

Bits and Bites

**Short Devotions From God's Word
To Lift You Up**

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Devotion 1

Are You On Solid Ground

We went through a time in our area where we had a lot of rain. I mean a whole lot. We had the remnants of two major hurricanes come through with bands of rain for days. We had a lot of flooding, and problems from that, but one huge problem was the landslides. One of them covered up both sides of the four lane with a huge pile of dirt and rocks. Just up from that the whole side of the mountain came down on a veterinarian clinic. They had to get the animals out. Dirt, rocks, trees, and power lines, all slid down that mountain. Huge chunks of the road that ran around the hillside fell out with everything else. Also, the parking lot fell in behind one of the local restaurants. It left a ditch about head high around the side and back of the parking lot. At about that same time, down in North Carolina, a huge section (about a mile long) of a major four lane caved in. All that water was washing the ground away out from under the surface. What everyone assumed to be solid ground was not so solid.

During this time, people were majorly stressed out. There are a lot of things going on in today's world that bring about a lot of stress in people's lives. I don't have to tell you about those things, because, no

matter where you live, you know about these things. We all share a kind of mixed up world right now. The whole world seems like it is shaking in its boots. I want to ask you a question. While it is shaking, are you standing on solid ground?

Jesus told a story, a parable, about a man that had not built on solid ground. We read about it in Matthew chapter 7:24-27. This scripture talks about a smart man and about a not so smart man. The not so smart man built his house down on the beach in the sand. His foundation was sand. When a small storm came, it washed his house away. The smart man built his house on solid rock. That was a strong foundation. When the storms came, his house stood firm.

We get all kinds of insurance for all kinds of problems. We have insurance to protect our house against floods, fire, theft, and all sorts of things. How about insurance that keeps our family secure even in the midst of a world that seemingly is falling apart? When disasters like the recent hurricanes strike, some of the biggest on record, you can forget getting insurance companies' payments to rebuild. It takes forever, if your company isn't bankrupt. So how can a company insure your family? I have an insurance policy for my family that is guaranteed. Matter of fact, I have an eternal guarantee. Why? Because I have built my house on a rock. It is built on a rock

that will hold no matter what goes on. How do I know? Because it has held for thousands of years. You see, I know without a doubt that the ground I have built on is solid ground. The foundation of my life, all I hold dear, and all I own is built on Jesus Christ. I know this because I have been saved, I have given my heart and life to Him, and I walk in obedience to Him and His Word. That gives me a solid foundation.

God's Word gives us a sure foundation, a solid ground. There are promises in God's Word. They don't work if we aren't walking with Him. It is like this. God's Word provides us an umbrella to protect us against the storm, if we are walking close enough to Him to get under it. We have to be going in His direction to be under that umbrella. We can't be caught up in doing our own thing if we want to be under that umbrella. If we are walking with someone who is holding an umbrella, and we want to stay dry, then we have to scoot up close to that person. If we want to be under God's umbrella, then we have to walk up close to Him, and go where He is going. If we are walking in our rebellious little direction regardless of what God says in His Word, then we are fools to think that the ground that we are walking on is solid. If we aren't walking on solid ground, then when the bottom drops out of our foundation, and our house crashes down on our heads, then we really

shouldn't be surprised. Maybe then we will be more careful to build back on solid ground, on God's sure foundation of His Word, on the foundation of the solid rock, Jesus Christ.

It guess to sum this up, I am saying get real with your life. Check out your foundation. Check out the ground you are walking on. We were trying to help someone who is homeless. He has no job. He has been in jail. Most of his problem is caused by alcohol and drugs. He carries with him in a couple of bags everything he owns. He never knows when his next meal is coming, and how he is going to get out of the cold for the night. He came to church. During an altar call, I slipped over to ask if he wanted to go to the altar, and I told him I would go with him. That is not my usual thing, but this time the Lord led me to go to speak to him. He answered, "No, I am fine." My first thought was that this is so not true. He is definitely not fine. He is fooling himself into thinking that he is. I suspect that the reason he is in such a shape, the reason that he is so far down, is that his house has been sliding for a long time. He was given a chance to rebuild on a solid foundation, but he turned it down. It is my prayer that he rethinks this, and wises up.

