocrites! They believe a lie and refuse to heed the Scripture!

Money itself is good when used for good, but when the love of money perverts the purpose and mission of it for the kingdom of God and for spreading the Gospel in the earth, it will end up destroying that person, church, or ministry. You cannot serve God and money, but you can certainly serve God with money when it is used as a tool for the kingdom of God.³⁴⁴

Love is the centerpiece for all ministries. Love for the people is the reason for ministry. Without love, a ministry will have no lasting effect and bear no fruit.³⁴⁵ Ministering to the needs of the people must be the primary objective together with the ministry of the Word of God in instruction; correction, teaching, rebuke, and nurturing that will cause the people of God to grow up spiritually.³⁴⁶ Compassion is the motivation for ministry.³⁴⁷ Compassion is what moved Jesus and that is what should move us.³⁴⁸ Jesus was an example of an apostle or a sent one as also was Moses.³⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that both were also called prophets.³⁵⁰ Abraham was both one sent by God with the anointing to accomplish the given task, and he also was called a prophet.³⁵¹

³⁴⁴ Matt. 6:24, 1Tim. 6:17, 18

³⁴⁵ 1 Cor. 12:28 -14:1, Ephesians 4:11-16, particularly verse 15

³⁴⁶ Ezekiel 34:1-17, 2 Tim. 3:16 - 4:2, 1 Peter 1:22 – 2:2

³⁴⁷ Matthew 9:35-38

³⁴⁸ Matt. 14:14, 20:30-34, Mark 1:40, 41, Luke 7:11-15

³⁴⁹ Heb. 3:1, 2

³⁵⁰ Matt. 21:11, Luke 7:16, Deut. 18:15-18

³⁵¹ Gen. 12:1-3, 20:7

Prophets

The prophet's ministry will vary according to the desire of the Holy Spirit. There are seeing prophets, hearing prophets, and some that operate in both realms. There are different levels of prophets as well as "ranks" of prophets. There are senior (major) and there are minor prophets. There are prophets called to the nations and those that their call is restricted to one specific geographical area.

Some people think that because God has used them to prophesy, have words of knowledge, or even have an occasional word of wisdom, that this alone makes them a prophet. The manifestations of the Spirit are given to the entire Body of Christ to profit from them. (1 Cor. 12:7-9) Just because one had a dream or vision does not make them a prophet. The revelation gifts of the Spirit, a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits, plus prophecy, will be in operation on a consistent basis in a real prophet. Then there is the real call, ordination, and anointing of God to function in the office of a prophet. All these must be present for one to know their calling into this office of ministry. As you study the lives and ministries of Biblical prophets, these things are evident in their prophetic ministries. There are more facets to this ministry or office of the prophet, but this gives you a general idea of what we are studying.

The same goes for prophesy in the church, and prophecy that comes through the office of the prophet. They are two very different aspects of prophecy. Prophetic utterance in the church, according to Paul, is only for edification, exhortation, and comfort.³⁵² It is not for the revelation of future or past events. Prophecy is given only as the Spirit of God moves and directs. It is never by the will of a man.³⁵³ A true prophet of the Lord will prophesy with these facts as his or her solid foundation.

Prophets may bring forth other revelation into play because of the anointing that rests on them, but only as the Spirit of the Lord leads. No prophet can turn their prophetic gift on and off whenever they please. Don't let anybody fool you.

Generally speaking, prophetic utterance as a rule is not to lead us. I am speaking of personal direction on an individual basis. Public prophecy is often instruction for the entire church or the Body of Christ. It can be marching orders for the Body. I am not referring here to that kind of prophetic utterance. I am here referring to when someone brings you a "personal" word. This does not mean that God will not speak to you on a personal level at times through somebody else. I am writing that you have to judge it by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit in us.³⁵⁴

Even if a true prophet of the Lord reveals something to me about the future, if the Lord has said nothing to me about it already, I put it "on a shelf" in my thinking, and listen to the Lord concerning it. This is especially true if I do not get the witness of the Holy Spirit in my heart when the "word" is given

³⁵² 1 Cor. 14:3

³⁵³ 2 Peter 1:21

³⁵⁴ Ps. 119:105, 130, 133, Rom. 8:14, 16

to me. There may be some exceptions to this rule, but they are very rare. I had a prophet speak something to me that was news to me, but I had an instant witness of the Spirit that it was right and a good Word from the Lord for me. In those cases, I believe the Word of the prophet and prosper!³⁵⁵ If it is against what the Lord has already showed me, I discard it. Learn this and it will deliver you from flaky prophecies given by uninspired people. It makes no difference it came through a well-known prophet or minister. Follow the leading of the Lord and not that of men or women telling you things contrary to the Lord's direction.

One woman, a supposed prophet, spoke some stuff over me that was clearly uninspired. This was in 1999. I didn't make a scene over it, but under my breath I rebuked it as something from the enemy, and not from the Lord. Actually, this woman had a perceptible wrong spirit from the moment she got on the platform. Her message was off as well as her ministry. It was even more blatantly obvious when this supposed prophet spoke something over my wife out of her past, before she was a believer. It was condemning and not of the Spirit of the Lord. My wife (though this was about a year before we were married) left that meeting not edified at all and felt robbed. We both took authority over those wrong words spoken over us in the Name of Jesus, rebuked them, and spoke the Word of God in place of them. We had witnessed a "demonstration" of a familiar spirit through a deceived woman, and certainly not a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Never accept a "word" from somebody that speaks something over you contrary to the Word of God, and that opposes what the Lord is already leading you to do! Read the story of one younger prophet that did just that and it cost him his life. (1 Kings 13:1-32) Please read the entire story. I will not take the space here to quote it because it is a lengthy passage.

The older and supposedly more seasoned prophet gave the younger prophet a "prophetic word." This older prophet was recognized, and had more experience than the younger prophet. The younger prophet should have stuck to the original word that God gave him and refused to follow some "new" word. The younger prophet disobeyed the word he had received from the Lord. One the way back home, a lion pounced on him and ate him!

The moral of the story is:

"Follow God and not uninspired men or you will be eaten for lunch," or

"Obey God or you will be toast!"

How about,

"How to avoid hungry lions on the path of life" or

"Food for a lion's thought"?

Take your pick. You can probably think of a few more. It all boils down to the same thing. This story can clear up many errors permeating some sectors of the "prophetic and apostolic" people that have gone off the deep end.

³⁵⁵ 2 Chronicles 20:20

Prophets are not psychics! Some in the church follow some that are true prophets, not because they want to hear the Word of God and be under the anointing, but because they have a wrong desire in them to hear about the future. These are the ones that slip over into having “itching ears” as stated in 2 Timothy 4:3. They end up following their own desires instead of the teachings of the Lord. They get over into wrong thinking and these prophets become their “guides” in place of the Word and the Spirit being their guides. That is akin to going to psychics and following after “familiar” spirits. It is very dangerous territory.

Staying within your Sphere of Ministry

A man or woman of God must understand their “sphere” of ministry and stick to it for the anointing to flow powerfully. If you get out of the place God has set you in, and attempt to invade an area of the anointing that you are not called to, eventually your real anointing will wane. That is not the only result or problem that will come up. Eventually, you can get into real trouble with deception, error, and outright heresy if you insist on invading a realm of the anointing to minister that you are not ordained by God to be in. It can be very dangerous and even deadly.³⁵⁶

That happened to the prophet of God, William Branham, mightily used of God in the late 40’s and throughout the 50’s, until he attempted to be a teacher of the Word. The Lord did not anoint William Branham to teach according to some ministers that were close to him. Church historians also point this out. One prominent prophet confronted him on the issue. He led many into errors, and strange and bizarre doctrines. Some still think his teachings were right, even though the Word can easily refute them. He died in a tragic auto accident long before fulfilling his ministry.

I truly believe in God-ordained and anointed prophets. A few are my friends, and it is easy to point to others and say that they have true prophetic ministry. How can we tell? The BIG difference is the anointing factor! The anointing on a real prophet is noticeable a mile away. It is very distinguishable and outstanding. There is no way to deny it or to mistake it for something else. Either a person has it or they do not. The anointing to stand in the office of the prophet is the distinguishing factor. The real prophetic anointing can only come from God. God is the one that calls and anoints for any office of ministry.

Not everybody can say they are called to be a prophet. Do you know that some (hopefully very few) churches teach that we (the Body of Christ) are all prophets? Paul asked the question, “Are all prophets?” The answer was obviously, “NO!” The same goes for any other ministry gift. There are different members and different functions in the body, and not all have the same activity or responsibility. The real problems begin when you are set by God in the body of Christ as a “foot,” but

³⁵⁶ Look up these references: 2 Cor. 10:12-14, Numbers 16:1-33, 2 Sam. 6:1-8.

you decide for yourself that you want to be an “ear!”³⁵⁷ The arrogance of this is beyond description. To insist on being an “ear” or an “eye” when God made you a “foot” is to tell God you know more than Him. Arrogance, disobedience, and pride are the sins of those that insist on being different than what God called them to be. *We do not tell God what we want to be. He places us and He sets us in the Church as it pleases Him.*

God set in the church...secondarily prophets. 1Cor. 12:28

To “set” is *to fix, appoint, purpose, to set forth, to establish, ordain, to put, and to place*. Only God can do these things where ministry gifts are concerned, that is, if you want His blessing and anointing on your life. The One that establishes the ministry gifts in the body of Christ, and anoints you for an office of ministry is God.³⁵⁸ God sets the members of the body as it pleases Him and not as men wish for or want.³⁵⁹ You can only be an apostle, or any ministry gift for that matter, by the will of God.³⁶⁰ No one can will on their own self a ministry call or assume an anointing just because they think that is what they are, or because they think they can do it, or because they like the sound of people calling them “prophet so-and-so.” It does not work that way.

At one so-called “prophetic” church, two lines are formed with people facing each other and prophesying to each person in front of them as the line moves. At this particular church, they believe that every believer is a prophet and that every believer has “a word” for others. They misinterpret Paul’s teaching when he said, “You can all prophesy one by one.” The context of this verse is speaking about those that stand in the office of the prophet, which are only to speak two or three in any one service. (1 Cor. 14:29-31) This exercise of standing one in front of each other and “prophesying” is supposed to be a part of a “school of the prophets.” Their church members are taught that they are learning to be prophets in this way. This “line” prophecy exercise leads people to usurp the place of the Holy Spirit and to speak out of their own minds. They try to “divine” something about the person that is in front of them. Even though they think this is prophecy, it is not. This opens them up to the operation of demon activity. It is yielding to a spirit of divination and definitely not something taught anywhere in the entire Bible. This same church is now profoundly involved in very unscriptural “dream interpretation classes” and even with quartz crystals and their “meanings.” This is based on New Age teachings and errors. They should change their name to exclude the word “church” or “Christian” (or any other name that could be associated with Christianity) from their building, and include the names “psychic” or “medium school” and “new age training center,” because they ceased to be according to Christ and His teachings a

³⁵⁷ See 1 Cor. 12:14-30.

³⁵⁸ 2 Cor. 1:21

³⁵⁹ 1 Cor. 12:18, Galatians 1:1

³⁶⁰ 2 Cor. 1:1

long time ago! This particular church no longer even has a pastor. They now have a “moderator” and “facilitators.” They actually think they are a progressive church! They think they know more than Jesus who gave the gift of a pastor to the church.³⁶¹ The arrogance to think that they know more than the Word of God and the Lord of the Church is appalling!

The Spirit of God is the one that wills to manifest among believers. No one can conjure up a gift of the Holy Spirit by his or her will. They only will come into manifestation as the Holy Spirit desires and wills.³⁶² If one tries to will it, it is of the flesh and certainly not of God. *I can learn to yield more to the Holy Spirit as I spend more time in prayer and sometimes fasting in preparation to minister, but I cannot tell the Holy Spirit what gifts I want in any service.* I can pray general prayers believing for signs and wonders as the church in Acts 4: 29, 30 did, but I can’t tell the Lord how to minister or how I want Him to manifest to the people. No, He tells me what He wants to do in a service and I do it. He is the boss!

You can call yourself a prophet all day and that does not make you one. Someone else can “prophesy” over you and call you one, but that does not make you a prophet. *Only God calls, sets, ordains, and anoints for ministry.* A prophet can come and confirm your call from God, or even reveal your call to you, as the Lord leads him or her, BUT, and I write it with a big capital “B,” they cannot anoint you with the Holy Spirit’s power for any office of ministry. Only God can do that.

The Lord may use a prophet to anoint you and separate you into your call, just as Samuel did with David, or Elijah did with Elisha, but the anointing of the Holy Spirit comes from the Father. As they say in parts of the South, “the proof of the pudding is in the eating.” If the real anointing is present to stand in an office of ministry, the results will prove it.

Just because people fall on the floor, cry, shake, or because the minister “blows” air on people, are not signs of a prophetic call. People can jump, shout, dance, spit, and holler, but that does not prove the anointing and manifestation of the prophet’s ministry.

Without the anointing of the prophet, some “want-to-be” prophets think they have to perform in prophecy or some revelation gift. They get a performance “anxiety” or “itch.” They go from person to person with a “prophetic word” that originated in their own head and does not come out of the Holy Spirit’s inspiration. They have misunderstood the office of the prophet, they are out of their anointing, and think that a prophet has to prophesy to everybody in sight. I have been present in these so-called “prophetic” services. Nowhere in the entire New Testament do you see a prophet “prophesying” to everybody in every service.

Watch out with trying to make something up without the anointing! Quit “fishing” for something to say or you may “catch” something that was not edible! If one continues to do things like these it will

³⁶¹ Eph. 4:7, 11, 12

³⁶² 1 Cor. 12:9-11

breed more and more error, until finally, one will lose whatever anointing they may have had on their life and they will be categorized with the false prophets of Baal. We will study this more below.

Watch out with self-appointed prophets! The Thyatira church allowed a woman that *called herself* a prophetess, when she was not, to operate in their church unchecked and uncorrected and it led to false teaching, seduction, sexual immorality, and finally idolatry (spiritual adultery).³⁶³ That is the danger of self-appointed prophets or anyone operating outside their God-called realm of anointing. Mark it down; serious error and sin will creep in when people assume an office of ministry without the calling and anointing of God to function in it. Seducing spirits will overtake these people if they do not repent and find out from God where they actually belong in ministry, or even if they are to be at all in ministry. Instead of going from faith to faith and glory-to-glory, they will be going from error to error, and from deception to more deception. Weird, strange, unscriptural stuff begins to appear. False teaching begins to creep in. Then sexual immorality follows in many cases, and finally outright rebellion to God and His plan, which goes into spiritual adultery and idolatry, and this finally results in destruction and death. That was exactly what was happening at the church in Thyatira.

If a church does not repent for allowing the false in their midst and it does not heed the Lord's warning, then He will finally remove the "lampstand" (its light and anointing) from its place in that church, and that church will shrivel up, loose out, and die off. (Rev. 2:5) Have you ever wondered why an anointed and going church begins a journey towards decrease, splits, and finally it begins to die? I just gave you the answer. Only quick repentance can change the outcome once they have gone as far as the church in Thyatira. (Rev. 2:21)

There are false teachers, prophets, and apostles in the land. The Church leadership better beware and "test those that say they are apostles (or any other ministry gift) but they are not." (Revelation 2:2) Don't be gullible and think that just because someone calls their own selves "apostle" or puts "prophet" in front of their name that they are. The fruit of their lives and ministries will speak for themselves. I am talking about REAL fruit and not imagined fruit.

Prophetic Ministry

The Scripture reveals true prophetic ministry. We recognize that there was a clear shift of emphasis in how a prophet functions after the resurrection of Jesus. The shift hinges on the fact that in Christ, all are to be led by the Holy Spirit, and all can have spiritual manifestations of the Spirit as the Lord leads. That is an important distinction in how prophets were operating before Jesus and how we should view them today.

Before Jesus, prophets were like *oracles* that you went to when needing a word from the Lord. Before Jesus, only certain individuals had the privilege to have the anointing of the Holy Spirit on them.

³⁶³ Revelation 2:20, 21-NKJV

In general, the only ones to have a manifestation of the anointing on their lives were the priests, prophets and the kings. Others had the privilege of being anointed from time to time. Some heathens were anointed for certain tasks.³⁶⁴ That is a shocker! After the resurrection, every single believer has an anointing abiding within.

A prophetic ministry can be every bit as supernatural today as the prophets we read about in the Biblical text. This includes Jesus in His prophetic role. After Jesus' death and resurrection, prophets are less like "oracles" and carry more responsibility along the lines of edification, exhortation, and the bringing of comfort.³⁶⁵

Yes, prophets are still to have clear manifestations of the revelation gifts. The word of knowledge and wisdom, and discerning of spirits will show up more frequently through the prophetic office than through any other ministry gift. That is all true, but as sons of God, the Holy Spirit leads us as He bears witness with our spirit. *We are not led through the prophetic ministry.*³⁶⁶

The prophecies of doom and gloom that so many espouse as being prophetic are not the Spirit of the Lord. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. (Revelation 19:10) True prophetic ministry today will have a foundation of victory, power, authority, dominion, healing, wholeness, and not defeat or weakness. True prophetic ministry will move others into the miraculous and the divine, not the mundane and the weak and beggarly elements of this world. I can say this without reservations because true prophetic ministry is going to testify of Jesus and all the provisions of the Covenant sealed in the blood of Jesus.

Since the Lord would not have us ignorant of Satan's devices and strategies, sometimes the Lord gives warnings through the prophets of things to come.³⁶⁷ Sometimes it may not appear to be good news. To be forewarned of some potentially devastating event is good news. If you know beforehand what is about to happen, then you can prepare wisely. The Holy Spirit can show us things to come. This is one purpose for a word of wisdom in the list of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. It can reveal the future to us that the Lord wants and desires for us to know about. (1 Cor. 12:7-10)

A great example is Joseph and the seven years of prosperity and the seven years of famine. The Lord gave Joseph the interpretation to a dream that Pharaoh had. All of Egypt was able to prepare for the seven years of famine under the guidance of Joseph. (Genesis 41)

The New Testament prophet Agabus prophesied about a famine that was to affect the earth. It was not given as a doom and gloom prophetic word to feed fear or terror into the hearts of the people, but as

³⁶⁴ In Isaiah 45:1-10, we see that God anointed the heathen king Cyrus because he was willing to obey God. Cyrus did not know God until God revealed Himself to him.

³⁶⁵ 1 Cor. 14:3, 6, 29-33

³⁶⁶ Rom. 8:14, 16

³⁶⁷ John 16:13, Amos 3:7

a warning so they could prepare and make provision for themselves. Sometimes the Lord gives warning in the earth through His prophets about impending disasters.

One present-day prophet clearly foretold what was going to happen on the Gulf Coast and in the City of New Orleans months before Katrina devastated the Gulf coast in 2005. Few, if any, made preparations or ever heard this prophetic word.

I remember seeing the DVD of a man of God warning the city of New York by the direction of the Holy Spirit about what would happen during 9/11. He prophesied it as he was preaching almost two years before it ever happened. The warning came during the year 1999, at a large Christian gathering in Manhattan where a multitude of Christians came together for revival. In those powerful meetings, thousands came to the Lord. God warned the city through this man of God, but few heeded the warning or made any preparation for it. It may even have been averted had the city taken the warning seriously. The majority of government officials do not take things like this seriously so they suffer because of it.

The city of Nineveh received the prophetic word through the prophet Jonah that destruction was coming upon them. The king and the people took the warning very seriously. They repented, fasted, prayed, and turned away from their wickedness. God intervened and the city was spared. New York City failed to heed the warning of a man of God and they suffered for it.

God will warn you about impending disaster to save your life. If you listen, you will get out alive. If you don't then you will suffer loss or possibly your own life. I have seen it happen on a few occasions that I was aware of in my own life.

I always pray for God's protection according to Psalms 91. I pray before I ever leave the house or on the way out and take a stand on that mighty Psalm. Sometimes, I have left the house and remembered I didn't take a specific stand. Immediately, I put it on my mouth and declare divine protection by faith. I have done this consistently for years. I have been travelling for years on airplanes and never had a major problem. I never had the Lord tell me not to fly on a particular airplane, but I have had Him tell me to change my plans. I have been obedient and endeavored to follow His leading. If He ever told me not to get on a plane, car, bus or train, I would obey Him.

One time, He instructed me to get on a plane that was going to have an accident unless there was a divine intervention. I was to be His man on assignment in this particular case, speak a divinely directed Word, and stop tragedy from happening by the power of the Holy Spirit being released into the situation. The details of this story would make your hair stand up on end. The Lord had the co-pilot suddenly bring to a screeching halt the jet airplane after it was halfway down the runway! I confirmed what happened with the co-pilot. She told me that, "Something just told me to abort the flight. I made the decision to not allow it to take off because I was not comfortable with the safety of the aircraft." That "something" that told her was the Holy Spirit or one of His angels on assignment. What nobody knew was that I was on board in my seat praying in tongues over the situation as hard and fast as I could under my breath. The Lord had showed me the intention of the devil to kill everybody onboard. I bound up the devil and loosed the angels in the Name of Jesus. (Matthew 16:18, 19, Hebrews 1:14, Psalms 103:20)

After we pulled back to the gate, they were going to keep all the passengers onboard while they made repairs. The Lord impressed me strongly to speak to the co-pilot and flight attendants to let everybody off the plane. I told them that it was evident that the plane was not safe for travel. They spoke to the pilot about it. He agreed and everybody was allowed to deplane. Did you know that they were not able to repair the plane and had to tow it away to their repair shop? It was supposed to be something minor, but it turned out to be far more serious than they initially assessed. Sometimes, God will use you like that if you will let Him. The Lord could have used anybody, but He chose to use me that day, and I was available. Thank God that He did. Over one hundred people were saved because of it, and the Lord received the glory.

God got me out of a very dangerous situation when traveling by boat. It could have ended in tragedy and death because, initially, I disobeyed the Lord's clear direction. It makes no difference if you are called as a prophet of the Lord or are in some other anointed ministry. If you refuse to follow the Lord's leading you may be in a world of hurt. Just because one is a prophet does not mean that you can always get direction from the Lord other than by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

The boat incident happened when I was going to move our 37' live-aboard sailboat from a marina on St. Thomas to a bay some 15 or so miles away. As we were pulling out of the marina, I heard the Lord whisper in my heart, "This voyage will end up in harm." The Lord quoted to me the words of Paul when he said those words in the story that ended in shipwreck because they refused to listen to the man of God. (Acts 28) I should have stopped right then and pulled back into the marina. I let the pressure of the situation and the expenses govern my actions instead of obeying God. I knew better, but I ignored the warning. I shrugged it off. Have you ever been there? I hope not.

We began the voyage with our sails up along the coast. It looked like a beautiful day on the islands. Without warning, the brisk 25 M.P.H. winds suddenly started gusting to 50 M.P.H. or higher. We almost capsized the sailboat on one of the gusts. We immediately dropped the main sails and turned on the engine. Within a couple of minutes, the engine began to smoke and died. Suddenly we were in big trouble. The swells doubled or tripled in size and the sky started getting menacing. A storm was brewing. We had no sail or engine power so we had no way to navigate the boat.

We were in deep water, so a shallow ocean bottom was not a problem. That part of the coast has a wall of rock that extends for a few miles and makes up the shoreline. The sandy bottom leading up to the coast begins at about a depth of ten or twenty feet and ends in a wall of solid rock. There is no gentle sandy slope leading to a beach in the area.

We began drifting quickly in the direction of the rocky coast. We dropped anchor so we could stop our drifting, but the anchor was not grabbing a thing along the bottom. The bottom was all sand. We were on a collision course with the rocks!

One of my friends, an experienced sailor, retired Navy officer, and a SCUBA shop owner and operator, went on the deck to raise two smaller sails on the bow. I had turned the helm and locked it to navigate away from the rocks, but we were quickly drifting towards them in a straight line! The heavy

swells were taking us in the direction of disaster. Our CSY sailboat was made of very heavy, oversized, reinforced fiberglass. If you know anything about the CSY brand, then you know what I am talking about. It was built like a tank and probably weighed as much as one! The rudder was not able to steer the heavy sailboat without the main sails or engine power.

We couldn't raise the main sails because of the very gusty conditions and run the risk of capsizing the boat. Even though my friend managed to raise the two smaller sails, we couldn't get enough wind power to steer clear of the rocks. My friend was trying to secure the boom, but he was having difficulty because of the very high wind and wave action. It was hard to get a footing on the topside with all the "rock and roll" of the boat. We were "between a rock and a hard place," and it was not a good place to be!

We did not secure the boom quickly enough and it cost us! Suddenly, the wind shifted to the opposite direction. The boom swung violently around the mast and hit my friend on the head before he could secure it. Blood went flying all over the deck. The weather had gotten so bad that I almost did not get to him in time before he went overboard. His Navy survival training kicked in and he grabbed a rope and hung on for dear life. He was starting to pass out. His immediate reaction was the only thing that kept him from going overboard and possibly drowning. I was so seasick at this point that I don't think I could have saved him had he gone overboard. I dragged him back to safety the best I could. His blood soaked both of us. He had a huge gash across his forehead. I helped anyway I could to stop the bleeding.

It was all a mess and it looked like we were going to crash with the rocks in minutes.

To top it all off, the seas were so rough that we all started feeling very seasick. None of us could stand up because of feeling so seasick. That was very rare for me, but it happened on that day. I think my Navy buddy got seasick because of the head trauma he had suffered. Usually, he could work in any weather, but not on this day. As bad as the sea and wind looked, it would be a miracle if we got out with our lives.

To add to the ordeal we were facing, we were too far from the shore to get reception on our cell phones. For some reason, even our onboard radio was not working right. In hind thought, the rock wall was probably interfering with the radio operation. All we had left was a hand held radio that did not have the same range of the boat radio.

I prayed in tongues as hard and fast as I could. Situations like these will make any Christian speak in tongues, even if they never have! I bound, loosed, commanded, and nothing was working. I knew I had missed it, and that I had disobeyed a direct warning from God. That was the reason we were in trouble. In a situation like that, it does not take you long to repent. I did repent and asked God to be merciful on us, to save our lives, and to save our sailboat.

To make a long story short, my wife and the SCUBA shop owner's girlfriend came to our rescue on the SCUBA shop's diving boat. Miraculously, my wife and my friend's girlfriend heard our distress call that evening at the SCUBA shop. The radio receiver was always powered down at the end of the business day. It was standard store procedure to turn that radio off as soon as the doors were closed for

business. The owner's girlfriend said she specifically remembered turning the radio off. I believe an angel turned it on that early evening! Christine (my wife) and the owner's girlfriend swam out to the SCUBA diving boat in the bay and navigated in the bad weather to where we were. We threw them a line from the sailboat and they towed us out and away from the rocks that were looming menacingly close. They towed us into a safe harbor. Oh, it was a happy ending to a terrible day!

Again, in the weeks that followed I was amazed at how well my friend's wound healed and left no permanent damage or scarring. After being hit so hard on the head by a very heavy boom, you would expect him to have major problems, at least a very bad concussion or a skull fracture. He recovered without any problems. Thank the Lord! God was merciful on all of us!

Just a few weeks after this, my SCUBA diving friend and I did some underwater salvage work for a woman that owned a sailboat that was about 10' longer than ours. She had lost engine power through a passage with a very rocky shoreline. She tried raising her sails, but didn't get enough wind from the right direction. She quickly started drifting towards the rocks. She dropped her anchors to stop her precarious situation, but her beautiful sailboat went crashing into the rocks. Her sailboat was a total loss. This happened to a woman that was a very experienced sailor. She asked us to help her look for her personal belongings and whatever was salvageable. That sailboat was also her live-aboard. It was her home. We did not recover much. We found her anchors that did not stop her drifting because the bottom in the area was mostly sand. We found very little except big pieces of the hull, her engine, and a few pieces of custom jewelry. Everything else was completely gone. This happened on a day that was not nearly as menacing as the day we had our ordeal at sea. It happened on a clear day when no storm was endangering her. Compare that to how gracious and merciful God was with us when he saved us from losing our boat and possibly drowning!

Yes, there is gloom and a lot of doom coming on this world, but prophets speak out the truth by the Spirit of truth and not by a gloomy and defeat-minded spirit. Truth as revealed by the Spirit, when acted upon, will produce divine protection and deliverance right in the midst of the doom and gloom the planet may be going through.

I know of strong men and women of God protected right in the middle of all the devastation of hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast of the United States. They believed God's Word concerning His divine protection. They got it! They did not lose their properties and their lives were saved by the power of God.

What are we saying in all this? We are telling you that even if a prophet does come and tell you bad news about a natural or other kind of disaster, the Lord is trying to prepare you, warn you, and finally to protect you, and not trying to scare you! Prophets will always ring out a note of victory in their prophesying. They will let you know about God's divine protection, and not leave you unprotected.

Even the prophecy in the book of Revelation has a continuous sound of victory that reverberates throughout that book. Through it all, the message of the book is that good triumphs over evil, righteousness over sin, God and the Lord Jesus over the devil and demons, and the people of God win!

Though some terrible cataclysmic events are in that book, the outcome is victorious and glorious for the righteous! The chaos that the world will experience is dramatically countered by the victory of the armies of the Lord Jesus wreaking havoc on the kingdom of darkness. That is not doom and gloom at all! That is grounds for shouting!

I like movies where good and right triumphs over evil and wrong, the good guys win, and the bad guys lose out big time. I despise movies where evil triumphs and good fails. A movie that inspires victory and the triumph of good over evil is my favorite. I believe in that kind of outcome because it is the teaching we have all over the Bible. The good guys win and the evil ones get thrown into the lake of fire for all of eternity and we live happily and gloriously ever after. That is no fairy tale either!

As I wrote earlier, the true spirit of prophecy is the testimony of the Lord Jesus according to Revelation 19:10. True prophecy will always point to Jesus as Lord and to the worship of the one and only true God.

How to Cooperate with Prophetic Ministry

The letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2 and 3 reveal by the Spirit what evil existed in those congregations and unveils their true spiritual state. Even in the middle of all the warnings and rebukes given through the Spirit by Jesus Himself, there is praise for the faithful and the promises of God for the overcomers. Each prophetic utterance pointed men and women towards repentance, worship, faithfulness, victory and the trust of God.

John had no knowledge of the activities going on in the churches of Asia. He was exiled on the island of Patmos off the coast of Greece when this revelation came to him from heaven. He did not have natural human knowledge of anything going on in the churches of Asia Minor. If he did have natural knowledge then it would not have been a revelation and the book could have been called “The moral analysis of the seven churches” or “the assessment of church activity in Asia Minor.” The name of the book though is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. (Rev. 1:1) There was no natural human agency involved to inform John. It was all by and in the spirit. (Rev. 1) The supernatural would be left out of the equation if John got his information from people about the conditions of the churches. John’s information came in the spirit and it was all a revelation from God.

It is important that pastors and other ministers learn to keep their mouths shut when visiting ministers with a prophetic call come to their churches or conventions. Don’t tell them anything about the problems in the churches, ministers, ministries or unruly people. You will hinder supernatural ministry by the Holy Spirit if you inform the man or woman of God of your problems. They cannot minister by revelation if you tell them anything in the natural! On the other hand, I am not saying to be dumb and ignore security concerns. Those should be addressed as the Lord leads. I am referring to that, in general, it is better to not say something about the church itself when you have visiting ministers that function under a prophetic anointing.

I was invited by a pastor in Puerto Rico to preach at his church. The pastor that invited me to minister knew that one of the requirements I have for ministry at any church is that you tell me nothing about your church problems or people, and what it is that you think they need to hear. In fact, I speak to no one. I have people around me that instruct and keep others from talking to me while I am preparing to minister.

At another church I preached at, the pastor's wife thought I was just rude and prideful. She didn't like this approach to supernatural ministry. She thought I should be mingling with the crowd before and after the services. Of course, I flatly refused to do what she wanted. She did not like me much after that, especially after I disagreed with her. This pastor's wife didn't understand that if you know naturally what is going on in the church, and if people tell you all their problems, then you left out the Holy Spirit, and you are on your own to minister to people. There is no way to minister supernaturally after that.

Those that know me at all know that I was not being rude or stuck up. I am protective of the anointing of the Lord on my life and refuse to allow input as to how I should or should not minister. I do not want anyone's ideas to interfere with what I am supposed to say and do in a service as the Holy Spirit leads me. I also do not need to get my mind off the Word and listening to the Lord by people unloading on me all their gossip and silly talk.

The pastor in Puerto Rico later told me that he was sorely tempted to tell me about the high visibility preachers that were going to be in the service that night, but he did not. These ministers came from a conglomerate of churches that got off their call and anointing. Their "apostolic" leader allowed a lot of New Age type stuff into their assemblies and many were being led into error. Their once powerful ministry was floundering and falling apart at the seams.

Thank God that the pastor didn't tell me who was in the audience that night because it was a very unusual service. On the way to that service, the Lord changed my message and gave me specific instructions to do three things.

As soon as I began to minister, I noticed that my preaching was very stern and harsh on some points. It was as though I was standing outside of myself hearing myself saying some tough rebuke, and it left me wondering why I was preaching as I was. I was having a running argument with the Lord on the inside about it while I was ministering the Word.

Another pastor, a close friend of mine, was sitting on the front row. He said that what I was teaching was so strong and pointed that he almost felt like crawling under the seat. He knew exactly what I was saying, and to whom I was referring. The preachers from the floundering ministry were seated right behind him. He knew every single one of them. I noticed these fellows were squirming and fidgeting in their seats, but I had no earthly ideas that these were the leaders of that straying ministry. I never met or saw these men before.

Later, we laid hands on a few hundred people in that church. The Lord said to lay hands on everybody in the building and we did. Only one man refused to have hands laid on him. He was the most

senior minister under the apostolic leader of the floundering churches. He stuck to his pride and refused to receive what the Lord had for him that night.

After the service, when the pastor told me about these visiting ministers, I was surprised, but connected all the dots. The Lord was reaching out to these ministers to get them to repent before it was too late. Some did and survived when that ministry had major scandals break out. Others that refused to hear the word of the Lord suffered losses.

The point of the story is that I would have been reluctant in the flesh had the pastor informed me that these well-known ministers were in the audience, and that they had been sent by their leader. I was only able to minister supernaturally and freely when I had no natural knowledge of who was in the crowd. Do you see this important point?

The Lord knows what a church or group of people need and He will address those issues if we will trust Him and yield to Him. If you try to bring information in the natural to an anointed guest speaker, then you will limit or even interrupt the anointing the Lord planned for those meetings. The Lord will bring instruction, correction, rebuke, edification, exhortation, and comfort in His love. He will do it through the preaching of the Word, prophesying, or some other manifestation of the Spirit. Any manifestation of the Holy Spirit that comes should be for the common good of the entire body of believers (1 Cor. 12:7).

Prophecy alone does not make anyone a prophet. Have I emphasized this enough? That should be obvious to folks, but I find that there is misunderstanding along the lines of the prophetic. All in the Body of Christ can prophesy as the Spirit leads in order and decency and free of confusion.³⁶⁸ Any manifestation can come through any believer as the Lord wills it. (1 Cor. 12:11) He will use anybody that will yield to Him. That is all true, but one must never jump to the conclusion that one is a prophet because the Lord has used you in revelation gifts from time to time. Even if the Lord uses you to prophesy often, that does not make you a prophet.

As I said before, it is dangerous and could be life threatening if you insist on calling yourself an office of ministry that God never called you into. Jezebel *called herself* a prophet at the church of Thyatira and she was no such thing. Her insistence opened the door to seduction, sexual immorality, idolatry, sickness and finally to death.³⁶⁹ The same can be said about people that call themselves apostles and are not apostles at all. (Rev. 2:2)

God never called Uzzah to handle the Ark of the Covenant as a priest. He touched the ark just to keep it from tipping over as it was being transported. Even though he had good intentions, his entering upon that which he had no anointing to handle cost him his life. One could argue that Uzzah was ignorant of the rules, but ignorance is not an excuse when handling spiritual power in a wrong way.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ 1 Cor. 14:1, 33, 40

³⁶⁹ Revelation 2: 20-23

³⁷⁰ 2 Samuel 6:6, 7

Korah, Dathan and Abiram in Numbers 16 are another case in point. They thought they could do what Moses and Aaron were doing in ministry. Many only see this incident in the light of a rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron, but it was actually a rebellion against the order and call of God to anointed ministry. They were trying to usurp a call and anointing that God never called them to function in and they died for it. It is dangerous to attempt to usurp a call and anointing. That may be an understatement.

These examples are a warning to us. Paul taught us to stay within the sphere of the call of God and not to attempt to function in the call and anointing of other people.³⁷¹ Some have not paid attention to these warnings and it will not go well with them. They will die prematurely if they don't repent and get into their rightful place. Others yield to demons and seducing spirits, and lead people off the right path of God. One cannot go around calling themselves a prophet or an apostle for long without the Body finding out that they are a fraud. The truth will come out!

I have been in the presence of true prophets of God and in the presence of frauds. *The key distinguishing factors of true prophets are; the anointing on them, their command of the Word, the backing of the Holy Spirit, and the clear testimony of the Holy Spirit inside you letting you know you are in the presence of a true prophet of the Lord.*³⁷² Want-to-be prophets are also clearly distinguished because they have no prophetic anointing, they are off the Word in many areas, often push ungrounded ideas and doctrines, there is no evidence of the Holy Spirit backing them, and you know by the testimony of the Holy Spirit within you that they are fraudulent.

I would rather be an anointed table waiter or janitor than a self-appointed prophet with no anointing. Ask Stephen and Phillip!³⁷³ Both of them were anointed to serve tables and were used mightily by the Lord. You can be anointed to greet people at the door of the church and have signs and wonders manifested through you! Never minimize whatever it is the Lord is calling you to do. Eventually, Phillip was called into evangelistic work. At first, Phillip and Stephen were just anointed table waiters. The Lord used them for His glory with signs and wonders as they waited on tables. You will accomplish a whole lot more for God by staying in your anointing.

Do you know what is even worse than attempting to usurp a call and anointing? Those that insist on making themselves out to be prophets without God's call are presumptuously attempting to be a mouthpiece for Him! Instead of speaking out God's Word, they are speaking out their own words. This is arrogance to the maximum degree. To declare, "Thus saith the Lord," when the Lord has not spoken is dangerous and extremely counterproductive to say the least. It is actually akin to divination, and it is condemned in the Bible.

³⁷¹ 2 Cor. 10:13, 14

³⁷² Romans 8:14, 16

³⁷³ Acts 6:1-6, 8:5-7

Prophets are specifically anointed to be the mouthpieces of God. They speak for God. They may speak with prophecy and/or revelation that come by a word of wisdom, knowledge or discerning of spirits and so forth. A simple study in the Biblical text will bear this out. (1 Cor. 14:29-33) Prophets will see and know things by the Holy Spirit. They were called seers in ancient times because they could see things in the Spirit that others did not see. (1 Samuel 9:9)

True prophets are recorded in Scripture as prefacing what they hear from the Lord as “Thus says the Lord,” or “the Lord is saying” or “this is what the Lord God is saying”, or “the Word of the Lord came to me saying”, or something similar to that. Why is that? They are rehearsing in natural language what the Spirit of God is telling them to speak out. Prophets are the interpreters in human language of what the Holy Spirit is saying from the supernatural realm or from the throne room of God. Sometimes they just say what they saw or what they heard. Prophets speak for and from God to the people. That is an awesome responsibility. The nature of that responsibility should never be taken lightly.

The Spirit anoints true prophets, and they are a gift to the Body of Christ. As I have written, not everybody is a prophet or called to prophetic ministry. Only some are called to be prophets, teachers, apostles, pastors or evangelists. Not everybody is called to one of these public ministries in the Body.³⁷⁴ I trust you do not mind me harping on this, but the church universal needs someone to harp on it for the sake of the truth.