So how about you? Are you building your house on a solid foundation? Are you walking on solid ground?

Devotion 2

What Matters Is Where You Are Going

I talk to a lot of people who can't let go of the past to grab onto their future. It may be that they can't let go of hurt, or anger, or bitterness in their past to be able to grab onto what good things their future might bring. It may be that they can't forgive themselves for things that they have done in the past so that they can accept God's forgiveness, which will give them a better future. It may be that there are sins that they are wrapped up in that they can't let go of so that they can find an eternal future with God. It may be that they can't see that they are worthy of God's love, so they don't accept the idea that they can find happiness and peace with God. They may not even deep think that they have a chance at having eternity with God. For whatever reason, they are stuck in the past.

I'm here to tell you that you have a future. But you have to let go of yesterday to grab onto today, and tomorrow. If you have your hands too full of yesterday, you won't embrace what is coming today, and tomorrow. If your mind is too full of yesterday, then you won't receive what is coming tomorrow. Here is an example. I had been saved when I was young. When I went away to college, I learned much

more than what they taught in books. I learned about drinking and drugs, and the mess of a life style that goes with that. I wrecked my life, my heart, and my mind. When you don't care about yourself, then you let a lot of people hurt you, and I had a lot of that going on. But God wouldn't let me go. I finally turned around from those things, I turned around from what I had in my life to grab onto God, and let Him change my life. When I finally did, it took a long time for me to forgive myself. Until I did that, I couldn't fully accept God's forgiveness. I was bound to what I had done. God kept dealing with me, and working with me using His Word and love to set me free. When I let go of what I had done in the past, I could finally see that I had a wonderful new future in Him.

The next step after His forgiving me and my acceptance of that forgiveness, was that I had to forgive. I had to forgive all those who had torn me apart. I could finally let go of all that anger and all the stuff that unforgiveness had caused in my life. Then I could accept by faith in Him that I had an eternal future with Him.

God isn't so much hung up on what you have done, or what has been done to you. He wants to give you a present and a future. Jeremiah 29:11 says *For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD,*

thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. He wants to give us a future that will be even better than what we expect. He promises us an abundant life, and a future that is so great that we can hardly believe it. How do I know? I know because I read my Bible. That is a good place to go to read about what God has in store for you, not only what He has in store for you now, but what He has in store for you eternally. Get a good study Bible out (I recommend the Thompson Chain Study Bible). Or get out a good online concordance (a really good one is www.kingjamesbibleonline.org). Study out verses that have the word joy in them. Study verses that have the word life in them. Here are some more words to study: hope, peace, God's peace, God's love, promises.

Look up verses that talk about an abundant life. Hey, if you don't look these up and read them, they won't help you. Get out your Bible. Another good one to research is forgive, and forgiveness. Let God's promises in His Word wrap you up in His love. Now you can read about all these things, but if you don't apply it to your life, it won't help you. You can look at all this and turn around and go back to your misery, or you can grab hold of God's love and His promises and let Him change you.

Here are some verses with promises for your future. I Kings 8:56, Romans 4:21, 2 Peter 1:4, First John 2:25, Psalm 30:5, John 14:2, Romans 8:28, Revelation 21:4.

So how about it? Do you have future ahead of you? One that is good, and wrapped up in God's love? Or are you going to settle for the junk that you have behind you? You have to let it go to have the future that God wants to give you. It is up to you to choose.

Devotion 3

Get Close Enough to Hear Him

One of my favorite songs has the line in it “get close enough to hear Him”. I wrote a song titled *I Sit at His Feet and Lean on His Knee*. Here is part of the lyrics:

I sit at Your feet and lean on Your knee, Jesus lover of my soul. I love you I praise You. You're my everything. Jesus I sit at Your feet. So many times lately I've needed so much that Lord I've not stopped to give. I've nothing to give You, that You've not given me. So I lift up my praise and worship your name, glory and honor to You.