Today much is said about prophetic singing and praise, prophetic churches, prophetic people and more. These catch phrases are the result of an attempt to identify people as part of the “prophetic” movement as opposed to Charismatic, Pentecostal, Word of Faith, Baptist, Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, etc. Often, these terms are used to attempt to identify a group of people with a label and define a separation, a new group, that is, “our group.” Do I have to tell you how childish this is when used that way? It shows a real lack of spiritual maturity. Paul expressed this in 1 Corinthians 3. He also denounced all the church splits, fights, clicks, factions, divisions, and so on.³⁷⁵ The faction and dissention spirit that people yield to by forming their little club is called a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. God’s kingdom (rule, reign, dominion) will lack in those places. If people are using the phrases to identify prophetic ministry, then there is not anything necessarily wrong with the usage.

Don’t misunderstand me and think I am critical against true prophets in the so-called “apostolic and prophetic” movement because I am not. I thank the Lord for those true prophets that walk in the Word and minister by the power of the Holy Spirit! The Body of Christ needs them desperately! One thing this apostolic- prophetic movement has done for e is to make the Body of Christ aware that God has anointed more than evangelists and pastors! It has made us conscious of true apostles and prophets. It has emphasized these powerful anointings in ministry. In some circles that preach the Word, there is a certain stigma if you dare to say that the Lord has anointed and called you into the office of the prophet

³⁷⁴ Eph. 4:8, 11-16

³⁷⁵ 1 Cor. 11:16-22, 1:10, 3:1

or apostle. If He has, and someone says something about it, it is usually said in “hush” tones. It is OK for certain recognized generals in the church to be called by these titles, but there has been an unspoken reluctance for anybody else to be known as an apostle or prophet. The apostolic and prophetic movement has removed much of the reluctance. On the other hand, there are some that associate themselves with the apostolic and prophetic movement that have gone the other way by throwing all caution to the wind and using these scriptural titles irresponsibly. One general of the Church used by the Lord to announce powerfully the apostolic and prophetic, was aware this would happen back when the movement was catching on. I read the warning he gave about excesses and those that took positions contrary to the Word of God after learning about the apostolic and prophetic. Even though this brother was used to bring the apostolic and prophetic to the forefront through books and seminars, he recognized that abuse would appear and that some would misuse and abuse the information. This has happened often in Christendom; the Lord reveals something or adds more insights to certain truths, and somebody takes it to extremes and uses the information wrongly.

In some Christian circles, it seems to be the “in” thing to call yourself a prophet or an apostle. I have seen people that were not even baptized in the Holy Spirit use the titles with NO understanding of what they were doing. God help and deliver us from those ignoramus folk that think this apostolic and prophetic call is trendy or fashionable!

The ministry gift must be proven before you have any right to claim any title for yourself. Even then, one must examine thoroughly their motives. God already knows the intention of the heart so we might as well be truthful about it. We cannot hide anything from Him. (Heb. 4:12-14) Why are people so hung up on titles anyway? It is just pride and wrong motives. Some people have selfish reasons, a desire for recognition, honor, fame, and other self-serving reasons. *If there is no proof in your life of an anointing to stand in that office of ministry then there is no right to claim the name of the office for yourself.* It is that simple. If you are called to stand in any office of ministry, let the Lord anoint you, promote you, and give proof of your call. Quit trying to advertise, promote or sell yourself. Let the Lord prove your call!

If you will walk humbly before God and serve His Body of believers by the Spirit, soon enough recognition of the anointing on your life will come and people will recognize the call of God on your life as apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher.

You will not have to announce what you are called to do. It will become clear and obvious in the process of time. When the Body recognizes you as such, then it is OK to call yourself by that title. Don't harp on it though and become obnoxious about it. Do not get demanding and think everybody needs to call you prophet or apostle so and so. Let God prove your call. Examine your motives and be brutally honest with yourself, and do not deceive yourself. Lay it all down before the Father because He already knows what you think. Make very sure you have pure motives to serve the Body before you go off saying into what ministry gift God has called you.

Did you ever notice that it is rare that Jesus ever called Himself a prophet? It was the people that began to recognize His call as prophet and a sent one of God. Others called Him teacher or rabbi,

prophet, or one sent by God. He did call Himself the good Shepherd, but other than that, He didn't trumpet His call as a prophet.

Moses was an apostle and prophet and you do not find him flaunting the prophetic label.

What about David? He was a king and a prophet. You never hear him calling himself prophet, do you? It is not wrong to call yourself a prophet if that is what God has anointed and called you to do, but to blazon it on your letterhead, ministry business cards, t-shirts, and mugs, is very obnoxious. In some cases, people call themselves "prophets" and swell up with pride like a toad frog. I despise all this label giving and label hunting. It has brought in some quarters a cheap feeling for the words "prophet" and "apostle". I pray that these label and recognition hunters repent.

Many times prophets will preach-prophecy. What is indicated by that statement? Their preaching and teaching is prophetic in nature. I am not referring to the fact that they will preach about "prophecy" or the end times, though they may as the Lord leads. I am talking about preaching and teaching over in the realm of prophetic utterance. This is vastly different from one being anointed by the Spirit to preach and teach in another office of ministry. When prophets preach or teach, it carries the anointing of the prophet to unveil the secrets of the hearts of the people. The preaching of the prophet will be different from the teaching of a teacher, pastor or evangelist. When you hear a prophet preach, it will be coming from the anointing that reveals and unveils things. There is a sense of revelation and the supernatural that permeates his or her words. The expectation of revelation from Heaven oozes through their message. Generally, it is not the systematic preaching and teaching of the pastor or teacher. Most of the time prophets are anything but systematic, unless they are also called to be a pastor or a teacher. The preaching of the prophet is mostly on the edge of revelation and prophecy.

We must understand clearly that preaching is not prophecy, though a prophet may be ministering close to that realm of prophecy. Prophecy comes out of the spirit like tongues and interpretation. It is given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

The operation of the revelation gifts will manifest at a higher degree in the office of the prophet. It is a distinguishing mark borne out everywhere in the Bible. Many times prophets saw and knew things that others did not. That is *part* of their God appointed role and not all of it. Any believer can walk in higher levels of the revelation gifts, but the level in which a prophet will operate and function in these areas is higher and more distinct.

Prophets often see, know and understand things about the spirit and the natural realm that others are not seeing. I gave you some examples when we looked at the discerning of spirits. Again, prophets were called *seers*. This "seeing" capacity develops over the years to very high degrees in the prophets. The more a prophet walks in the Word, obedience to the Lord, and stays in fellowship with Him, the more these spiritual operations manifest, and the more their perception and discernment develops. Over the years, it can get to where their spiritual perception is astounding. The reason is that they walk in an area, sphere, or degree of the revelation gifts reserved for that office of ministry.

Prophets recognize the moving of the Spirit and have the capacity to move in and out of the realm of the Spirit in a moment. Something may be said in normal conversation to a prophet that will trigger something in their spirit and move them right off into the Spirit right on the spot. It is uncanny to see it or experience it. I have been on both sides of this. It can be shocking to you and those around you when it happens. You may not feel a thing one moment and feel completely unspiritual. You may be complaining about the heat and the fact that you have not eaten a thing. You may be stepping from one room into another. You may be getting into the car or walking across a field. Suddenly, and without any warning, the prophetic anointing comes on you and it moves you over in the realms of the Spirit of God.

One time my wife and I were visiting some folks in the Northeast. We were driving all day and I felt tired, hungry, grumpy, and extremely unlovely. I wanted a hot meal, a good shower and to go to bed. I was not being pleasant at that moment. I was actually far from it. Some of the people we were visiting asked us to pray with them. I did not want to pray, and I certainly did not feel like praying. I don't even remember what they wanted prayer about. I reluctantly made a prayer circle with them holding my wife's hand on one side and another family member's hand on the other. I was the only minister present, so they expected me to lead the prayer. I grumbled some more and finally said OK. I really wanted to pray a short one-line prayer and get over it. Don't act so spiritual because I know you have probably been there too. That is a good place to "crucify the flesh" and demand obedience out of your body.

I opened my mouth and said, "Father..." That is as far as I got! Suddenly, I was off in the spirit, God gave me a vision, and some specific instructions for those present. I think we prayed for about 45 minutes after that! It surprised my wife, all the family there, and me. Sudden revelations like these have happened in my life at many unexpected moments.

One day, I was walking out of a church after the service. I was the invited speaker. In the foyer, a man walked up to me and shook my hand. Before I could stop my tongue, some words rolled out of my mouth. I almost looked around me to see who said them only to realize I said them. I looked at this man and said, "You are a married man. The reason you are having problems with your wife is because you are having sex with those other women and she knows about it. If you want God's best for your life you better stop it before you lose your family and Satan completely takes you over." It shocked me and you should have seen the effect it had on this man. He looked like I had slapped him and began to strongly reject and oppose my words. He said in an angry tone, "You are wrong Brother Rodriguez...you are wrong about me..." I actually thought he might take a swing at me. He was angry enough to do it. I am glad he did not because he was a big and muscular man, and I would have had a fight on my hands. I was embarrassed, but I knew I had little to do with what was said to him, except that I was a yielded vessel unto the Lord. God revealed the man's activity and situation out of my own mouth. Months later, I saw this man and he confessed to me that I was right about him. He repented and got his life right with God and did not lose his family. Thank God!

The first time I had this happen to me was when I was 12 years old. My mother and father were members at a Baptist church in Carolina, Puerto Rico. After the service, I saw my parents and sister

talking with the pastor. I approached and they were talking about different things. Suddenly the pastor turned to me and asked, “What do you want to do when you grow up?” What do children usually answer at that age? They respond with something like they want to be a fireman, an astronaut, or something else they will probably never do. Right? Maybe some say they want to be a doctor or teacher or something else. My dad thought I would grow up to run the chain of restaurants he owned. So maybe I was expected to say something like that. I meant to say something like every other kid would say around that age. I opened my mouth and said to my utter amazement, “I want to be a preacher.” It came out of my mouth with authority and without doubt. What? I was shocked at what came out of my mouth with no premeditation on my part! My sister was stunned, and my parents just couldn’t believe what they heard. I wanted to kick myself for saying something so contrary to my thinking, but there it was for all to hear. I must have turned red as a tomato with embarrassment. My mouth knew more about my call to ministry than my head did! I never intended nor thought about being a minister before that moment. Even the pastor couldn’t believe his ears and asked me the question again. He may have thought I misunderstood him. Again, out of my mouth came the same response. It was supernatural, shocking, and totally unexpected.

One young woman that my wife and I prayed with was interested in a certain man for marriage. At that prayer meeting, the Lord told me the man was completely wrong for her. I never even met the man she was interested in. I had no natural knowledge. It came by revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Lord would not let me say a word to her about it. Actually, the Lord told me to mind my own business when I prayed about it. I said, “Well, if you wanted me to mind my own business, why tell me about her situation in the first place! I was perfectly happy not knowing anything about it.” I was not being disrespectful, but I was surprised by His response. He said nothing. It was a prophetic set-up. Something was brewing. I could tell it.

A few days later, my wife and I met with her again to pray. The Lord said, “Tell her what I told you about her future husband.” When I told her the Word of the Lord, she turned as white as a sheet and her countenance fell. She did not receive the word I gave her from the Lord because she was convinced the man she was focused on was supposed to be her husband. The Lord was trying to save her from a world of hurt and discouragement. Because she didn’t listen, she was hurt emotionally. The man she had her eyes on turned out to be wrong for her and finally lost interest in her. God wanted to protect and deliver her from the whole situation, but she rejected the word of the Lord. It cost her.

The point is that God is the revealer of secrets, and He will use men and woman to deliver a revelation as He leads and instructs. He is interested in our wellbeing if we will just listen.

In 2002, I was walking out of a service at the church where I fellowshiped. I saw a friend of mine and his wife standing in the foyer with another couple. My friend presented this unknown person to me and told me that he was a minister. As that minister reached out to shake my hand, suddenly the Lord spoke up firmly in my heart. He said, “This minister is here today to spy on the sheep, and to see how he can start a church in town with them. He is here to steal some sheep!” Try and keep a straight face when

the Lord says something like that to you as you are shaking someone's hand. That minister was speaking to me and I don't remember one word he said!

The next day, the pastor was visiting my martial arts school. I got the opportunity to tell him about my experience. The pastor said (as close as I recall), "I received the same thing when I met him, and made a mental note of it. So it's a confirmation. I'll be watching." Because the pastor heeded the Lord's warning, only two people from his church joined the sheep robber's new church in town.

The Lord Jehovah does nothing without He first reveals His secret to His servants the prophets. Amos 3:7

We could go on for hours telling you of all the times supernatural events like these that have happened. Not all the revelations have been easy to swallow. I have mourned over some, cried over others, rejoiced over some, and prayed at length over some others.³⁷⁶ Most of the time, one doesn't say a word about them, because God never said to share it. Sometimes a revelation or vision can make one tremble all the way down to their toes. Other times, they can make one shout with joy.

In 2000, I woke myself up out of a deep sleep one morning saying aloud, "I have anointed George W. Bush to be the next president of the United States. Pray because Satan is doing everything he can to stop it!" (Read it all before you conclude otherwise because of what he did in office.) I said it so loud that it startled my wife out of her sleep as I sat straight up in my bed. After a few moments of allowing what came out of my mouth to kind of settle in my spirit, I repeated the Word of the Lord to my wife. Later, I told some ministry friends about it. I do have witnesses. I asked myself how George Bush could again be president because he had served two full terms. I thought the Lord was talking about George Bush Sr. I did not know about any other George Bush. Let me explain.

We were residents of the U. S. Virgin Islands in 2000 and did not even have the right to vote for the next president because only stateside residents get that privilege. U.S. territories do not have the right to vote in the U.S. national elections. For that reason, I did not know who was running for president, and had no interest at the time in national politics. I probably should have, but I did not. I did not know at the time that George W. Bush was the son of former president Bush and that he was the governor of Texas. I had to go and research what had come out of my mouth. You know how Mr. Bush went on to become president, and how close it was when it came down to a few votes in Florida! The recount of votes in Florida gave Mr. Bush the official lead and he won by a narrow margin. Do you remember how hard the opposing party fought to reject the outcome that gave Mr. Bush a victory? That was what God was talking about when He said Satan was doing everything he could to stop it. The devil lost and Mr. Bush became president.

³⁷⁶ See example of Elisha in 2 Kings 8:10-13.

Just because one is anointed to stand in an office does not determine that one does everything right. You can be called and anointed, and still mess up royally! President Bush did numerous things in office that I certainly did not agree with. That does not change the fact that God called and anointed him to be President of the United States, regardless of any mistakes he made. Did President Bush miss and mess up in office by making some horrendous decisions? Yes he did. Frankly, just because God's calling and anointing comes to you does not mean that you cannot do wrong things contrary to them. Some go down the path of disobedience and rebellion and lose the anointing. King Saul was mightily called and anointed by God, yet because of disobedience and rebellion, he lost the anointing on his life and ended up forfeiting the kingdom.

One more prophetic revelation I want to talk about. In 2014, Donald Trump began to say he might run for president. The first time I heard him say it on the news, my heart jumped, and I knew by the Spirit that if he did run he would win. Truthfully, I knew nothing about Donald Trump except that he was a billionaire businessman. The day he walked down the escalator at Trump Tower to formerly announce his candidacy, the Spirit of the Lord spoke up in me. I turned to my wife and repeated what I heard the Lord say, "Here comes the next president of the United States." It was crystal clear. It was a revelation. I told numerous friends and family members. Within a week or two, the said Lord said that Mr. Trump was a type of King Cyrus (see Isaiah 45:1-5). I never received that for anyone else. That was a first for me. Needless to say, you may have heard many other believers and prophets say similar things. It's all over the net. Make no mistake about it. God called and anointed Donald J. Trump to clean out the massively huge corruption that permeates all levels of government. That is not all. The day he became president, something started breaking up in the world of the spirit. Strongholds began to crumble. It was distinct. Corruption started coming to light around the world and began to be purged out from government and its institutions, corporations, among musicians and actors, churches, ministries, households and so on. Why is that happening? Satan thought he had the world ready for his antichrist reign. God intervened mightily, and a massive restraining of the enemy's works began! Suddenly, God has given more time to save as many people as possible from Satan's final destruction in the lake of fire. One final earth shaking revival is here, and there is nothing the enemy can do to stop it.

One prophet of the Lord was given this revelation about Trump in 2007! The Lord said out of his mouth, "Trump shall become a Trumpet. I will raise up Trump to become a trumpet." In 2011, the Lord revealed to another prophet that Trump would be president of the U. S. In 2014, the Lord Jesus took another prophet to heaven in the spirit, and revealed to him that Trump was God's choice for president. Many rose up to declare that there was Cyrus type anointing on Trump. All of these things have been clearly documented. That kind of stuff will give you goose-bumps from head to toe, and everywhere in between!

I really took the time to expound on all this about the prophet because of the necessity many people in the Body have of a correct understanding in this area. It may help those that are confused in this area to get out of wrong thinking on the subject.

Much of what I am telling you are truths I have observed in the lives of the true modern-day prophets, and especially of those found in the Scripture, for example as in the lives of: Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Samuel, David, Nathan, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, Agabus, and others.

Identifying False Prophets

Jesus was very specific in His teaching on how we identify true prophets from false prophets.

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree produces good fruit; but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not grow good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them.” Matthew 7:15-20

Fruit is the centerpiece of the identification process. Fruit calls for production AND character. Fruit is not just character, according to the fruit of the spirit that we studied earlier in this book. That is a part of the equation, but the other side is the fact of ministering supernaturally in the anointing of the prophetic call of God. Both aspects will be the determining factors. If you find some prophet that God happens to use supernaturally, but they are immoral or covetous as was the prophet Balaam, then they will have their part among unbelievers. Jesus goes on to teach this truth.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will tell me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did not we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty works?’ And then I will tell them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.’” Matthew 7:21-23

Balaam was like the example Jesus gives here. He was used by the Lord to speak a mighty prophetic word concerning Israel and the Messiah.³⁷⁷ Yet, he yielded to the love of money and lived a life of covetousness. Not only that, but Balaam turned himself over to divination.³⁷⁸ He became a worker of iniquity. He became an example in the New Testament of one having wrong doctrine.³⁷⁹ You cannot

³⁷⁷ Numbers 23:1-25, 24:1-9, 15-23

³⁷⁸ Joshua 13:22

³⁷⁹ 2 Peter 2:15, Jude 1:11, Revelation 2:14

serve God and be covetous at the same time.³⁸⁰ Covetousness is as idolatry according to the apostle Paul.³⁸¹ Just because God used a person at one time in the past to prophesy, cast out demons, or heal the sick, we should not believe that they are of God if they live immoral, covetous lives, and are hirelings (one that is for hire to do anything for a price- as was Balaam).

Some ministers have become hirelings by requiring hefty honorariums in order to speak at your church. They are like Balaam. Money leads them instead of the Holy Spirit. They require more than Hollywood and rock stars. They will not come preach unless they get a limo with their own driver, eat steak and lobster, and stay at the Ritz! There is nothing wrong if a church wants to honor a man or woman of God with great benefits and a huge offering. I am not against that. That is good and honorable. It would be wonderful if every church was in a position to treat a man and woman of God to the best of the best. At the churches that I was privileged to pastor, I did that. I made sure guest ministers were treated like royalty. We always gave them an excellent offering. That is good! I am referring to those that require or demand \$5000 or \$10,000 (or more), and they have a list of amenities that MUST be met for them if they are to come preach at your church. These are hirelings and no better than prostitutes for hire! If they only knew, that where we were concerned, we usually gave speakers a better offering than any expected honorarium. Of course, we would not tell anyone that detail in advance. We would not tell them that they were going to stay in the best hotel in town and eat at the best restaurants. We did not tell them that there would be an assigned vehicle and driver for them. No sir! God requires faith from us, and if a speaker comes, they better come by faith! They need to trust God with us for the money to cover and exceed expenses.

I know I am stepping on a lot of toes by speaking the truth about this, but love for the ministry of God, and for the Body of Christ, demands that these hidden things of darkness be exposed and reprovved by the light.³⁸²

Today, it is easy to come across preachers that actually sell tickets to their ministry events. Oh boy, now I am really messing with a golden calf among many ministries! They charge you a fee to attend their seminars on prayer, prophecy, and more! Do I have to tell you how far removed that is from the gospel ministry example we have in the New Testament? How about all those that sell tickets to their Christian music concerts? Are you kidding me? Where is the free will offering that is taught in the Word? All this ticketing of Christian events is stealing from the people of God the privilege and blessing to sow and reap from their giving.³⁸³ Entertainment venues sell tickets to ball games, rock concerts, circus, theatre, and now, lo and behold, they sell tickets to “ministry” events. Yuk, and double yuk! That

³⁸⁰ Matthew 6:24

³⁸¹ Colossians 3:5, 6

³⁸² Ephesians 4:15, 5:11-14

³⁸³ 2 Corinthians 9:6-10

style of ministry goes against every gospel principle in THE Book! Get out the whips and let the tables of the money changers be turned over!

Other ministers are proponents of an entertainment “gospel” that is not really the gospel at all. The good news was designed by God to heal the sick, cast out demons, get people baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak with other tongues, teach and preach the Word, and lead people to receive Jesus as Lord. Gospel ministers are not entertainers. They are not supposed to be proponents of a “Broadway” style of entertainment, but of the “narrow way” Jesus taught!³⁸⁴ Preachers are supposed to be ministers of the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit.³⁸⁵ Nothing else will do!

Ezekiel chapter 13 further tells us how we can identify false prophets.

1. False prophets speak out of their own inspiration. (Verses 2-3)
2. False prophets are like foxes among ruins or they are opportunists. (v. 4)
3. False prophets do not reveal where the enemy is breaking through (the breaches in the defenses) because they lack true spiritual insight. (v. 5)
4. False prophets will not build up a wall of protection against the enemy so the people of God can stand against their enemies because they are slaves to the enemy themselves. (v. 5)
5. False prophets are seers of falsehood and practitioners of divination because they speak as though they heard or saw something from God when they did not see or hear from Him. (Verses 6-7)
6. God has not sent false prophets. They move by their own impulses through the agency of evil spirits. (v. 6)
7. False prophets whitewash the truth instead of speaking it.
8. False prophets are manipulative, condescending, flatterers, etc. (v. 10)

Read the entire chapter because it is insightful.

True Prophets

If we turn these negative attributes of false prophets around, we begin to get a picture of what true prophets are like and how to identify them.

³⁸⁴ Matthew 7:13, 14, Luke 13:24-30- The narrow door is a reference to the fact that there is salvation, wholeness, health, prosperity, protection, security, and deliverance in none other than Jesus. (See John 10:7, Acts 4:12) He is the door! He is THE way, THE truth, and THE life, and nobody can come to the Father but through Him. (John 14:6) There are not “many ways to God”, as is believed by the new age gurus and false religions of darkness. There is ONLY one way, and His Name is Jesus!

³⁸⁵ 1 Corinthians 2:4, Acts 6:4

1. True prophets prophesy from the heart of God.
2. True prophets are only interested in the welfare of the Body of Christ and people in general. They are never opportunists like Gehazi (a prophet in training) or Balaam.³⁸⁶
3. True prophets reveal where and how the enemies of the Lord and of the Body are breaking through the defenses.
4. True prophets build a wall of protection from the enemy with their preaching and prophesying so the people of God can stand. They always preach or prophesy in a way that leads to victory over the enemies of the Lord and the people of God.
5. True prophets speak only that which is according to the Spirit of God and the Word of God.
6. God sends true prophets. When the Lord sends you, He also equips you with the anointing necessary to get the job done. These are not self-sent or self-promoted people.
7. True prophets never whitewash the truth God gives them. They speak the truth in love plainly and clearly just as they hear it from the Lord. This is done regardless of how the message is perceived, received, or even if it is rejected.
8. True prophets never use flattery, manipulate, or exploit people. They recognize and understand that it is only the truth as revealed by the Spirit that can bring freedom to the people. (John 8:31, 32)
9. To this, we must add that true prophets are also called watchmen. (Ezekiel 33)

Watchmen

Watchman is not something negative (Ezekiel 33). Watchmen are not to be confused with the self-proclaimed heresy hunters, or those that function with a suspicious or critical spirit. Those kinds of people are detrimental to the Body of Christ and are false prophets. They are only interested in “watching” where they can damage people and ministries. I purposely left out the word “men” in the previous sentence from the word “watchmen” when speaking of these suspicious and critical ones. These are not operating as men of God in any way. They are not watchmen in the Biblical sense. They are out hunting and fishing around for something that is against their doctrines of men so that they can demonize people and ministries. Find these, and you may find a loud-mouthed one from time to time, but mainly they are mousy individuals with no spiritual guts or power. They are blind leaders of the blind that think their tradition is the only right religion instead of what the Scriptures teach us. I have seen some of those self-appointed watch dogs that pervert the Scripture and are teachers of falsehood. They are liars, full of jealousy, and are not spiritual at all. (James 3:14, 15)

This sounds somewhat like Jesus’ rebuke to the hypocritical among the Pharisees. (Matthew 23) It is! Their only interest is sectarian and destructive criticism. There is no truth in them.

³⁸⁶ 2 Kings 5, Numbers 22-24, Joshua 13:22

True watchmen are selfless. Often they stay awake during the watch when others are sleeping. To be a watchman can be a very lonely post because they may be alone from time to time. Sometimes the watchman is required to raise a voice when there is no other voice in the area. Prophets are often loners for this reason. They appear to be perfectly happy when they are alone. Sometimes they appear to need no one at all. This quality about them can be very irksome to those that do not understand how the Lord has created them.

I need to qualify what I mean by “loner.” Loner is not to imply separation from the Body with airs of superiority or weirdness! We are certainly not implying that they are not willing to be accountable for their words and actions with other ministers of God and other true prophets.³⁸⁷ They will appear to be different, and can sometimes stand out in a crowd, but that does not mean that they are a weird lot. They are strange to the world and unspiritual Christians, yes indeed!

Prophets mostly keep odd hours. They pray, study, and walk around when others are sleeping or out to lunch. They are not “normal” as some people would call it. I heard the prophet Morris Cerullo say it like this, “You can ask my wife; I am not normal.” He said it in his characteristic raspy voice with a certain look in his eyes that would have left no doubt about it. You may have agreed with him. Ask any wife or husband of a prophet of the Lord and they will probably give a similar response.

Beware of the kind of loner that thinks that they are the last or only one left. As we say in Puerto Rico, “They think they are the last Coca-Cola in the desert”! Elijah thought that for a while. He thought he was the only prophet left that was following God. The Lord let him know that there were 7000 that had not bowed their knee to foreign gods.³⁸⁸

Beware of those prophets that refuse to sit under other ministry gifts and don’t ever belong to a local church. Even the prophet needs to sit under the Word under anointed pastors and/or other ministry gifts. I understand the difficulty of this if you travel a lot in ministry. You may get to church three or four times a year or less. Many times the travelling minister is preaching on Sundays and on other days that people attend church, so you may not see them often, but the principle remains the same. None are an island to themselves, and they need the Word in anointed meetings just like anybody else. They may have to get away and be in public assemblies in other places just to get together with the saints, but they will do this one way or the other if they are going to be obedient to the Word in Hebrews 10:26. We cannot forsake the assembling of ourselves together regardless to what ministry we are called to.

Getting back to the watchmen: they were very important because they could see danger on the horizon long before it approached the city, and they could sound off a warning. Preparations could be made in advance, and the people were not caught off guard. Watchmen sounded the alarm of approaching enemy troops, and heralded the return of the troops from battle after a victory or a defeat.

³⁸⁷ 1 Cor. 14:29

³⁸⁸ 1 Kings 19:14, 18

They also announced visiting dignitaries to the region, and so on. Their job was to report what they saw and heard.

As I stated previously, prophets were called seers in ancient times.³⁸⁹ They see things on the horizon of time as the Lord wills. Things are revealed and unveiled to them by the Spirit of God concerning past, present, or future events. Read these chapters in first Samuel to get an idea of what I am referring to. There it tells you of how the prophet Samuel saw the past, present, and the future. This is easily tracked in the Scriptures. Revelation from God is given to him or her as the Spirit wills. They will be of things that the prophet will have no knowledge of in the natural realm.³⁹⁰ Look at the lives of Elijah and Elisha as proof.

There were also schools of the prophets and different spheres, positions, ranks or casts of prophets. This is one reason that we have Major and Minor Prophets. If we were referring to these classes of prophets in older English, we may have referred to them as different *orders* of prophets.

There is no reason to believe that we should organize ourselves in Christ in this same way. We need to let God tell us and instruct us as to our designated place. Artificial organizations created by men will never be effective. It must be Spirit-led and Spirit-organized so that it is a living organism and not a dead structure. I say this for all those that think we should have specific schools of the prophets today. In the New Testament Scripture, we have no such “prophetic” schools taught by Paul or by any other writer. Not even Jesus had a school of the prophets, and He is our example for ministry par excellence. He did train those under Him to minister, but He was not forming some exclusive club or school for prophets.

If you are the founder of a school of the prophets or participate in one, do not fret at my comments. If what you have is a *ministry school* that you call a “school of the prophets”, I am not knocking your school. Be blessed in all you do for Him, but please do not leave the impression that your school of the prophets is better or more advanced than other ministry schools that are also led by the Spirit. To do so is irresponsible and arrogant.

Before the resurrection of Jesus, generally, the prophets, priests, and the kings of Israel carried the anointing. There were some exceptions, but until the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit did not come to anoint (empower) all believers. Since that awesome day, everyone in the Body can operate in that anointing. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is one of the great gifts of God for the Body of Christ.³⁹¹

Sometimes prophets do strange things to illustrate by the Spirit what the Lord is saying. They can act in odd ways at times as the Lord leads. Scriptures have numerous examples. Agabus the prophet tied up Paul’s hands and feet with his own belt to illustrate the Word of the Lord.³⁹² Sometimes they require

³⁸⁹ 1 Samuel 9:9

³⁹⁰ 1 Samuel chapters 3, 10, 13

³⁹¹ 1 John 2:20, 27

³⁹² Acts 21:10, 11

something odd or unusual, as when Elisha told Naaman to go dip in the Jordan seven times in order to receive his healing from leprosy.³⁹³

Prophets should only obey God, and never allow other well-meaning people or more experienced prophets to get them from obeying the instructions of God down to the last detail. A good warning for everyone, but especially for prophets, is the story I mentioned earlier of the prophet that obeyed the word of another older prophet, even though it was against the clear instructions of the Lord he had received. The younger prophet left the house of the older prophet realizing he had disobeyed God, and a lion ate him. The moral of the story is, “Prophets must only obey the Lord’s instruction or somebody or “something” will eat them for lunch”!³⁹⁴ I know I am being repetitive, but the lesson is extremely important. Good teaching demands repetition. Usually, people don’t get it if it is only mentioned once.

Anyone, prophet or not, that compromises the Word of the Lord for their lives because of some outside influences will suffer the consequences. Satan will gain entry into their lives. I can tell you from the Word, and even by personal experience. Disobedience to God’s instructions will always bring calamity.

What about if we miss it? Join the club. We have all missed it at some point. How about if I prophesy a revelatory word as from the Lord and speak in error? It wasn’t intentional. How about admitting the mistake, repenting, and receiving forgiveness? Show some humility. I have. There are no perfect prophets, but it is always wrong to prophesy for money, to manipulate people, or in an attempt to deceive.

Never say “the Lord said” unless you are completely sure He said it and you are repeating His words and His words alone. The awesomeness of speaking on the Lord’s behalf should weigh on the prophet. The responsibility and the privilege is weighty. A prophetic Word is not a word from “Jaime” down the street, but from the Creator of the heavens and the Earth, Jehovah! Our God is a consuming fire and these things are not games. If we don’t play with fire on earth, how much less should we be frivolous with God’s fire? No games here! Prophets should always distinguish between what is the Word of the Lord, what comes by a revelation, what is an inward witness of the Spirit, and what were just your thoughts. Brutal honesty and humility in these matters is of utmost importance.

Principles from the Ministries of Elijah and Elisha

Many principles are gleaned from the lives of Elijah and Elisha about prophetic ministry. I found approximately 30 principles they demonstrated in their lives that can apply to most ministers of the gospel. Some are in part exclusive to the prophet. I do not have the space in this study to look at all of them, but I want to share the first one because of its great importance for prophetic ministry. Here it is:

³⁹³ 2 Kings 5

³⁹⁴ 1 Kings 13

A prophet of the Lord will understand his or her position before the Lord.

As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand... 1 Kings 17:1

Elijah the prophet understood he had a position before God. He was not uncertain or wavering about it. There was a sheer boldness and confidence in him that he was before the Lord in what he was about to declare.

The word “before” is the Hebrew word *paneh*. It literally means *face*. It is the same word used when Jacob saw God face to face.³⁹⁵ It denotes that one is in the presence of another, facing them as they face you. Often, the word is used of being in the presence of God. Other times, it is translated with the meaning of “appearing before the Lord”. It can refer to the relation of the individual with God in worship and spiritual activity,³⁹⁶ and sometimes it is a direct reference to God Himself.³⁹⁷ The following verses use this Hebrew word to emphasize the presence of the Lord: Psalms 42:1, 16:11, 21:6, Exodus 23:15, 17. This word can refer at times to the presence of the Lord coming to you.³⁹⁸ The Hebrew word sometimes refers to when one finds favor in the sight of God.³⁹⁹ That is one awesome word!

Surely the righteous will give thanks to your Name; the upright will dwell in your presence (*paneh*). Psalms 140:14

This verse points out in the context of our study that a true prophet of God will walk in the righteousness of God and lead an upright life. Prophets with immoral lives will not be ministering by the Spirit of the Lord, at least not for long. Prophets, just like all in the body of Christ, are required to walk in holiness. Without holiness no one can come into God’s presence unless they first go to Jesus in repentance, and receive cleansing from sin through the provision of the Blood. Sin will not and cannot come before a holy God.⁴⁰⁰

Thank God that if we sin as believers in Christ we can repent, receive cleansing anew, and walk on with God.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁵ Gen. 32:30

³⁹⁶ Dan. 9:3, Ezra 9:6, Jer. 2:27, 32:33

³⁹⁷ 2 Chron. 30:9, Psalms 34:16

³⁹⁸ Ex. 33:19

³⁹⁹ Gen 33:10, Job 33:26

⁴⁰⁰ Heb. 9:12-28, 10:19, 2 Cor. 6:14 – 7:1, Heb. 12:10-14, Rom. 12:1, 1 Cor. 3:17

⁴⁰¹ 1 John 1:7-9, 2:1

A prophet ministering by the Spirit is one that stands before God clean, receives the Word of God for the people, and then delivers it to them. Of course, much of what I am saying about prophets can apply to all the ministry gifts, and to all the Body of Christ in general.

A prophet must know how to step over into the realm of the presence of God in worship, prayer, and thanksgiving. Only in the presence of God can he or she hear the Word of the Lord, receive it, and transmit it to the people.

It is important to realize that primarily the prophet will preach and/or teach the Word. Jesus was also a prophet (besides the fact that He was THE prophet) and He went everywhere teaching, preaching and healing.⁴⁰² No, prophets do not go everywhere prophesying to people and foretelling future events. They may do this as the Spirit leads, but that is not their primary responsibility. They are primarily preachers and ministers of the Word and the power of the Spirit. (1 Cor. 2:4) Jesus, Paul and others are clear evidence of this. Paul was also a prophet (Acts 13:1), and he went everywhere preaching the Word. There are many references to this in the book of Acts. His epistles are full of the ministry of the Word and the Spirit!

ALL ministry gifts to the Body are primarily preachers and ministers of the Word and of the demonstration of the Spirit. A person may be called to the office of the prophet, but he or she must mature in the Word and in the things of the Spirit of God to stand effectively in that office of ministry. Elisha was called to be a prophet of God many years before he actually stood in that office of ministry. Paul was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit for a number of years before we are told in the book of Acts that he was a prophet.

Novices and newborn babies will not stand in any office of ministry with anointing and power. I have seen some that have tried and most of the time their ministering comes out quirky, out of place, or at the wrong time. We need to grow up and understand the workings of the Holy Spirit, learn divine order, and follow the Lord's leadings in any gathering of the Body of Christ.

Prophets *have to learn when to speak and when to shut up.*⁴⁰³ Maturity is what will bring prophets to the place where the anointing can work with them and through them. Maturity does not imply perfection in your body or the world of the natural. It does not suggest that one has a perfect character, and that one never misses it. If that were a prerequisite, then nobody would ever stand in any office! Maturity implies that a person has grown spiritually to the place of walking in the spirit. They are not fulfilling the lust of the flesh as a matter of habit of lifestyle.⁴⁰⁴ They have matured in their love walk, and in their understanding of the Word of God.⁴⁰⁵ Maturity denotes that one is no longer a spiritual child being

⁴⁰² Luke 4:24, Matthew 4:23

⁴⁰³ 1 Cor. 14:29-33, 40

⁴⁰⁴ Gal. 5:16-26, Eph. 4:22-32

⁴⁰⁵ 2 Tim. 3:15- 4:2

tossed around by every wind of doctrine.⁴⁰⁶ Maturity is when one learns to live offense free and is no longer walking in strife, unforgiveness, or divisiveness by claiming to be of this group or that other group.⁴⁰⁷

Again, maturity is when one is walking on the commandment of love as one's rule of life even though one may not yet be perfect in it.⁴⁰⁸ The word, as used for "perfected" love in 1 John 4:16, indicates a maturing love walk. It speaks of one that is moving in the direction of perfecting their love walk. It does not imply absolute perfection because that is something none of us will obtain this side of Glory. Yet it does imply a determination and a moving towards perfection. It implies doing whatever it takes to move in that direction and have progress by daily practice.

*Prophets that do not understand that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth will be easy to deceive.*⁴⁰⁹ These immature prophets may get to prophesy things way out of line with the Scripture. Error sets in that way. Frankly, prophets that do not know the Scripture are dangerous and can do a lot of damage.

Jesus said the Word is truth. He also said He is the truth, and Paul said that truth is in Jesus.⁴¹⁰ Jesus was the perfect demonstration of truth in operation. We are to emulate or imitate Him. True prophetic utterance will always, without exception, line up with the Word of God. It will never violate the letter or the Spirit of the Scripture. The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.⁴¹¹ The testimony of Jesus will always be in line with the Word of the living God. The Spirit of God will only back up the truth that is according to God's Word and not what we think is the truth. When prophets minister according to the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit will flow through them, and their words will bring healing, deliverance, edification, exhortation, comfort, warning, revelation like He did through Jesus, Paul and others ministered as prophets.

All this came from studying that one phrase that came through the mouth of Elijah the prophet, "Before whom I stand." Even more can be taught here, but the bottom line is this: Elijah understood his call. He knew that he had favor with God. He was standing before God as upright. He was delivering the Word of the Lord with God's backing. He had communed with God in worship, thanksgiving and prayer. He stood up to speak as the mouthpiece of God. He stood up with confidence and boldness.

When you have been in the presence of God, acting on His Word with boldness and confidence becomes easy.

⁴⁰⁶ Eph. 4:14

⁴⁰⁷ 1 Cor. 3:1-7, 11:18, 19

⁴⁰⁸ Eph. 5:1, 2, John 13:34, 1 John 3:23

⁴⁰⁹ John 16:13

⁴¹⁰ John 17:17, 14:6, Eph. 4:21

⁴¹¹ Rev. 19:13

Evangelists

Evangelists are called to the miraculous, particularly in the power gifts of the spirit such as: the working of miracles, gifts of healing, and special faith. Even though they may have other manifestations of the Spirit from time to time, these power manifestations should predominate.

*Phillip is the only example we have in the New Testament of an evangelist in action.*⁴¹² Paul tells Timothy to do the “work” of an evangelist.⁴¹³ He does not explain what that work is, so we must go back to Phillip and his example as to the work of an evangelist.