We need to draw nigh to God. James 4:8 says, *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.* We need to get close enough to Him that we yield to Him. We need to get close enough to Him that we hear His voice, and close enough that we respond to His love, and let Him lead us. If we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us. Jeremiah 29:13 says these words, *And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.* The key to this is to seek for Him with all of your heart. If

we only give God 5 %, or 10%, or even 50%, then we aren't seeking Him with all of our heart. We are being double minded. What I mean by that is this. I see so many people who confess with their mouth to follow God. But what I see in their lives is not God. I see so much confusion. I see a lot of drama, and a lot of mess in their life. I see the kind of heartache that comes when we don't yield to God and obey His Word. I know that they aren't seeking God with all their heart. They are being double minded. They are blowing with the wind, going whichever the crowd is going at the moment, or just aimlessly drifting along. The Bible tells us that if we are double-minded that we won't get anything from God. We have to make up our mind that we want God to have His way in our lives. We have to draw near to Him, then He will be real in our lives.

The sad thing about people who don't draw near to God is that they eventually give up on trying to live for Him, because it doesn't work. It is their fault that it isn't working, but they just don't see it. They really don't know what they are missing out on. They are missing out on getting to know the One who loves them enough that He died to save them, the One who gave His life to them to give them an abundant life. They are missing out on this love all because they aren't giving up their stinking way to go His way. They are missing out all because they aren't giving up

their stubborn will to be in His will. There are so many people who think that they are smarter than God, and they think that their way is so much better than His way. They aren't willing to give up either to find out how wrong they are. And their life is full of one disaster after another, one drama after another, one heartache after another, all because their way and their will is just not working.

If all this sounds like you, and you are tired of it all, then what can you do? You need to make up your mind that you are willing to do it God's way. After all He is a lot smarter than you, and He knows how to fix it. He can take all the messes that you've made and turn them out to be miracles, if you'll just give up and give it all to Him. And remember, Jeremiah 29:13 says that we will find Him if we seek Him with ALL of our heart. If we do that, then we will find Him. How do we know? Because He promised in His Word.

What will we find when we do give up and give in? We will find that Savior who died to set us free, the One who died to give us eternal life, the One who loves us with an eternal love. Who else has done for you what Jesus has done for you? If you had been the only one, He would have died just to save you. He is the Good Shepherd, and He will be a shepherd to lead you to green pastures by still waters. He will lead

you home. He will keep you safe. He will set you free from all the things that are messing up your life. If you will yield to Him, and listen to His voice He will help you to find an abundant life full of Him. You just have to draw near to Him. Get down on your knees. Seek His face. Tell Him that you are tired of your way, and you are finally ready to do things His way. Then He can lead you. Be willing to get a real relationship with Him. When you do, you won't regret it.

Devotion 4

Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve

The nation of Israel had been led by God through the wilderness. They had seen all of the miracles there. Then God had helped them to take the land that He had promised them. They finally had victory over their enemies. Things were good. Joshua had become their leader after Moses had died. He had been faithful to lead them, and faithful to the God who led him. When he knew that he was dying, he called them together, and gave what you might call his farewell speech. It was his best words that he was leaving them to guide them. You can find this in Joshua 23 and 24. In this talk, he reminded them of what God had done for them. Then He said this in Joshua 24: 15, *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.* The part of that I want to concentrate on is *choose you this day whom ye will serve.*

Serving God is a choice. It is a choice that we have to make everyday that we live. It is an active choice. It

isn't a thought that we have, but it is a life that we live. If we aren't careful we can become like so many who confess that they are Christians, but they don't possess what they are saying. They talk the talk but they don't walk the walk. That is such a hard way to live. There is an old saying that when we straddle fences, then we get the seat torn out of our britches. When we try to have it both ways, following the Lord, and doing what everyone else is doing who isn't following Him, then it is a hard way to live. The Bible says that when we do that we will be of all men most miserable. We need to choose who we are going to serve.