Acts 8 should be THE manual of instruction for any evangelist because that is the only place in the New Testament that we find out what it is they do.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. Acts 8:5

Evangelists are not only fiery preachers that preach a salvation message and get people to make Jesus Lord over their lives. This portion of Scripture will prove that theory to be incomplete and very misleading. Yes, salvation is a big part of their message, BUT it is a part of it! Some seem to think that *preach Christ* is only referring to the message of Jesus dying for our sins and the new birth. Some may even throw in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as part of their message. That is not enough to meet the standard of Phillip the evangelist in Acts 8. The Christ that Phillip preached was a risen Christ that would do for the people the same miracles He did while in His earthly ministry.⁴¹⁴ Phillip preached a miraculous Christ of deliverance and miracles.

The people with one accord gave heed to what Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the many miracles done by him. For unclean spirits came out of many crying out with a loud voice, and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. Acts 8:6, 7

Phillip preached and the lame walked, the paralyzed were made whole, miracles were done, and demon spirits were cast out. *There is no such thing in the New Testament as an evangelist that does not have the supernatural of God in manifestation.* One can preach powerfully and charismatically, but if the supernatural is not in manifestation with healings, signs, and wonders, then that one is by no stretch of the imagination a New Testament type of evangelist. You may be an exhorter, but you are by not an evangelist, according to the only Biblical example we have.

⁴¹² Acts 21:8

⁴¹³ 2 Timothy 4:5

⁴¹⁴ Hebrews 13:8

The credentials of a true New Testament type evangelist are not their ordination papers from a denomination or theological seminary of dead religion. *The real credentials of an evangelist are the preaching of the Word, miracles, signs and wonders in demonstration as proof of a living Christ!*

If you have never had the crippled or paralyzed to get up and walk in your meetings, and if you never cast demons out, then you are probably not an evangelist. Many go around calling themselves an evangelist that are nothing like the example set by Phillip. Phillip's example was the preaching of the Word with the demonstration of the power of God in signs and miracles. We need to straighten up our thinking along these lines.

Pastors

Do we have any indication of how pastors are to function and manifest their full potential? YES, we do! First, I will say that pastors are to excel as Bible teachers and preachers. Paul wrote two detailed letters to a young pastor named Timothy. In them, Paul exhorts Timothy to spend much time in study, reading the Word in public, and teaching and preaching of the Word to the people without any compromise.

Paul also alludes to the supernatural that should be in demonstration through all pastors. Paul tells Timothy to do the work of an evangelist.⁴¹⁵ He was not telling Timothy that this was his call to ministry, but that he was to do the work of one. Paul was exhorting him to continue supernatural ministry as he preached the gospel at the church he was pastoring, but also to heal the sick and cast out demons. As we already saw, the only New Testament example we have of the ministry of the evangelist is Phillip in Samaria.⁴¹⁶ He preached the gospel of the Anointed One (Christ), demons came out, and many crippled folks were healed. Paul was instructing Timothy to not forget the signs and wonders side of being a pastor!

Pastor, bishop, and elder are all a reference to this ministry gift. Acts 20:17-28 speaks about this pastoral gift. In the original Greek, Paul calls the elders appointed at the church of Ephesus by all three titles. *Pastors* are also called by the synonymous title of *shepherds*. In fact, the two words are often identical from the Hebrew and Greek languages.

All pastors should flow in the supernatural power of God's Spirit. Healings and miracles should manifest in their ministry. I already gave you the reference to where Paul tells pastor Timothy to do the supernatural work of an evangelist. I will give you two more major scriptural references that should be a mainstay for the ministry of the pastor.

1. *All pastors, bishops or elders, should have healing flowing through their ministries consistently because it says:*

Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will cure the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up. And if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him. Confess faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous one avails much. James 5:14-16

⁴¹⁵ 2 Timothy 4:5

⁴¹⁶ Acts 8:5-7, 21:8

Could this be any plainer? “*Any sick*” refers to that, regardless of the sickness or disease, the healing power of God should be available through the ministry of any pastor or elder.

Secondly, pastors and elders must know how to pray the prayer of faith that ministers God's healing power to people. Every pastor or elder should have a “healing ministry” at the church they are called to minister to. Healing should be a part of the “daily bread” of your church. The conclusion here is that all pastors and all elders should have power gifts in operation through their lives to minister to their flock.

If you are going to a church that does not minister the healing power of God in their services get away from them as hard and as fast as you can! If they do not preach and teach the promises of God and about what Jesus accomplished for us through His death and resurrection for our healing and health, then they are contributing to your sickness and disease, and possibly even to premature death! Get out of that weak traditional environment and get into a church that ministers God's Word on the subject of healing and health! Get into a church that is consistently operating in the healing and deliverance power of God! Go to a church that preaches and teaches uncompromisingly and ministers the supernatural of God! Settle for nothing less!

2. *All pastors, bishops or elders, should have healing and deliverance of the oppressed flowing through their ministries consistently because it says:*

And the Word of Jehovah came to me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to them, “So says the Lord Jehovah to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you kill the fat ones, but you do not feed the flock. You have not made the weak strong, nor have you healed the sick, nor have you bound up the broken. You have not brought again those driven away, nor have you sought that which was lost; but you have ruled them with force and with cruelty.” Ezekiel 34:1-3⁴¹⁷

Though this was written as a rebuke to pastors or shepherds that are not doing their job right, I want to use it to emphasize our point of what they are to be doing through their ministries.

Pastors are to feed the flock of God with the Word of the living God and also to do the following:

1. *Make the weak strong.* Only preaching and teaching the Word of God accomplishes this so that faith comes to people. They only become strong as they learn who they are in Christ, what Christ has made available for us, and the promises and the truths of God's Word. They will only be made strong

⁴¹⁷ Compare with John 10:1-27, 1 Peter 5:1-5, and 2 Timothy 3:15- 4:2.

and rise up out of weakness if they are taught victory, dominion, authority over the devil and all demons, and understand that Christians are all to be anointed and powerful witnesses with undeniable proofs! ⁴¹⁸

2. *Heal the sick.* Here it is again. Healing of the sick is to be a part of every pastor called by Jesus Christ to shepherd. Notice in this verse above that this was God's Word given to Ezekiel the prophet. This rebuke was for pastors that are not ministering healing to their flocks. It was written as a warning and a correction for traditional shepherds that refuse God's healing power. God does not take kindly to pastors that take the “wool” (money or goods and services) from the sheep and do not minister healing to them. Read the rest of this chapter. God has some harsh things to say about pastors that are only out for themselves and refuse to minister supernaturally to people.

3. *Bind up the broken.* Shepherds are to minister to the whole person: spirit, soul and body. They have supernatural ministry equipment to minister to the needs of the flock in every realm of life. I am not referring to natural counseling or natural knowledge in ministry through an earned degree in psychology of the heathen. This is supernatural ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit. I do not believe in these counseling sessions people seem to need with their pastors. I see no evidence for all that foolishness in the entire New Testament. I agree that people may need “special” help now and then, but it should be by the power of the Holy Spirit with revelation gifts flowing to minister to the people and not by psychology. Psychology is a humanistic endeavor that has no spiritual value at all. It is the world's system of mental health, and it is weak and powerless. True mental health comes by the renewing of the mind through the Scripture.

Psychiatry is not God's answer to delivering the mentally ill. The anointing of God ministered in deliverance and powerful Scriptural instruction is what binds up the broken. It only comes through the Word and the Spirit of God. ⁴¹⁹

Many churches are depending on psychological ideology and natural programs that are not scriptural. The best teaching on earth for children, families, marriage, husbands and wives, and human relations is in the Scripture and not in psychological hogwash. Much in psychology and psychiatry actually runs contrary to the Word of God. The best thing is to start out by teaching the Word to people in these areas. If people will get the Word into their spirit, the Holy Spirit will have something to work with to lead and guide them into all truth in all these areas.

Read the rest of Ezekiel 34. Pastors are to seek out the lost. These are not just those that do not know Jesus. It also includes those that once knew the Lord, but are now lost again in the world.

⁴¹⁸ Romans 10:17, 4:16-23, 2 Corinthians 1:20, 2:14, 5:14-21, Ephesians 1:17-23, 3:20, 6:10-18, Acts 1:8, Mark 16:15-20, James 4:7, and the rest of the New Testament!

⁴¹⁹ 2 Timothy 1:7, Romans 12:2, 2 Timothy 3:15-17

Stop trying to be the shepherd of the flock if you are called to be a sheep. You may be an evangelist, prophet, or teacher, but in a local congregation you may only be a sheep in that sheepfold. Just because you are known as a prophet elsewhere does not give you the right to interfere in how the Lord is leading your pastor to do things. No one but the pastor and His staff have any business running the church or leading the flock. Not everyone is a shepherd or pastor. Paul said that only some are pastors, as is the truth for all ministry gifts.

If you are called to shepherd, quit trying to be a sheep! Shepherds make long-term lousy sheep, and sheep make lousy established shepherds! Pastors will never make it as a full time sheep, and they will be frustrated and disgusted half the time. Shepherds are “made” differently. Accept it or get ready to be in a mess.

I have some more to say. Big problems have happened when people are out of their place in a church. If you are called to be a pastor and you know it, pray, fast, and seek God until you hear from Him as to where the people are that you are called to shepherd. Find out in what area you are called to minister. For a time, you may be in an anointed and very powerful church until you can step out on your own. Sometimes God will call you to serve under an established pastor until you learn enough to get out on your own and begin a church.⁴²⁰ It was that way with me. Until God sends you out on your own, you have to use a lot of restraint and self-control, and keep your mouth shut as long as you are at some other pastor’s church. It’s not your church, and God didn’t call you to shepherd that particular flock. As long as you are there, you must follow God’s instructions as given to the senior pastor. So shut up, sit down, and listen to the Lord. Be loving, kind, and submissive, whether you like it or not. If you hear or see something you don’t like, then pray for the pastor. Stay open to God and His Spirit, study the Word profusely, and fine-tune your mind and spirit. Then when He speaks, obey Him!

As a pastor, as the Lord led, I used to invite people to minister to our church that had different ministry anointings in manifestation. In the process of time, we had all five “forefront” ministries come. We also had others share that were exhorters, and sometimes we had a psalmist that had no other ministry in the Body. A good church needs to hear from all different kinds of anointed preachers and teachers as the Holy Spirit leads and guides the pastor of a church. A pastor is not, and never will be, a “jack of all trades” in his church. Most pastors are called to only be pastors. They will never be prophets, apostles, or evangelists.

Pastors should be apt to teach, but they are not necessarily called to be teachers with a teaching anointing. Anointed teachers in the Body can come to a church and by the Spirit enhance the Word the pastor has taught previously. They can bring the sheep up higher in the Word. It would be wisdom for pastors to bring in some of these anointed ministers from time to time as the Lord leads. Allow their ministries to build up the flock and strengthen them further in the Lord.

⁴²⁰ Forget anything I have said if you are in some weak, powerless, gutless, unbelieving church!

If you are a pastor and think that you can do all the ministries, you are in for a rude awakening. We need one another in the Body. We need anointed ministers and preachers. You see this with Paul and his fellow ministers. He would tell churches to receive other ministers that he knew about and had proven ministries. They were not to let every “Tom, Dick, and Harry” that called themselves by some title have a place of ministry. Paul was very selective in his recommendations to churches concerning other ministers. Note Romans 16 and other passages in this respect.

As a pastor, when I found out there was a big meeting in my city with an anointed minister of God, sometimes I shut down our own church services and urged everyone to go to the meeting. I let the whole church know that I was going to the meeting and that they should do the same. I never lost any flock by doing that. I actually gained people in the process by participating in great citywide meetings of men or women of God.

In a fourteen-year period, as pastor of two churches, I only did this about four times because I was specifically led by the Spirit to do it. I did not do this for every meeting that came to our city. I would not invite every “Tom, Dick, and Harry” to my church at all. I was prayerful, selective, and watchful. I always listened to a minister’s audio messages before I ever invited them to come speak at our church. I wanted to make sure they weren’t going to confuse the sheep with strange ideas, teachings, or unbelief. I was (and am) very cautious, so don’t misunderstand what I am saying. Guest speakers were brought in when the Holy Spirit prompted me to do it because it was going to be beneficial for the flock. When I obeyed the Lord, it always was a big blessing for all the church. I did invite a couple of people that I should never have let preach to the flock. I missed it, but God was bigger than my mistakes. If you teach your congregation well, they will have enough sense to “eat the hay and spit out the sticks” just like an old cow. The best is never to put your congregation in the position to have to spit out the sticks in the first place.

Elders and Deacons

A group of elders must operate in such a way that they recognize the leadership of the pastor of the church. They should not be challenging or contradicting the senior pastor, as long as the pastor is functioning according to the Word. (Heb. 13:7) *An elder board is a nuisance unless the elders are mature saints that are willing to yield to the authority and direction of the senior pastor.*

Elders must walk in the love of God and be mature in the Word of God. They should be interested in meeting the needs of the people they are called to minister to at the local church. Elders need to be good teachers of the Word. Again, this does not necessarily mean that they have the teaching gift on their lives, but they should know enough of the Word of God to be able to teach others the principles of Christ. An elder that cannot teach others is not a true elder and should never be in that role.⁴²¹

⁴²¹ See references to this pastoral office of the elder in 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 5:1, 17-22, Titus 1:5-9

We should never get in hurry to appoint elders. One should follow Scriptural guidelines and never appoint a novice.

Elders are called into a leadership role to pastor under the senior pastor. They are not called to run the church and order the pastor around as they see fit. An elder board that attempts to lord it over the pastor and the flock needs to be fired! I have seen pastors that were sitting ducks for their eldership. They had little say and authority, so the pastors were wimps and patsies. A pastor with little to no leadership is very detrimental to a church. Churches without a head are monstrous. Many churches are headless because the elder board controls and governs their senior pastor. Something else happens at churches like that. They have little to no anointing! Turn your pastors loose in the Name of Jesus to study the Word, pray, and minister to the people as the Holy Spirit leads him (or her), and see what happens! The anointing will begin to flow and fruit will become evident.

Less is more when you have elders that are anointed and appointed. More will be accomplished for the kingdom of God with two anointed and appointed elders than with an “elder board” of 20 or more. I would rather have one elder that has caught the ministry vision and mission of the church. Just one that is called and anointed and is powerful in the Word and in prayer, and knows how to pray the prayer of faith to minister healing to the flock, is better than to have a thousand elders with no anointing!

While I am in this Church-meddling-mode, here is something else by inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord. Tell Sister Bucket Mouth, Aunt Nosy, and Ma Busybody to quit trying to run the church! The same goes for Uncle Complainer, Brother Contrary, and Pa Motor Mouth. Bevis and Butthead need to sit down! They need to shut up, sit down, learn the Scripture, repent, get right with God, and get out of the way of the God-appointed leadership!

What about deacons? As long as someone called to be a deacon tries to pastor, the church is going to have serious problems and “anointing” deficiencies. Deacon boards are also a known source of trouble! Pastors, I strongly suggest you do not have a “deacon board” and let one of the pastors be in charge over the deacons or “ministry of helps.” (1 Cor. 12:28) I would avoid calling them “deacons” and call them what they are. The Greek word *diakonos* is better understood by the English word SERVER. *Deacons are servers under the direction of the senior pastor and the pastoral staff, and nothing else. They are not in charge of church government, and are not expected to be in administration of church affairs.* If your church has not grown to the place of having other pastors under you, then you should be in charge as the pastor until the Lord adds another pastor to your leadership. The Scripture does not teach us to have deacon boards. Deacons are the ministries of helps called of the Lord *to serve* the people of God in that office, and they are to do it with an anointing.⁴²² As long as they stay in their designated place, and do not try to run church business, then things can function according to the Word in decency and in order. (1 Cor. 14: 40)

⁴²² Acts 6:1-8, 1 Tim. 3:8-13

Teachers and teaching

A little known foundation of the church is teaching.

The foundation of... the doctrine (teaching)... Hebrews 6:2

The Greek language in this passage does not necessarily demand the translation, “the doctrine of baptisms.” From the Greek text, there is no absolute reason to think these two words **baptisms** and **teaching** (doctrine) should be one phrase, and not speaking about two completely different areas of the foundations of our faith. The word *doctrine* can stand all by itself. Make no mistake about it. The Greek word here is the noun *didache*, or “teaching and instruction.” It is derived from the verb, *didasko* (to teach), which in turn comes from the root word *dao*. This root word indicates *to learn*.

Any student of the New Testament should know that teaching is a very important part of church activity. Here are some terms used from the Hebrew Bible, and some terms used in the Greek New Testament. Each one is related intimately to teaching and establishing doctrine.

The Hebrew Bible terms connected to teaching and instruction are; discipline, law,⁴²³ discernment, wisdom, knowledge, illumination, vision, inspiration, and nourishment.

The Greek Testament terms associated with teaching and teachers are; instruction, acquisition of knowledge (or learning), presentation (of truth), elucidation, exposition, authority, care, supervision.

As you can see, many words in Scripture describe for us the word *doctrine*, and what is included in the transmission of teaching.⁴²⁴

Here are some things that you will not find in a dictionary or encyclopedia. It will shock the religious “pants” off folks brainwashed by tradition, but here it is.

Whom we announce, warning every man and *teaching every man in all wisdom* that we may present every man full-grown in Christ Jesus... let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching... Colossians 1:28, 3:16

Did you see that we are to teach in *all* wisdom? Most churches on the planet have neglected to do that! Am I being condemning or judgmental or is this the unvarnished truth? You may wonder how I can say this. Let me quote to you some of the subjects inside the wisdom of God, and you tell me if this is true or not. You judge my words and see if they are right or wrong. You decide.

⁴²³ *Law* in the Hebrew Bible is *TORAH*, that is, the “instructions” and “teachings” of God to Israel.

⁴²⁴ Go to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, under the entry “Teaching, Teach” and study it out for yourself. Many scriptural references are there. I got these terms from this reference library.

Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding...Length of days is in her right hand, riches and honor in her left hand. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace. She is a tree of life to the ones who lay hold on her, and happy are the ones holding her fast. Proverbs 3:13-18

Remember that the writer is the wealthiest man on the planet in his day. In Solomon's day there was so much gold that silver was considered worthless. This is NOT speaking of spiritual wealth or eternal life. This is speaking of abundance of natural wealth and long life on the earth. Religious folks want to spiritualize everywhere it speaks about abundant financial wealth as though it is teaching "spiritual riches." Any unprejudiced person can see that these, and MANY other references in the Bible, are to natural riches, wealth, and abundant provision, but religion and tradition blind people to the truth.

And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. Genesis 13:2

I am so glad the Lord cut through all the nonsense of tradition and included "cattle" in this verse. Cattle cannot refer to something spiritual! This is real gold, silver, and real Angus beef! Galatians 3 says that we are the seed of Abraham in Christ Jesus and that the blessing of Abraham is by our faith!⁴²⁵

A part of the teaching of Godly wisdom is riches (wealth), honor, length of days (health, long life), pleasantness, peace (as in "shalom," which is an "all that is good" inclusive term), a tree of life, and happy (which literally means "blessed" and "prosperous.") If a church is not including these things in their teaching then they are not teaching ALL wisdom, but only parts of it. These verses prove that wisdom includes more than the character traits of wisdom, as outlined in James 3:14-18, and throughout the book of Proverbs.

The Word of Christ will never be richly in you unless you include these parts of God's wisdom teaching. That will blow out traditional circuits I know! Here is another list from Proverbs of things inside the Wisdom of God.

I (wisdom) love those who love me, and those who seek me early find me. Riches and honor are with me; enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my increase is better than the best silver. I walk in the path of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice; to cause those who love me to inherit wealth, and I will fill up their

⁴²⁵ Galatians 3:29, 14- Also, look at Genesis 24:34, 35 for an assessment of all that Abraham's servant saw in his master's life as the blessing of the Lord. Abraham is the father of the faithful and of our faith. (See also Romans 4:12.) He is an example of the kind of faith we are to have. (Galatians 3:7-9) Note that the gospel was preached to Abraham. (Galatians 3:8) If I taught nothing else, this is more than enough proof that abundant provision is a part of the gospel!

treasuries. Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of His way, from then, before His works.
Proverbs 8:17-22

Wisdom teaching will bring light concerning God's true method of riches, honor, enduring wealth, AND righteousness! I feel sorry for preachers that belittle our Covenant in this area of wealth and health. They think they are demeaning us by saying that we preach a "*health and wealth*" gospel! I have to say "thank you" when I hear it because I find it a compliment instead of an insult. Those that think the "health and wealth" gospel is an aberration are woefully ignorant of the Word of God, and that is not even to mention the fact that they are under the influence of a demon spirit of error. Can they read? If they will only read the Bible, they would have to conclude differently. Theologians and preachers that do not know the Bible themselves have indoctrinated most churchgoers to oppose the clear teaching of the Bible on wealth and health! I hope that they will repent. Woe will be to these deceivers if they do not repent!

Proverbs connects all the aforementioned with righteousness. Try that on for size because part of the instruction we are to give the church from the Word is "instruction in righteousness."⁴²⁶ Study Psalms 112 and see how wealth connects to righteousness. Many in the Bible were righteous and wealthy! Here is a short list. Abraham, Job, Joseph, David, Solomon, Esther, Boaz, Daniel, and many more, including Jesus, were wealthy and righteous!⁴²⁷ The problem is not wealth, but covetousness. Covetousness is trusting in money instead of trusting in the living God that gives us richly all things to enjoy!⁴²⁸

I am not speaking of the world's system of gaining wealth, which is the way of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11. They embraced a godless system of getting money their own way. The people at Babel left God completely out of the equation and sought to do things without Him. It was the system of getting things by the sweat of *my* own brow and *my* ingenuity. It was the way of getting things by the "strength of my own hand" as it says on Deuteronomy 8:17 instead of understanding who is THE Source of all

⁴²⁶ 2 Timothy 3:15, 16- Get a grip on the fact that the Word of God inspired by the Spirit is supposed to make us wise and instruct us in righteousness. We have seen in this study that righteousness is a word better translated as the all-inclusive phrase, "the salvation of God." Everything bought and paid for through Jesus' sacrifice for us is included in that term. Here is one many do not know about, but is included in our redemption. Read it for yourself in 2 Cor. 8:9 and notice the context is speaking about giving an offering of MONEY.

⁴²⁷ If Jesus was poor, why in the world was He in need of a treasurer? Judas was the treasurer for His ministry. Jesus had many wealthy people supporting His ministry. (Luke 8:1, 2) His outer robe was so expensive that they cast lots for it because it was a seamless piece of material. We could go on, but unbelieving preachers and churchgoers that oppose this message just need to learn to read the Bible!

⁴²⁸ 1 Timothy 6:10, 17

provision. I am referring to God's "system" of operating in wealth revealed throughout the Bible for His kingdom people.⁴²⁹

The Greek word used for "disciple" when Jesus said just before His ascension into heaven, "Make disciples of all nations," refers to making pupils, or learners.⁴³⁰ Probably, a better word we all understand is the word, "student." The Hebrew translation of this Greek word, used in the most widely used Hebrew language New Testament, is "*talmid*." This word simply means, "a student."

Matthew 28:20 uses the word "teaching" in relation to making students. "Teaching" is a part of our foundation in Christ according to Hebrews 6. Teaching, and making people students of the Lord, is essential.⁴³¹ If you having no calling into this teaching gift for public ministry, you can still teach something to someone else from the Word. We should all be doing that as part of what the entire Body of Christ is to do. We are to teach people that are willing to learn about the things of God.

A student is one that diligently learns, acts on, obeys, believes, and passes on His teachings. True teaching is the Holy Spirit taking the Word taught under His anointing and revealing it in you. The anointing of the Holy Spirit teaches you the Word. It unveils the wisdom of God to you. That is why you need to sit under excellent teachers of Bible truths. Find those that are anointed and moving in the Holy Spirit of God.⁴³²

Bible teachers are thorough in their presentation. They analyze, study, research and organize scriptural truth in a systematic way for presentation to others. They do depend on the Holy Spirit in this and should always depend on His anointing to teach the Word. If you have not noticed, the Lord has anointed me to teach the Scripture. It is one of the graces of the Lord on my life. I can tell you by experience that teachers are very good students themselves and are always searching the Scripture, listening to the Holy Spirit, and love to teach the Word. This was the first area of ministry the Lord called me into in 1975. It has developed over the years, as it always should. It would be sad if I had not improved over the years.

⁴²⁹ See Deuteronomy 8:17 and 18. The worldly way of getting money and God's way are there clearly taught. Some good places to begin studying about God's abundant provision for His people are Genesis chapter 14 & 26, the book of Proverbs, many parts of Ecclesiastes, Philippians 4, 1 Timothy 6, and 2 Cor. Chapters 8 and 9. There are requirements, and there are obedience *tests* along the way into God's way of provision. Faithfulness, stewardship, giving and receiving, tithing, etc. are all part of God's way. I'm sorry to have to tell you that often what is popularly taught as stewardship in churches is not God's way at all! God's way is not "cutting credit cards" and never spending a dime on yourself so you can "save" enough money to get out of debt. I believe in God's idea for debt cancellation. (Deuteronomy 15) Miserly lifestyles are a part of the curse and not the blessing. God's way is by tithing, seed sowing, and through receiving a harvest. All that other stuff is manmade "financial planning."

⁴³⁰ Matt. 28:19

⁴³¹ John 8:31, 32

⁴³² 1 John 2:20, 27, John 16:23, 1 Cor. 2:2-14

Over the years, the Lord has blessed me with increased understanding, and I will never cease to learn and grow in revelation and understanding as long as I am in this body. This is the right attitude and demeanor of a good instructor. Good teachers never get puffed up thinking they know it all. They don't and I don't know it all either. I know more today than I did 45 years ago. I will know more tomorrow than I do today. Almost every single day, I learn something from the Word that is new to me. It may not be new to others, but it was new to me. I love the Word of God! It is never boring nor does it ever get "old."

A good teacher is always a great learner. They are very eager to learn. The word "teacher" implies also that one is willing to be taught and learn. Teachers are teachable! Yet teachers are very mindful of what they learn and from whom they learn it. They don't eat at every "table" of revelation that comes their way. I refuse to follow the revelation of the moment without examining it in the Scripture. I am very cautious to examine teaching and revelation, regardless of how respected the teacher is. I do not open my mouth like a little baby bird and take whatever some "teacher" wants to shove in there. No sir! One must have a discriminatory palette, be selective according to God's Word, and not eat whatever you are fed without examining the Word on it. Not all the revelation making the rounds in the Body of Christ is Scriptural. Some of it is stark error leading people astray. Other "revelations" are half-baked semi truths that are also leading people down the wrong path. Half a truth is as bad as error. Many times that is the devil's strategy of, "Just give them enough truth mixed with deception and then we will have them duped".

We are supposed to be led by the Spirit of truth into all truth. There is a legitimate truth and we can arrive at it through study, research, searching in the Word and by the direction of the Holy Spirit for the revelation of truth.

For years I have followed this pattern "to study to show myself approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15), but here are some important points:

- I never teach on something if I do not have many Scriptures to back up my subject.
- I only teach that which the Lord gives me to teach in any service or church that invites me to speak. I never prepare sermons! I listen to God and allow the Holy Spirit to tell me what He wants the people to hear, and then I proceed to study in line with His instruction and direction. I also stay open to follow the Holy Spirit at any time. If He wants to change or amend what I was planning to say, or if He wants an entirely different path taken in a service, I will follow His guidance and leading.

I have had Him change my message just as I got to the pulpit and was ready to open my mouth. I have had Him change what I had on my notes mid-stream, and many times He has added things that I did not plan to say, but He saw fit for that church or assembly.

Sometimes, I never did follow my notes in a service. Other times, I started in the middle or at the back of my notes. You may ask, "Did that ever throw you off?" When I first began to teach and follow God it was a surprise to me, and it caught me off guard. Over the years, you begin to understand better

your gift, and learn how the Holy Spirit uses you. Now I just do whatever He wants in a service by faith. I don't get rattled or taken by surprise if He changes directions on me. I have to trust Him and follow His leading. Follow the anointing! That is a vital key.

I remember one time how the Holy Spirit got my attention. He wanted me to preach something different. I got up to preach, and when I opened my notes, suddenly the page I had written on went hazy. I could not see or understand the notes. That was a surprise! I kept looking at my notes, and they looked like they had a cloud over them. I could not see the words through the hazy cloud! So what do you do? I stopped, and prayed in tongues a few moments until I had clear direction. Once I got the clear direction, and determined to follow the Spirit, I gradually began to see my notes again. That evening, I only got through the first two Scripture texts. I had four pages of notes, but preached all the way around those two texts for at least an hour as the Lord led me. He was teaching me that it was good to study, pray, and write down the notes and instruction He gives me, but that I had to follow Him in the delivery of the message. He knew exactly what the people needed to hear. I learned the lesson!

- I stay away from divisive subjects that do not have ample Scriptural support and have little to do with the spiritual growth, wholeness and victory, and empowering of the people of God.
- I refuse to major on the minors of Scripture in any public arena.
- I will not compromise the Word of God on the major themes of Scripture. Major themes are; redemption, rights and privileges in Christ, salvation, healing, health, baptism of the Holy Spirit and tongues, faith and perseverance, love and compassion, joy and shalom-peace, prosperity and the principles of sowing and reaping, victory and Divine protection, wisdom, the priority of God's Word, prayer, holiness, our covenant sealed in the Blood of Jesus, righteousness, resurrection, eternal judgment, the authority of the believer in Christ, the dominion of the Name of Jesus, the catching away of the church, and the visible return of the Lord to rule and reign.
- Sometimes anointed teaching requires dismantling tradition, and kicking over sacred religious cows of wrong thinking and teaching that keep the people of God from receiving their inheritance in Christ. (2 Tim. 3:16- 4:2)

I have followed this pattern consistently over the years when I preach and teach at other people's churches. The only exceptions have been by special manifestations of the Holy Spirit to bring a correction or rebuke in public, as in the story I told you about when the ministers of a straying church were present at a certain church meeting where I was ministering. It all turned out good and beneficial for the church that invited me to preach. It was actually a powerful service. The anointing was rich, and people received healing and deliverance that night for the glory of God.

I have to admit that I made some bad mistakes along the lines of teaching in the late 80's that carried a high cost. I repented, God forgave me and restored me, and that is what really matters. I won't magnify all that old junk that happened in my life because it is all under the Blood. I will give you the positive side instead. Here are some characteristics of mature Bible teachers:

1. Teachers judge what they allow to enter their eye and ear gate as supposed revelation.
2. They examine everything with the Scripture, and will not teach something unless it is clearly taught in the Word. They will search and research for evidence and clear proofs in the Scripture. This is a powerful key to staying out of error and in the truth of God. Trust me when I tell you that a lack of sticking to the Word will cause you to go down the wrong path in teaching. Never follow or teach unsubstantiated revelations or doctrines that have nothing to do with the deliverance and the spiritual growth of the people of God. I have been there and it is a mess. It is far better to always stick to the Word!
3. Teachers will stay away from personal opinion and be firm on the truths of the Word.
4. They give references from the Word and never assume that people know what they are talking about.
5. Mature teachers are not afraid to correct their thinking, teaching, and their speaking when they see something in the Word contrary to what they believe.

Excellent teaching is always rooted and grounded in the Scripture (chapter and verse please!) and is not based on whims, movements, ideas, philosophies, trends, political or religious correctness, traditions or anything else contrary to the Word.

It is important to distinguish between scholastic teachers, instructors and college professors that are teaching natural knowledge, and anointed Bible teachers that minister the dynamic truths of God's Word by the power of the Spirit. One is natural and the other supernatural. There is a vast difference between motivational speakers and anointed Bible teachers. Life coaches are not anointed Bible teachers. Don't ever think that they are! Life coaches are natural instructors using psychological methods based on humanistic thinking and criteria that is not based on God's Word. If you are called to any of the public ministries we have discussed, you are not a motivational speaker, life coach, facilitator or anything of the type. You are anointed by God to stand in an office of ministry and minister His Word and power as He leads. Never forget that.

Teachers in ministry, as with every ministry gift, have a supernatural endowment of the Holy Spirit to stand in that office of ministry to impart instruction from the Word of God to the Body of Christ. It is not natural ability. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit coming through an office of the ministry as much as the prophet is anointed to stand in his or her place. Sunday school teachers are not this teaching gift. Imparting information is not the same as having the teaching anointing on your life that reveals the Word to the heart of the listener.

Jesus was the epitome of an anointed Bible teacher and He had supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit in operation around Him. This is important because anointed Bible teachers will have healing and deliverance manifested as well. Again, I emphasize that all ministry gifts will have manifestations of the Holy Spirit as evidence of the anointing of God upon their lives. It is interesting

that often through a teacher comes the ministry of the Word that will bring deliverance and healing to people. The anointed Word given through anointed teachers will drive out darkness and bring light. (Psalms 107:20, 119:130) I have seen it happen repeatedly. I would minister the Word on healing and people would be healed without ever ministering to the sick through the laying on of hands.

Please look at these scriptures on teaching, doctrine, teachers, learning and study for a basis to many of my comments in this section:

Matthew 4:23, 5:2, 7:28, 29, 9:35, 13:36, 15:9, 22:16, 28:19, 20

Mark 4:2, 7:7

Luke 4: 14, 15, 24:27

John 1:38, 49, 3:2, 5:39, 6:46, 8:4, 14:26

Acts 2:42, 5:42, 11:4, 13:1, 15:35, 17:1-3, 11, 18:11, 26, 19:8-10, 28:23, 30, 31

Rom. 2:20, 12:7, 15:4, 16:17

1 Cor. 4:17, 12:28

Eph. 4:14

Col. 2:22

1 Tim. 2:7, 12, 3:2, 4:11

2 Tim. 1:11, 3:15- 4:2

Titus 1:9

Heb. 5:12

James 3:1

Revelation 2:14-15, 20

Chapter 5: Finding your Place, The Anointing, and Divine Guidance

The teaching in this book would be incomplete if we didn't give you some additional information about finding your rightful place in the Body of Christ. The importance of knowing where the Lord wants you, and what He wants you do, is vital if we are ever to have a powerful Christian life. The anointing to minister to others must be honored. We must have divine guidance or leading. These elements are necessary for kingdom living and kingdom ministry to others. I trust that this last chapter will be the icing on the cake for you. May it help you rise up and take your place in the Name of Jesus!

Find Your Place in the Body

There is nothing more important for each individual in the Body of Christ than to find their place in the Body and do what the Lord instructs them to do. Quit trying to be an “eye” in the Body when you are really a “hand”!⁴³³ A hand does a very poor job as an eye! In fact, a hand will never fulfill the call or job of an eye! If you will follow this line of thinking, you will begin to see why churches, ministries, Christian workers and so on can sometimes cause problems and even havoc in sectors of the Body. As long as the hand attempts to function as an eye there is going to be a lot of trouble and a lot of frustration! Nothing is more important than getting in your place. The Lord gave me a parable concerning this to strike our thinking.

The Parable of the Toe that Tried to be a Finger

“I hate being jammed up in this place. I can see through this opening, but I really feel like I am not appreciated. I have four other brothers in this place with me and none of them is like me. For some reason I am the smallest one of the family. I know they make fun of me because I am so small, but I am important. I know I have a part in this family, but I aspire to do greater things than what has become my “calling” in life. I remember when I was first put here to do the job I do every day. We really stay busy every single day. I really want to be like “Joey” and his four brothers. They have a lot more freedom than I do. They get to be outdoors a lot and never have to think about what they wear. Not only that, but they are out in the public eye a lot. I am going to try to be like “Joey.” The next time I am called upon to do what I have been doing for what seems like an eternity, I am doing my own thing!”

Fred reached for the extremely rare vase worth about 1.5 million dollars. He trembled slightly at the thought that his two hands were about to hold a one-of-kind vase from so very long ago. The Museum curator handed him the vase carefully. Though Fred was not up to the Curator's standards in many respects, he knew that the man was knowledgeable. He knew Fred was no novice at handling rare artifacts. Even though the curator really despised Fred's casual dress style because he wore jeans, a pullover, sandals, and a beard, he knew the man had some experience under his belt. Fred had been working at the museum for 30 years.

All of a sudden, and with no premeditation by Fred, his foot lashed out at the rare vase, and his little toe hit the handle so hard that the vase went crashing to the floor! The ancient treasured piece broke into a thousand pieces! The sudden turn of events stunned Fred and the curator. Fred had no earthly explanation as to what happened. It was bizarre. He ended up with a broken toe!

The moral of the story is: ***That is what happens when a TOE tries to be a FINGER!***

⁴³³ 1 Cor. 12:12-30

Need we tell you that this is a very real problem in the Body of Christ? Many are doing things the Lord never led them to do. Some are in places they should never be. Many live without the anointing or real satisfaction of KNOWING they are in the right place and at the right time, doing what the Lord created them to do.

Some pastors are trying to be prophets or evangelists. Some truly have multiple calls, but others want to be “trendy.” Some want to be trendy because it brings them more opportunities to preach and get more exposure. Others have no call at all! Let us get in our place, under God’s grace for our individual lives. Let us ONLY do what He sets us in the churches to do. Let it be His WILL be done and not whatever we want done. It will be eternally more productive and powerful if God is behind it!

What can you do to find your place in the Body of Christ? You have already begun that quest by studying this book. The study on divine leading and guidance by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential. We teach on that in the following sections. One will never know to what and where they are called unless they are led by the Spirit of the Lord, pray much in tongues, and learn to take the time to study the Scripture and shut out the world. Turn off your TV. Don’t read the newspaper or watch your favorite news channel for a few days. Tune in ONLY to God. Maybe you need to fast a few meals. Let the Lord lead you.

Another point is, that if you are in some traditional church listening to religious “slop” instead of anointed teaching and preaching from God’s Word, you may never know what God wants you to do. The first thing you need to pray about is getting into a powerful church that refuses to compromise. Go to one where the captives are being set free and people are receiving salvation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues, and being healed.

What is the Anointing and what are its Effects?

It is written in Isaiah 10:27 that the anointing will destroy the yoke of slavery and remove every burden. What is the anointing? Let me describe it like this. The anointing is a divine, supernatural essence. It penetrates the world of the natural and makes possible what is impossible for human beings. The anointing is the presence of God released into the human sphere to do what a person cannot do on his or her own without supernatural help. The anointing is what we call the manifestation of the Holy Spirit of God in the earthly realm. The anointing affects the physical; it changes it from one state to another. It is, at times, perceivable by the natural senses. The body can feel it. The anointing has a certain real essence that can be felt in the natural world from time to time. It is transferable. It can be transmitted from one person to another.

Do we have any Scripture to back up these statements? Yes we do, and we will give them to you.

If electricity is a real energy of the physical world that is subject to change, (though generally invisible), how much more real is the anointing that comes from the eternal world of the Holy Spirit?

I read the writings of John G. Lake on this subject and they were very enlightening. The brother had some extraordinary insights on the subject. The best teaching I heard in person on the subject was at Healing School classes I attended in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1983, taught by brother Kenneth E. Hagin (Senior). Those teachings, given in a small-class-setting, are on cassettes (recorded magnetic tapes which are “ancient” history). Invariably, when speaking on the same subject, I may say things in a similar way, but there has been no plagiarism on my part.

The anointing is a real force, power, or energy. It can be administered by the laying on of hands, and on occasions, through clothing or handkerchiefs.⁴³⁴ The Greek text literally says that God did special works of power through the hands of Paul. Anointing power was administered through the hands of Paul.