What are the other choices besides serving God that we can choose? We can choose to serve ourselves, do what we want to even when down deep we know that it is the wrong thing to do, and we know that we are having trouble in our life because of that choice, even though we don't want to admit it. We can choose to serve people around us. Young people especially can get so caught up in doing whatever their little crowd is doing. Sad to say, a lot of grown people will go with the crowd too. Sometimes we will sacrifice ourselves, our lives, our walk with God, just to keep someone in our lives. All too often when we do that, we will find ourselves in a big mess, with a lot of heartache. I watch people go through this and they admit to me that they are suicidal because they have

such bad depression. The person that they gave up following God to keep in their lives caused all these problems. That is when we need to remember the parable that Jesus told about the prodigal son. He told us this to remind us about His Father's love. You can read about it in Luke 15:11-32. Please get out your Bible and read about this. Take God's Word for it. If you are facing this kind of situation in your life, my words to you are "Run Home". Run back to God. Run back to His love.

Every day we have to make a choice. The happiest days I have are those that I start on my knees by my desk at work asking God to lead me during that day. The worst days that I have are those days that I allow everything to come in and jerk me around in circles so that I don't have time for Him. If we aren't careful, we can allow the devil to cause our whole life to be full of chaos so that we don't have time to serve the Lord. He becomes the after-thought we have at the end of our day. We give Him the leftovers of our life. When we do that, we will not have a peaceful life full of Him. We have a life where satan is just giving us leftovers. We need to start each day choosing whom we will serve.

When Jesus hung on the cross for you, He didn't give you His leftovers. When He left heaven to come to earth so that He could understand, and feel what we

go through, He didn't give you His leftovers. When you call out to Him because your life is in a jumble and a mess, and you long for His peace, He won't give you His leftovers either. Run to Him. Make up your mind who you are going to serve. Don't let the devil make you a servant of his. Don't let someone who is drawing you away from God cause you to serve them instead of God. Don't let the cares of this life cause you to serve them instead of God. Choose you this day who you are going to serve.

The last part of Joshua 24:15 says this "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord". Joshua made this statement before he died. So how did he know that his house would serve the Lord? If he had made this statement before that, it would be easy to see how he could say it. He could say it because he was going to lead them in that direction. How could he be confident that they would serve God when he was going to die? He could say this because he had led them in the right direction. He had taught them about the ways of God. Not only that but he had lived the ways of God before them. He was confident that they would serve God. Can you be that confident about your family? Do they see you living a life that draws them to follow God? Do they see from your example what following God means?

In closing, we choose this day, and every day who we will serve. Please, on this day, today and every day, make sure that you choose to serve the Lord.

Devotion 5

Be Still and Know That I Am God

Our topic for today's devotion is Be Still and Know That I Am God. This comes from Psalms 46:10, "He says, *"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."* This is a key that can help us every day, in a hundred different ways. The first way that it helps us is when we first get saved. Many people aren't saved, and don't commit their life and heart to God because they don't shut up enough to listen, to know, and to admit that God is God. They are too busy doing their own little self-destructive things. They are too busy doing their own things, and getting their own way, and proud of it.

Then something happens to change all that. They get in reality, because reality has a way of hitting us pretty hard, when we are running away from it. They realize that their way isn't working out so great. They begin to see that God is real, and that they need something in their life that is bigger, and greater than their own way. They begin to be still and know that God is God, and they recognize their need to submit to Him. That is the beginning of salvation. God is dealing with their heart and mind, drawing them to

Him. They become more aware of God, and their place in Him. God's love is drawing them. His Spirit is working in their lives. Then at an altar (whether in a church, or by their bed) they allow Him to be their God, and come into their heart. They give their heart and life to Him. They invite Him to come into their heart. It all started when they were willing to be still and know that He is God, and they allowed Him to become their God.