*The agent that administers the anointing on the earth is the Holy Spirit.*⁴³⁵ The Holy Spirit is God, and not just “a part” of God. He is not a force or power. To believe that is to take away from the fact that He is God. The anointing is what scripture calls the manifestation of God’s power in the physical world. The anointing on the earth is God manifesting Himself as the Holy Spirit. “Holy Spirit”⁴³⁶ is one of the personal names of God just like Jehovah⁴³⁷ or Elohim are other Hebrew names for God. “*Holy Spirit*,” specifically, has reference to God when He is expressing His power, flexing His spiritual “muscles.” The Holy Spirit is God expressing His Divine persona in His power. This is essential so we never get the idea that the Holy Spirit is an “it” or a “manifestation” or some other lesser thing. No, the Holy Spirit is

⁴³⁴ Acts 19:11, 12

⁴³⁵ Luke 4:18

⁴³⁶ *Ruach HaKodesh* in Hebrew

⁴³⁷ Or *Yaveh*, that is *YHVH*

as much God as the Father is God. We must maintain and have the proper respect and understanding of that fact so we never minimize Him or His activity.

Jesus taught this anointing of the Spirit from Isaiah 61:1-3.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me...” Luke 4:18

It is necessary to understand that the anointing is the manifestation of the Spirit and that it is He that anoints with this heavenly substance. As I stated, the anointing comes to carry out certain things in the earth. It comes to anoint believers to preach the gospel with undeniable evidence from God. This is what the Greek word indicates in Acts 1:8, when it says that the Spirit would come on the day of Pentecost to anoint or pour out on us *power*, (Gr. δυναμις). This Greek word for “power,” *dinamis*, is where we get the English words dynamic, dynamo, dynamics, and dynamite. All these words speak about power in movement, certain energy in action or explosive power. The Holy Spirit invaded this planet in unprecedented ways on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) to bring us real God-power to manifest evidence that cannot be denied.

The gospel or good news is the power of God unto salvation or total deliverance. (Rom. 1:16) The demonstration of this gospel is with the power of the Holy Spirit, with signs and wonders, according to the apostle Paul.⁴³⁸ The last phrase of Romans 15:19 literally says that demonstration of the full gospel is with signs, wonders, and the power of the Holy Spirit. If these manifestations of the Spirit are lacking, then we are incomplete in the ministering of the gospel. Ouch! What does that do with all the weak services in many churches that have NO manifestations of the Holy Spirit? They are way out of line! The best we can do is line up with the Word and expect the supernatural of God.

The name *Christ* is not just another name for Jesus! The Greek word is referring directly to Jesus as the anointed. It also refers TO the anointing on Him. *Anointing*, or *to anoint* literally is defines as: *to rub or to pour on*. The *Christ* is that one anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit without measure.⁴³⁹ A *Christian* (derived from *Christ*) is someone on who has had poured out or rubbed on them this spiritual heavenly substance from the Holy Spirit. When we made Jesus the Lord of our lives was the day when this anointing came to reside on the inside of us.⁴⁴⁰ When we were Spirit baptized⁴⁴¹ is when the anointing came upon us, just as it came on Jesus after His water immersion. It was not until the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at the river Jordan that signs, wonders, and miracles were manifest in His life.

⁴³⁸ Rom. 15:18, 19

⁴³⁹ John 3:36

⁴⁴⁰ 1 John. 2:20, 27

⁴⁴¹ Lit. *Immersed*

How God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with *the Holy Spirit* and with *power*, and how he went about doing good and healing all those oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. Acts 10:38

Do you see in this verse the connection between the Holy Spirit, the anointing, and the power demonstrated in His life and ministry? This power came out of Him and healed the woman that had the issue of blood.⁴⁴² When she touched His garment hem there was power transferred. The anointing of the Holy Spirit came out of Jesus and healed her. On another occasion, we see that the power of the Lord was present to heal.⁴⁴³ At times, people could perceive the power coming out of Him. He would minister that healing anointing through the laying on of hands. It was as though He was a power generator.⁴⁴⁴ He was hooked up to the unlimited supply of the Holy Spirit!

The Lord has privileged us to minister this in this way to some degree. Often, we can sense this anointing “fire” coming through our hands and into the people as we minister to them. Fire describes and connects this anointing of the Holy Spirit in Matthew 3:11. People often feel this power when we lay our hands on them. When I begin to speak or write about this subject, almost without exception, I can feel the heat of this anointing coming on my hands. The anointing is very real to me. If I take the time to teach on it or prepare to minister with this anointing, my hands can often feel like they are on fire! I have on occasions had this anointing so strongly on my hands that the only relief was to minister with it. When I spend extra time in prayer and in fellowship with the Lord, this anointing has filled my body and settled on my arms or legs. After ministering with this anointing, my entire body would be weighted down by this glory to where I could hardly stand up or walk around without assistance. One definition of the “glory” of God is given as a divine “weight.” It is “heavy” and real weighty heavenly stuff (material)!

Jesus Christ (*the Anointed One*) is the same yesterday, today and forever. Hebrews 13:8

The “gifts” of the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 12:7 are better called the “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴⁵ These are ways that the Spirit manifests Himself in these powers or anointings.

See Isaiah 11:1-5 y 61:1-5 to see more ways the Spirit manifests Himself.

Notice other ways that the anointing can be administered in Acts 19:11 and 12. Here Paul administered the anointing by “rubbing” that anointing into cloths and aprons. He probably did this by

⁴⁴² Mark 5:25-34

⁴⁴³ Luke 5:17

⁴⁴⁴ Luke 4:40, 41 y 6:17-19

⁴⁴⁵ See the entire passage in 1 Cor. 12:4-11

laying His hands on them, or by wearing them for a time, and allowing that anointing on him to saturate those cloths.

The anointing of the Spirit can cause miracles of provision to come forth. (Matt. 15:30-37 y 17:27)

Those that came to arrest Jesus, FELL to the ground under this anointing power. This happens frequently in our services.⁴⁴⁶ Many scriptures prove this business of people falling under God's power or manifested presence.

The same thing happened to Saul on the road to Damascus in Acts 9:3 and 4.

The prophet Ezekiel writes of the different times the Spirit of God caused a reaction on him. At times, the presence of God, when manifested, would cause him to hit the ground. At other times, the Spirit would enter him and would then raise him up OFF the ground, or stand him upright!⁴⁴⁷

When Jesus was raised from the dead, an angel of God appeared and the guards at the tomb "became as dead men." That is a euphemism for "falling" under this divine influence, to such a degree, that they fell flat on the floor as though their very life had left their bodies.⁴⁴⁸

When they came seeking to arrest Jesus the Nazarene, He responded to them, "I am he." There was so much power or anointing in His word that it tells us that they all fell backward to the ground. Wow!⁴⁴⁹

After all this biblical proof, do not allow people to tell you that "falling under the power" is nothing but "fanatical extremism" or some kind of "mental suggestion." It is VERY biblical and is quite common when the physical body comes into contact with spiritual power that it cannot resist. I have had it happen to me a few times. Multiplied millions have had it happen to them around the globe over time.

Have you ever received an electrical shock? I have and it is not any fun! In the natural, if you grab a live electrical wire with your hand, without the proper protection, the electrical current will make you jerk, jump, or it may knock you to the floor. I have seen it knock people out cold. In the same way, a reaction takes place when a human being makes contact with a sufficiently strong anointing!

Please also look at these other verses in the note to see what else the power of God's Spirit or anointing can and will do.⁴⁵⁰ Unbelief negatively affects the flow of the anointing.⁴⁵¹ Notice this last footnote in this chapter and the things that grieve the Holy Spirit or that cause interruption in the flow of the anointing.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁶ See John 18:1-6. See some of our ministry photos.

⁴⁴⁷ Ezekiel 1:28, 2:2, 12, 14

⁴⁴⁸ Matt. 26:1-4

⁴⁴⁹ John 18:5, 6

⁴⁵⁰ Acts 12:8, 10 and 28:5

⁴⁵¹ Mark 6:1-6, Matt. 13:58

⁴⁵² Check out Ephesians 4:27 through chapter 5:5, 1 Thess. 5:19.

Settle the issues concerning the anointing in your spirit. Look up the Scriptures we gave in this chapter. Understand the reality and power of the anointing. Pray and ask God to use you. Determine to take the time to pray (also worship and praise) everyday, and read your Bible. Practice listening and talking to the Lord about everything throughout your day. Believe He is with you every second of the day. Some call this “practicing the presence” of the Lord. These are all simple, but tried and true ways to prepare yourself to be used by the Lord. Having said all this, the key to supernatural manifestation in the anointing is not complicated. As you go through your day, when the Lord gives you something to say to help someone, say it. If He moves on you to do something to bless another, do it. Practice obeying Him implicitly, and without delay. If you miss it, repent, and listen for further instructions.

How to Receive Divine Guidance

God's will is not to be a mystery to us. How can I say that? Here is what the Word says about it:

Therefore, do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:17

We should have an understanding of what is the will of God for our lives. His will is that you know what He wants for your life! This is where it starts: We must trust God to show us what He wants for our lives. His will for our individual lives is extremely important. If you do not know what His will is for your life and then get in it, you will never enjoy the fullness of His blessings. Do not panic if you are finding this out for the first time. There is help from the Lord in this area. We want to point out some things to help you hook up with God in this area.

The Lord has impressed me to tell you again that receiving a personal prophecy is not the way God leads and guides you. If the Holy Spirit has already witnessed it first in your spirit or heart and it comes as a confirmation of what you already know from the Lord, then it is acceptable. Exercise great caution in this area. Some believe wrong stuff because of a personal “word” given to them. Some have had their entire lives ruined because of not having correct Bible instruction in this area. Others have had right teaching, but they have let this area slip.⁴⁵³ Here are some examples.

One woman received a personal word that a certain man in her church was to be her husband. Women should run from someone giving them a word like that! Do not follow somebody else's word about who to marry. If you do follow somebody's word in this area, get ready for a bad marriage! I have not seen one single marriage go right that was led by some personal word.

The woman I started telling you about above believed that her marriage to this particular man at her church would cause her to be able to step off into the things God had for her. He seemed like a nice fellow, had the right credentials and she thought he was good looking. She got involved with the man only to find out that he was not right for her at all. Actually, the man turned out to have homosexual tendencies. Their intimate life was a mess right from the first night of their honeymoon! Her husband ended up in a homosexual relationship sometime later. Their marriage ended up in shambles. It messed her up emotionally and mentally. After that nasty experience, she was often physically sick. She became a “basket” case. As far as I know, she never has fulfilled anything God had for her, never remarried, and has never even had children.

Some women get anxious because they are getting older and think that they have to get married “pronto.” They allow family, friends, and sometimes people they trust to get them to thinking they may turn out to be an unmarried woman. Listen up women: 30 years old (which is very young when you are

⁴⁵³ Hebrews 2:1-3

my age) or so is not old at all. It would be better to marry right later in life than to marry sooner and then find out what a mess you have made of your life. I do not care what age you are, give it to the lord and let Him bring you the right person. I give this warning by the Spirit.

My wife and I met and we were divinely connected. We never even dated until the week prior to getting married. We prayed and hung out together at her father's house, but we did not go out on dates alone. The Lord spoke to her while visiting in Fort Worth about meeting her husband on a particular month in 1999 and He spoke to me at the same time on St. Thomas. We met and the rest is history. We knew the first day we met that we were to be married. She knew it and I knew it.

It took me a few months to come around because I had been through a devastating divorce in the early 90's and did not want to get married again. Yea, I was divorced as a preacher. I was not as perfect as those that were married for half a century. Thank God for the Blood and for the Word! My hat is off to all of you married over twenty years. My wife Christine and I are at 18+ years of marriage (in 2018) and headed for twenty!

Our story is a wonderful story of God divinely connecting a man and woman for ministry, business, and for life. We will share it in detail some time later, but if it happened to us, it can happen to anyone if he or she will trust God. It may not happen exactly the same way with you as happened to us, but the truth is that God can and will bring your way the right person IF you will trust Him and be led by His Spirit.

God brought the right woman to Adam. She was the one He had prepared for him. It works both ways. Sister in the Lord, God will also bring the right man for you, but you are going to have to trust Him and take a stand against anxiety and worry in this area.⁴⁵⁴

Another person received a “personal word of prophecy” to move to a certain city because God had a great ministry for them there. They moved and NEVER had any kind of ministry! They even backslid and as far as I know never came back to Jesus.

I could go on and on with the stories.

I never pay attention to any personal word of prophecy unless the Lord has already witnessed it in my heart. I certainly do not act on it. I put it on a “shelf” in my thinking until either the Lord brings it up to me or I discard it if the Lord tells me it was off His path for my life and not inspired by the Holy Spirit. I have had to do both so I am speaking from the Word and by experience. Most of the time, I have known immediately if it was God or if it was a wrong word for me. Thank God for the Holy Spirit!

One man gave me a “word” in 1974 to move to Africa because the Lord would use me there. Thank God, that I did not follow that man's “personal word” to me or I would have missed God by a long shot. The entire ministry He has had me involved in since 1975 would have never happened. I would have never pastored two churches and preached at many other churches. I would never have been on the radio or on television ministering the Word to thousands and seen the miraculous events surrounding our

⁴⁵⁴ 1 Peter 5: 6, 7

ministry. I would have never pioneered many things concerning ministry in Puerto Rico, and I would never have met my wife Christine in Africa. Our website and present ministry would probably never have gotten started. I may have never written my first book. The Lord let me know early on that same year that it was a wrong word for me and that I was not to move to Africa. Visiting Africa and preaching there is one thing, but making it my home is another thing entirely. Thank God, I followed the Lord instead of a wrong prophetic word. If the Lord told you to move to Africa and live there for the rest of your life, and you did not, then you are out of the will of God. That may be the will of the Lord for others, but that is not the will of the Lord for my life. If the Lord sent you to Africa then that is place He has for you and none other will do! Do you see the difference?

How does God lead and guide us into all truth? Two central answers are that He leads and guides us through His Word and by the Holy Spirit. There is more to it than that simple statement, but that is at the center of any guidance or leading by the Lord. On both counts, His guidance will come through your spirit and not through your head. God is a spirit and not a mind.⁴⁵⁵ His Spirit will reveal things through your spirit being. We should know by now that we are first a spirit being, possessing a soul and living in a physical body.⁴⁵⁶ It is with our spirits that we make contact with the realm of God who is a spirit being. God is really THE Father of spirits to whom we should be subject.⁴⁵⁷ We do not make contact with God with our minds because God is NOT a mind, nor can we have contact with Him with our physical bodies because He is not a “body.” Of course, our minds can be transfigured through a renewal process, and our bodies (where the senses are located) can be trained through practice to discern good and evil so that our entire being is lined up with God, but the leading will be Spirit to spirit.⁴⁵⁸

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God... The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Romans 8:14, 16

The leading comes by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings a witness to our spirits. Notice that the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits, not our mind or our bodies. I am telling you this because you cannot be led by goose bumps, feelings, emotions, or even what “seems right” in your head. That can be dangerous.⁴⁵⁹ I am not discounting the fact that when God's presence shows up that you may have some powerful feelings, emotions, and maybe some mountain size goose bumps! Yes, the body does respond in funny ways at times when God shows up, but don't depend on goose bumps to tell you when God is present or not.

⁴⁵⁵ John 4:24

⁴⁵⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:23

⁴⁵⁷ Hebrews 12:9

⁴⁵⁸ Romans 12:2, Hebrews 5:14

⁴⁵⁹ Proverbs 14:12

We know God is present based on His Word and we should believe that He never leaves us or forsakes us and that if we come into Scriptural agreement prayer that Jesus will be present right in the middle of us.⁴⁶⁰

Sometimes what “seems like” it is God's leading is not His leading at all. Usually the way people get off into being led by what seems like it is the right thing to do is when they are led by their feelings or emotions instead of from the Holy Spirit bearing witness to their spirits. As I said before, I am not discounting the fact that when God's presence shows up that you will not have some powerful feelings, emotions, and maybe some BIG goose bumps. Your hair may stand of end! As fun as that can be at times, you can't depend on goose bumps to tell you if you are supposed to do anything in life.

How does the Holy Spirit lead and guide us into all truth? The Word is THE truth, but “the truth” can also be the truth about His will for your individual life as a believer. As for example, where you are to live, work, what church you are to belong to, your call in life or ministry, your part in the Body of Christ, whom you are to marry, and we could go on for hours. The Word of God reveals the GENERAL will of God for all believers, but it does not necessarily answer directly the above questions for the individual life.

Two central answers as to the “how” of divine guidance are that He leads and guides us through His Word and by the Holy Spirit. If we had no other Scripture to go on but John 16:13, it would suffice. There are many more, but look closely at this verse.

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears, He shall speak, and He will announce to you things to come. John 16:13

Let's point out a few things here.

1. He is the Spirit of truth.

You will never get flaky “off-the-wall” stuff from the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to the Father in prayer, **“Your Word is truth.”** (John 17:17) That is the answer to Pilate's question, *“What is truth?”* (John 18:38) The Word is truth, and because the Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth, then He will never lead you in a way that is contrary to Scripture. God will never lead you into anything that violates Scripture or our redemption in Christ.

The Holy Spirit does not talk in circles or roundabout ways. He does not beat around the bush, He does not hide from you, and He does not hold back either.⁴⁶¹ He is THE Spirit of truth. His

⁴⁶⁰ Hebrews 13:5, Matthew 18:19, 20

⁴⁶¹ 1 Corinthians 2:9-13

communication will be Spirit to your spirit,⁴⁶² and He is ONLY involved with truth. The Holy Spirit is straightforward, revealing, unveiling, open, faithful, honest, consistent, firm, and He is ever stable. There is no wishy-washy stuff with the Holy Spirit. There is no confusion or darkness in Him. He will reveal and uncover all mysteries. All the definitions and explanations I just gave you are what the word “truth” should convey to us from the original languages.

I have marveled over the years at some the things people do personally, in churches, or ministries, because “the Lord told me to do it,” but it was obviously unscriptural. Some of the most outlandish things have been done in the name of “the Lord led me to do it.” Yet, when we compare the activity to the Scriptures, God was not in any part of it. In some cases, it was stark error, and in others, it led entire churches into disobedience and sin, just as it did at the church of Thyatira in Revelation 2:18-29.

When I say examine it with the Scriptures, I am specifically referring to the NEW TESTAMENT. If people would just analyze what they are doing according to the Gospels and the writings of the Holy Spirit through the apostles Paul, Peter, James, Jude, and John, a lot of weird stuff that they are doing would have to be thrown out the door or flushed down the toilet!

I understand that we are living in an age of technology and so forth and that there are many things available to us that they did not have back in New Testament days. None of that changes the truth or can possibly override the principles of God's Word, that is, if you want to stay within the sphere of the Holy Spirit of truth.

Television is a wonderful tool for the preaching and teaching of the Gospel around the world. However, television is also overflowing with programs that present everything from adultery to homosexuality as acceptable or even glamorous. It glorifies theft, murder, and many other things that our society should reprimand and reject. Con artists are praised. Promiscuity gets a “comedy” rating. The news media twists the truth by often reporting falsehoods and inaccuracies. Foolishness is frequently exalted. If all someone does is watch those devilish programs, then they are probably half brain dead anyway! God does not want a “brain dead” people! He wants our minds renewed and transfigured by His Word and Spirit.⁴⁶³ When Christians spend their time with these demon inspired programs, they get themselves saturated with lies. Then they wonder why they never hear anything from God. How could they hear anything of the truth when they are full of the lying trash of the world? They cannot, and will not, hear from God that way.

Why have some gotten off into strange stuff thinking the Spirit of God was leading them? They were listening to a spirit all right. It was a wrong spirit, a spirit of error, and a demon spirit that sounded spiritual. It even sounded “right”, and it led them into deception and not into the truth of God.⁴⁶⁴ There

⁴⁶² Romans 8:16

⁴⁶³ James 1:21, Romans 12:2

⁴⁶⁴ 1 John 4:1-4

are such things out there as “seducing spirits” and “doctrines of demons” that spout off lies in hypocrisy.⁴⁶⁵

There are two kinds of wisdom on the planet. The first is the wisdom of God. Secondly, there is the devilish, demonic, sensual wisdom of the world.⁴⁶⁶ The God kind of wisdom ONLY comes from God’s Word, His will, God’s Spirit and Christ in us.⁴⁶⁷ Which one do you want?

There are different voices in the world.⁴⁶⁸ What “voices” are you feeding into your spirit? Jesus said, “Be careful what you hear, for with the same measure that you hear it will be measured to you again. And to you that hear will more be given.”⁴⁶⁹

Focus your attention on the world’s voices and that is all you will hear. You will never hear much of anything from God with your focus in the wrong place. Your spirit will be “stopped up” with trash and you will at times follow the wrong voices thinking that it is God. Have you ever heard Christians say that God never speaks to them? Now you know the answer of why they can’t hear a thing. Their ears are full of garbage and they quench the voice of the Lord in their lives! Many have “drowned” the sound of the voice of the Lord in the cesspool of the world’s ways and thinking because that is all they feed into their heart!

The world is FULL of lying and deception. If that is what one feeds upon daily then that person will be easy to deceive. Seducing spirits and lying devils have easy access to people in this condition, spending daily time feeding on the world’s garbage coming via numerous media outlets. If that was not bad enough, many spend their time rehearsing the lies of Satan when they sing along with the world’s music and dance on their Mp3 players, cell phones, CD players in their cars, home stereo, etc. Worldly ideas, talk, and ways that do not please God infect people this way and usually they do not even recognize it.

The same as I have been telling you about hearing goes for “reading.” Whatever voice you give priority to; you will have to deal with. Feed on romance novels, gossip newspapers, lusty “celebrity” magazines and that is all you can hear. I trust you are getting this. This is why Jesus admonished the churches in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, **“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”** They all had ears on their heads. That was not the problem. The problem was could they hear Him who is Spirit? Many have not been able to hear the Spirit of truth because of all the

⁴⁶⁵ 1 Timothy 4:1-4

⁴⁶⁶ James 3:14-18

⁴⁶⁷ Luke 11:49, Proverbs 4:1-13, Ephesians 5:17, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 13, 1 Cor. 1:30, Colossians 2:3

⁴⁶⁸ 1 Corinthians 14:10, 11

⁴⁶⁹ Mark 4:24

garbage they have been feeding on.⁴⁷⁰ This must change if one is to ever hear the Holy Spirit and not be an easy target for deception!

We need to learn to distinguish between which voice is of God and which is not. The FIRST way to begin to distinguish between which voice is God and that which is not His voice is to get a revelation in you of how God thinks and how He talks. Do you realize that the Scripture is a revealing of God's thoughts and Words? It is impossible to know how God thinks or talks without spending the time reading, studying, meditating in, using the Word in prayer and putting it on your lips.⁴⁷¹ How can anyone know how God thinks or speaks unless they spend time around His Word and in prayer? The answer is that they can't! One will never know HOW God talks unless the Word is in them and they have passed from being a hearer of God's Word and have become doers of it.⁴⁷² The SECOND great and always important key is that we will learn how the Spirit of God speaks to us as we pray in tongues and learn to wait on Him.

Two central answers as to the “how” of divine guidance is that He leads and guides us through His Word and by the Holy Spirit. There are more verses we will point out, but look closely at this verse.

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will announce to you things to come. John 16:13

We saw the first statement:

1. He is the Spirit of truth.

Jesus said that the Word is truth. (John 17:17) He also said that continuing in the Word will cause us to be His disciples knowing the truth and the truth would make us free.⁴⁷³ It takes the Word of God in the Spirit of a person to become light for Godly guidance to follow. This is the first prerequisite of divine guidance or leading in the path of life. The Word must be first. No light will come forth without the Word in the human heart. We will say more about this below.

His leading or divine guidance begins by establishing the Word in your life as final authority. This means that you choose what God says regardless of people, pressure, religion, church, preachers, teachers, schools, governments, bosses, jobs, neighbors, friends, family, or whatever could oppose itself to the Word. The first place must be the Word, and it must be foremost in your life!

⁴⁷⁰ Rev. 2:7, 17, 29 and others

⁴⁷¹ Joshua 1:8, Psalms 1:1-3, Ephesians 6:10-18

⁴⁷² James 1:22

⁴⁷³ John 8:31, 32, Joshua 1:8, Psalms 1:1-3

2. He will guide you into ALL truth.

All truth is the truth about everything that has to do with God and His Word and everything that has to do with your life.

This will signal to us, for example, all the truth about whether you should invest in a certain thing or not. Some people have really benefited by listening to the Holy Spirit in this area, and some have lost their shirts by not following Him! Can I get a witness here?

He will lead you into all truth about the car you are getting ready to buy.

In 2008, I bought a brand new 2009 car. I am not going to tell you what make or model, because I really like this brand. I did not have problems with two other vehicles from this same carmaker, so I am going to give them a break. I really liked the colors and the extras. It “looked like” it was made with me in mind. There was one problem though. When the dealer got the one I wanted, they found it at another dealer. In my spirit, I knew something was off, but I really liked this car. I did not pray about it, though I had a check in my spirit.⁴⁷⁴ It “seemed right” so I accepted it and drove it home. Within one week, the engine light came on and it became a real source of aggravation. During the next year, the car spent many days at the dealer while they tried to figure out what was wrong with the vehicle. They changed so many engine parts on it that by June of 2009 it was almost a brand new engine, but they couldn’t figure out why the engine light kept coming back on after they thought the problem was corrected. Finally, the car manufacturer bought it back from me in order to avoid bad press. Now, I could have saved myself from all the aggravation and frustration had I just listened to my own spirit! The Spirit of God was bearing witness with my spirit not to receive the vehicle, but I didn’t listen! It cost me. It always will when you do not listen.

A friend of ours was working at an office at the World Trade Center on 9/11. She was a nominal Christian and really was not very spiritual. Talk about God’s favor, this woman got a truckload on that day. The morning that Islamic terrorists crashed the two jets into the twin towers, she was running late for work. She reached the train station under the towers. Instead of doing what she usually did if she was running late and rushing to her office, she stopped, and the thought occurred to her that she was hungry. She decided that though it was late, she was going to override her feelings of rushing to work that morning. She went up to the street level, crossed the street, and went to get a sandwich, something she **never** did in all the years she worked at the World Trade Center. She was not even a breakfast eater! As she was in line waiting for service, the first jet slammed into the first tower. When I talked to her about this, she said that she knew that the Lord had saved her life that day. She obeyed from the inside and did something totally opposite to what she usually did. Were many others warned on that awful day but

⁴⁷⁴ I should have checked or inquired of the Lord before proceeding. I did not “check” out the “stop and check with heaven” signpost I had on the inside, in my heart!

refused to listen? The stories abound of the people that the Lord spoke to do something different on that day.

Sometimes, God's leading may make absolutely no sense to your head, but it could save your life if you will heed His voice? A great Biblical example is 2 Chronicles 20 and how the Lord led king Jehoshaphat to go into a particular battle with the praise team at the front lines of the army! In the natural, that made absolutely no sense. Surprisingly no one said, "The king has lost his marbles. All the trumpet players and the praise teams are going to get slaughtered!" If they did think it, they did not voice their opinion! You know the story of how the Lord then set "ambushments" against the enemy and they ended fighting and killing each other. What would have happened had Jehoshaphat not done what God ordered him to do? The answer is that the armies of Judah would have suffered a terrible loss that day instead of having a mighty victory, one that they received without ever fighting.

One day, I was driving along with my family on my way to church. Suddenly, the Lord said in my spirit, "Don't turn left here. Go straight and take the next road." I was already in the turning lane. It was going to take me out of my usual route if I got out of the turning lane and obeyed the leading of the Lord. Thankfully, I obeyed that day. On the road I was about to turn at but did not, there was a terrible accident that cost the life of one driver, and seriously injured the passengers. Both automobiles were total losses. The accident happened at the same time that I would have been going down that road! More details to it proved to me that the enemy meant the tragic accident for my destruction. I listened to God and it saved our lives because I obeyed even when it made little sense.

I told one woman that the man she was hanging out with, and was thinking of marrying, was evil and had evil intentions for her and her family. The Lord spoke to me very clearly and had me tell her because she was not listening to the Lord. I told her what the Lord said and she swore up and down that it was not so and that I was wrong. She thought he was so very good looking, had a lot of money, and was a kind hearted and very "spiritual" individual. He put on a good show. Later she admitted that all along she had a witness in her heart that something was off with the man, but she shrugged it off. She married the man and almost lost her life over it. The man turned out to be a drug dealer and involved with a crime syndicate. The woman had to run for her life and "disappear" for a time to get away from the demon she married.

The Spirit of God will lead you into ALL the truth concerning your life, from how to dress for that important interview, to how you change your eating habits. He will lead you, from how to pay less for what you are buying, to how to minister to someone in need. He will show you everything, from where to market your product, to showing you the best route on your trip or vacation. The Holy Spirit will instruct and correct your way. He will show you pitfalls, how to avoid them, and circumvent the strategies of the enemy. Thank God for the Holy Spirit!

3. He will speak.

He is not quiet all the time. He will speak and He will speak to your spirit. He wants to talk to you. Do not ever say that God never talks to you. The problem is never with God doing the talking, but with people and their capacity to hear Him, and many times their lack of understanding as to how He talks.

The doorkeeper opens to him, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him. For they know his voice. And they will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers... My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. John 10:3-5, 27

We must understand that we have a right, and the privilege, to hear Him on the inside. Never say that you don't or can't hear the Lord if you are a believer. This is what every born again child of God should be saying about hearing the leading of the Jesus by His Spirit, "I hear the voice of the good Shepherd and the voice of a stranger I will not follow. I know the voice of the good Shepherd!"

Notice He is the GOOD Shepherd. He will never lead His sheep to the wolves' den! He will not lead you to the thieves' lair either! He will never lead you into evil or anything of the devil. Those that believe the Lord may lead them into evil somehow are saying that He is a bad Shepherd. Thank God, He is not evil and He is only the GOOD Shepherd. If you have not already done it, please get that straight in your thinking.

4. He will announce things to come.

These are not just the future events of the world. We saw that the Holy Spirit gives us direction that could save our lives.

The Holy Spirit will direct us into triumph.

Now thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and making known through us the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 2 Corinthians 2:14

Someone may object thinking that this verse says nothing about the Holy Spirit. Unless there is disagreement in God, this verse must also include the Holy Spirit. The verse does mention Christ and God, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ.⁴⁷⁵ This is important because the Holy Spirit will never lead you into defeat or something contrary to what has been provided for us in Christ through His awesome sacrifice. The Holy Spirit will never lead you into sickness, disease, poverty, premature death, accidents, or evil circumstances. If anything, He will lead you out of bondage, never into it. The Holy

⁴⁷⁵ Roman 8:9-11

Spirit will lead you out of bondage just as God led the children of Israel out of Egypt. I have heard Christian people say things like, “The Lord led me into that sickness or to lose that job so I could learn this or that.” That is an outright violation of the teaching of Scripture and the fact that the Holy Spirit will only lead you into triumph.

Unless you think you are *the Christ* and have the job to redeem the world as the last Adam,⁴⁷⁶ don't ever come at me with the thinking “Well, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into temptation.” Satan's temptation was to make the second Adam (Jesus) fail as the first Adam had failed in Eden. Jesus never fell for the trap! Jesus resisted the devil and he ran off with his tail between his legs like a whipped dog!⁴⁷⁷ Jesus specifically told us to pray that we not be led into temptation, tests and trials, but to be delivered from the evil one.⁴⁷⁸ In other words, Jesus was telling us to pray for God's leading out of evil stuff and into His deliverance from all the works of the enemy.

Making the wrong investment is NOT the Holy Spirit leading you into triumph. That was a side note, but it is the truth.

Even when persecution and trials come against you, the Holy Spirit will show you the way to win in life. He will never lead you to failure!⁴⁷⁹ He will show you how to use your faith in the Covenant of God to come out victorious in all of life's circumstances. He will show you the way OUT! The Holy Spirit will lead you around the obstacles of life. He will show you how to avoid the pitfalls. He will be a light to your path. If God is light and Jesus is the light, then the Holy Spirit must also be the light of God because we received the Spirit of Christ in the new birth. His leading will be light to us.⁴⁸⁰ The Holy Spirit will NEVER lead us in the ways of darkness, sin, death, evil, or the curse.

The spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, searching all the inward parts of the belly. Proverbs 20:27

We have already studied the fact that the Holy Spirit will lead you in your spirit and bear witness with your spirit.⁴⁸¹ The spirit of man called the lamp of the Lord.

Your Word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. Psalms 119:105

⁴⁷⁶ 1 Cor. 15:45

⁴⁷⁷ Matthew 4, Luke 4

⁴⁷⁸ Mat. 6:13

⁴⁷⁹ 1 John 5:1-4

⁴⁸⁰ 1 John 1:5, John 8:12, Rom. 8:9-11

⁴⁸¹ Rom. 8:14, 16

Notice again that it is the “marriage” of the Word and the Holy Spirit in the human spirit that will be light to us. Separate any of these and you will not have God's light. Notice the phrase above, “*searching all the inward parts of the belly.*” This phrase should immediately bring to your mind certain verses of Scripture if you are thinking according to God’s Word. First, Jesus stated that the baptism into the Holy Spirit would be as “living water” flowing out of your belly.⁴⁸² Remember that it is the Holy Spirit that “searches all things” which includes the human heart.⁴⁸³ The Word discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart.⁴⁸⁴ Here again, we see that it is the blending of the Holy Spirit with the main ingredient of the Word that will produce light in us. It also comes by the comparison of spiritual words (from God) with spiritual things taught by the Holy Spirit.

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1 Corinthians 2:13

Speaking in an unknown language or tongues is praying from the spirit as the Holy Spirit gives you the words.⁴⁸⁵ It is a powerful tool to learn how to hear your spirit and the voice of the Lord in you. Every Christian desperately needs the baptism into the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. Without this glorious experience in God, a person is limited in learning how to follow the leading of the Lord. Tongues should not be forbidden in our churches as long as it is in decency and in order. We should pray in tongues every day. Paul said, “**I speak in (supernatural) tongues more than all of you put together.**”⁴⁸⁶ That was a lot of tongue talking because he was saying this to a large church of tongue-talking believers! Paul knew the great benefit and awesome advantage that praying in tongues provides for the believer. Speaking in tongues will help you locate your spirit and you will begin to see and understand the leadings of the Lord.

In closing this section, let me give you a little further instruction on how to step over into the supernatural flow of the things of God. Jesus said that everything He said and did was because He first saw the Father do it, and heard the Father say it.⁴⁸⁷ That is THE way He ministered supernaturally, and that is the way we can step over into it. That is key! ONLY say what He tells you to say, and ONLY do what He shows you to do. Sometimes this will be simply seeing yourself do something on the inside. Just imitate what you see in your spirit because that is the way the Holy Spirit will show you what to do. How do I know if it was God? If it was the Lord, then it will work. Something will happen! If it did not

⁴⁸² John 7:38, 39

⁴⁸³ 1 Cor. 2:10-13

⁴⁸⁴ Hebrews 4:12, 13

⁴⁸⁵ 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14, 15, Acts 2:4

⁴⁸⁶ 1 Cor. 14:18

⁴⁸⁷ John 5:20, 12:49, 50, 14:10-15

work, then it was either me dreaming something up in my head, or not doing things *exactly* as He showed me. The leading of the Spirit may be a prompting, leading, leaning, impression, or even a nudging in your heart. Mostly, it is rare to actually hear the audible voice of the Holy Spirit, so don't be looking for that kind of leading or you will miss His daily instruction. It may be a *still small voice* in your heart.⁴⁸⁸ Trust God, and do what He leads you to do. Be bold about it. You will begin to experience great and mighty things, and the Lord will use you to bless many! Not only that, as you continue to follow His leading, He will trust you with more.

⁴⁸⁸ 1Kings 19:12, 13

Final words

The most outstanding events in the lives of God's people were around miracles of provision, protection, and God's healing power. These events marked them as those that had a supernatural God with whom nothing is impossible. The miraculous in their lives and through their ministries demonstrated a living God. He was and is the God that is interested in the blessing and welfare of His people. Ask Jesus, Elijah, Elisha, Paul, Peter, Phillip, Solomon, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Samson, Joshua, Noah, Moses, God-fearing kings of Israel, and many others in the Bible. The supernatural God of Heaven showed up and showed up powerfully in their lives, and they were a testimony to many around them. How about the miraculous in the lives of Hannah, Rachel, Sarah, Mary Magdalene, Mary- the mother of Jesus, Deborah, Esther, and many other great women of God in the Bible? The miracles of provision, healing, and protection performed through and for His people separates the God of the Bible from the dead religions of the world and all their false gods.

The two things that traditional unbelief derides are "those healing and prosperity teachers." They mock the Gospel of healing and prosperity even in the secular media. Have you ever wondered why? These two things are part of the great advertising "agencies" of God used throughout Scriptures to manifest His power and glory on the earth. Satan has been doing everything he can to lie about the truth in the areas of divine healing and prosperity. If He can make a mockery out of those ministries with a real strong call of God to these areas, then he can stop their influence among the masses. That is why the devil seeks to quell the voices of those with a real anointing to deliver the masses. He is looking to stop all those that have any understanding of our miracle working God. As in the past, the enemy's tactics and schemes will fail and the truth of God's Word will prevail. No one will be able to shut-up all those with a testimony of the healing and divine protection of the Lord. We refuse to be silent! We will shout if from the housetops! No opposition will stop the manifestation of God in the earth. The more that the attempts are made to thwart God's plan, the more God will show out. We are living in the days that God will demonstrate His glory as never before.

Demonstrations of God's power and glory are manifesting in the earth. They are increasing more and more until the catching away of the church, and the glorious return to earth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Nothing will stop these magnificent events. That is the manifestation of the kingdom of God! The Assembly of God's people will be a glorious Church without spot and wrinkle, holy, and without blemish when He presents it to Himself. (Eph. 5:26, 27) The bottom line is that we win!



Dan A. Rodriguez is the author of books and articles, and frequently writes posts on danalanrodriguez.com. His first book, *Three Days and Nights in the Heart of the Earth* was published in 1977 when he was 21 years of age, and it was translated into Spanish (*Tres Días y Tres Noches en el Corazón de La Tierra*) and published in 1978. Throughout the years, he has written and published a number of books in English and Spanish. The Lord has graced his life with the ability to communicate the truth of God's Word through the written page and through the public ministry of preaching, teaching, and ministering under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Dan and his wife Christine were the owners of retail stores and a martial arts school on the U. S. Virgin Islands. They are the parents of triplet boys, and make their home in Central Florida.

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A Call To Return: Restoring the Roots of Our Relationship With Jesus

Faith that Receives the Grace of God

Tras Días y Tres Noches en el Corazón de la Tierra

Manifestation of the Kingdom

From the Back cover

Demonstrations of God's power and glory are manifesting in the earth and are increasing more and more until the catching away of the church and the glorious return to earth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Nothing will stop these magnificent events. The Assembly of God's people will be a glorious church without spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing, and it will be holy when He presents it to Himself. (Ephesians 5:26, 27) The bottom line is that we win, and we are to win BIG! That is the reason for this book. It is our desire that the Church of the living God be the supernatural witness the Lord intended from the beginning. (Mark 16:15-20) The MANIFESTATION OF THE KINGDOM of God on the earth is through the anointed expression of SPIRITUAL FRUIT, GIFTS, AND MINISTRIES! That is the divine track laid out on the pages of this book by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit directed track on these pages begins by establishing the revelation of kingdom dominion and authority. After that, spiritual understanding will be opened to the fruit needed in order to have a solid foundation for supernatural manifestations from God. The instruction continues with the Holy Spirit's spiritual operations that demonstrate the power of God through the Church. Attention is then shifted to the supernatural call given to all of the Lord's disciples, and also to the public ministries God anoints according to the Scripture. We finish this inspired manuscript by learning to find one's place in the Body of Christ, the anointing to minister, divine guidance by the Holy Spirit, and how to step into a flow of the power of God. Be mightily and extraordinarily blessed by the study and application of this anointed resource!