Every day we have to make that choice to keep victory in our life. To be victorious Christians, we need to take time just to be still and know Him. The devil is a master in getting us so busy that we have no time to do this. We have no time to be still, and sit in His wonderful love, and in His presence. We have no time to fellowship with Him. We have no time to listen to His voice, and let Him guide us. We have no time to take in the Word of God, which is our necessary food. We become weak. Then it is easy for the enemy to destroy us. Every day we need to take time to be still and know that He is God.

All too often, if we aren't careful, we will allow life to get in a tangle. It gets all jumbled up until we don't even know which end is up (to put it bluntly). Our priorities get all out of line. We allow people who aren't led by God to lead us, and that is a lot like the blind leading the blind, and everybody falls into

the ditch. When our life becomes like that, we do not have any peace. That is when we need to remember to be still and know that He is God. Be quiet. Rest in His peace. Fellowship with Him. Pray. Seek His Word.

Then there are the times when life's storms come crashing in against us. That is another time when we need to be still and know that He is God. When it seems like our world is falling down around our ears, this is when we need to know that He is God. He is in control, and He will hold us in the palm of His hand. We are safe in His love. Because we have walked with Him, spent time in His presence, soaked in His Word, spent time in prayer watching Him answer our prayers, our faith is built up, and we can stand in the middle of the storm with victory.

Sometimes we want to use God as a spare tire. We want to just take Him out of the box that we keep Him in when we need Him. No relationships can thrive like that. He is God. He is the Lord of Lords. He is the great I am. He is definitely not anybody's spare tire. Jesus put it this way. He told the story of the house that was built on the sand. When the storms came, the house fell flat. Then there was the house that was built on the rock. When the storms came, the house stood firm. What is your house built on? Is it built on the sand or on the rock. Have you

been saved? Have you asked the Lord into your heart and life, and committed them to Him. Do you recognize that He is God, and that He is your God. Do you honor Him in your life? Do you take time to be still and know that He is your God, and submit to His will in your life? Do you allow Him to lead you into those green pastures, by the still waters? Do you allow Him to lead you around the hazards of this world? So many times I have been protected, and my life has been spared because I had a relationship with God where I listened to His voice, and was in the practice of obeying Him. So when that time came that I needed to obey Him to go around a situation that could take my life, I obeyed God and my life was spared.

Or when that time came that I needed to make a certain choice at exactly the right moment, and I was spared great heartaches, or financial ruin, because I was in the habit of listening and obeying. Or there have been times when I made a decision that led me to a great blessing. I made the right decision because I was in the habit of obeying God. I was able to do all those because I had taken time to be still and know that He was God, and I knew that I wanted to follow Him for real, hear His voice, and let Him lead me.

Sometimes if we aren't careful, the devil can set us up to run from God, to run from a relationship with Him

where we soak up His Spirit and allow His Spirit to work in our heart and mind. Sometimes the devil whispers to us that we are not worthy of feeling God's Spirit. We run away from God instead of being still and knowing Him. Sometimes, we want to run away from God and avoid Him because we are doing things, or living a way that we know doesn't please Him. We want to hold on to that, and not to God. We want to hide our sin away, and hide from God. When that happens, our life line is cut, and the enemy wins. If we don't change this, then sure destruction lies in our path.

The Spirit of God is our power source. When we allow His Spirit to flow in our heart and mind, that empowers us. That gives the power not only to overcome, but it pours out through us to make a difference in the lives of everyone around us. I see people who in their own flesh are really trying to help others, but they aren't really helping. Only when you fill up with God's Spirit can you pour out on others, and then they can be still and know that God is their God too.

We also need to take time to be still and let His Spirit touch us. His Spirit will strengthen us, renew our mind, get us on the right track, and hush the roar of the world. Here is a song that talks about how precious it is to come into the Holy of Holies.

Come Into the Holy of Holies

Come into the Holy of Holies
Come and worship My name
The petition is broken the shackles are gone
Come to My presence again

Come and My Spirit will touch you
Come and I'll bless you my child
I welcome you into my presence
Come rejoice with me for a while

I see that hurt I will heal you
I see that pain, you're made whole
I see your confusion, I'll send peace of mind
Come and I'll strengthen your soul

Come Into the Holy of Holies
Come and worship My name
The petition is broken the shackles are gone
Come to My presence again

Be Still and Know That He is God. "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." He is the Great I Am. When He spoke to Moses telling him who he should say sent him, He said Tell them I Am. There is nothing, or no one His equal, or who is

greater than Him. Still He loves us as His children. In the old days, before Jesus, only the priests were allowed to go into the Holy of Holies, that part of the Tabernacle where they did the sacrifices. If another person went in there, they would die. God is that mighty and holy. But He sent His Son Jesus to die, so that we could come in and fellowship with Him, so that His Spirit could dwell in our hearts. Take time to worship Him, hear His voice and obey Him, read His Word. Take time to be still and know He is God.

Devotion 6

Come In To The Sonshine

One morning while I was sitting in my living room, I noticed the sun shining in the window on my couch. It had been one of those seasons when we hadn't had much sun, mostly rain and clouds. Oh, that sunshine looked really good. I stayed where I was and imagined how warm and cozy that wonderful sunlight would feel. I looked at it for a long time picturing how that light shining through those clouds was lighting up everything in that corner of my living room with a happy glow. Then I came to myself. I thought, "Why in the world am I sitting over here thinking about how wonderful that would feel to bask in that sunlight, when all I have to do to experience it is to get up, and move over to the couch, and sit down in it?"

If we aren't careful that is how we do the things of God. If we haven't actually come to the place where we have submitted to God and His will for our life, and we haven't accepted salvation, allowing His Spirit to come into our heart, we can do God the same way I did that sunshine. We may even think that we feel the glow of His Sonshine, but we only get warmth from across the room, instead of sitting in the

glow and basking in His light. I can remember someone whom I knew most of my life. I can remember as a small child asking him to come to church with us. He would answer that he knew God, and had a relationship with Him, and he was fine the way he was. He stuck to that nearly all of my life. Every time I would ask him about it, he had the same answer. As I grew older I realized he was a miserable person. He was an alcoholic. His life was full of turmoil, with little true peace. Why? Because he was sitting outside of the Sonshine looking in, thinking that he was fine where he was. But he was sitting out in the cold, and couldn't feel the warmth of God's love and Spirit, and the light of His Word. He had chosen other things that were keeping him out of God's light and love, and was making excuses in his mind that he was fine. Problem is, he had convinced himself that this was all that he could have, that this was all that there was.

Every day I find people who are just like this person. Whatever they are holding on to that is keeping them out of God's light and love, blocks them from getting up from where they are sitting, and moving into the light. It is like a huge weight holding them down, and holding them back. They have convinced themselves that they are fine. Sad to say, many of them are in church every Sunday. They even read the Bible. At least they read the parts of it that doesn't convict

them. If God's Spirit starts to move, they run away from that, because His Spirit convicts us, and shows us the true Light. They don't want the truth, because the truth will set them free, and they don't really want to be set free. The problem is, the things that they hold on to, those weights that bind them, will destroy them-body, mind, and soul. In some part of their soul, they know this, but have come to the place that they don't care.

I understand how all of this is, because at one time in my life I was just like that. I had gotten caught up in a cycle of drugs, and alcohol, and a lifestyle that was destroying me. I made all kinds of excuses, and continued on my merry way. I thank God that He knew my heart. While I was running away from Him, I was lying to myself. I could even find excuses in the Bible for not fixing my lifestyle. God's Spirit never stopped dealing with my heart. I choked it down, and did everything I could to ignore it, but it never left me alone. Praise God. Finally I hit bottom enough to look up. You see, when you really hit bottom to the place that the only hope that you have is God, then is when you finally stop lying, and you begin to get real with Him, and come clean. You stop wanting it your way, and you admit that your way hasn't worked in a long time. All the excuses just fall away. All of the lies stop. Your pride stops, and your self will. You are ready to yield to God. Then is the

beginning of a change that will last the rest of your life. That is when you move into the Sonshine, and He will light up your life for real.

What about the person I mentioned at the beginning of this devotion? He finally moved into the Sonshine about 2 or 3 years before he died. I thank God for that. He totally changed. He found peace that he had looked for all his life. He found a love that was big enough to wrap up his failure. He moved away from sin, and God cast it away and remembered it no more. There was no more condemnation. He learned that because of God's love, he could love himself. There was no need for any more excuses. Through the help of God's Word and truth, and His Spirit, he gave up all those things that had bound him all of his life, and he found new life in God. He was born again. He found a real salvation that stuck. It wasn't salvation that he imagined he had. He wasn't sitting outside of the Sonlight looking in. He was sitting in the Sonlight basking in its warmth. Basking in its light, love, and joy.

Sometimes even as Christians we settle for sitting outside of the light looking in, if we aren't careful. Sometimes we can be like the kid who was looking at his glass of water thinking that was all of the water there was, when he was standing in front of the ocean. God's love, His Spirit, His power, His peace, His

Word, are so huge it is like the ocean. And we sit at the beach with our toes in it thinking that all we have in that little glass is all we need. Don't limit God. Don't get in a rut with your relationship with Him. Grow in your understanding. Never think that you have read the Bible enough, that you know it all. Don't think that you understand all of God. Isaiah 55:9 says, "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." We don't know a thing. We might as well admit it. Every time I pick up the Bible, I learn something new, and I have been reading it most of my life.

Fall in love with Jesus. Be like the psalmist that wrote in Psalms 130:6, "My soul *waiteth* for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning." Draw closer to Him every day. Don't let anything keep you from His love. Don't let anything keep you from His wonderful light that will light up your life. John 8:12 says, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Matthew 4:16, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."

I am reminded of Peter in Mark 14:54. “And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.” It was when Peter was following Jesus afar off that he denied Him. Stay up close to Jesus. Make your relationship with Him a priority every day. Make your prayer life and Bible reading, and fellowshiping with Him something that is important.

Don't be like the people in John 3:19, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” If you are sitting across the room, looking at the light, isn't it time that you move in closer? It is the best seat in the house, to be sitting basking in that wonderful glow of the light of the Lord.

Devotion 7

All Things Work Together for the Good

One of my very favorite verses is Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.” Those verses are verses that will see you through the fire. That is one of the passages of scripture that is like a light when you are going through a dark time. Those scriptures become your favorite. This verse has seen me through a lot of fires. I use it a lot when counseling people, young and old. I have come to understand that no matter how great, or how horrible the battle has been, God can work everything (and I mean everything) out for our good.

I remember a Bible lesson I was giving at our Christian school. God put this verse on my heart to teach that day. I thought I had heard Him wrong. You see, one of the students present that day had just been through a terrible thing. Her dad had killed her mother and her sister, and then himself. I thought to myself, I can’t teach a lesson on how everything works for the good. In that instant, God showed me

how He was planning to work this out for good in this young person's life. He didn't cause this situation. He didn't want this to happen. It was caused when someone who was full of the devil gave in to him. But God causes everything, and I mean everything to work out for good in our lives. Even something that terrible. I taught that lesson. I have never forgotten that. That moment has stuck in my heart and spirit since then, and that has been maybe 20 some years ago. I have used this illustration many times through the years to light up the darkness for people who were going through terrible trials. I have never seen this verse fail to work if the people involved were obedient to the way that God made to work the situation out. Sometimes we have to be obedient to see God's plan work. No matter how great the troubles, the battles, or the trials. God can work everything (and I really do mean everything) out for our good.

I recently went through a fearful time. The enemy was trying to come against everything I was doing, and creating situations to discredit me, and really trying to discredit God. I went from one situation to another, and seemed like I couldn't get my head up above the water before another wave came sweeping over me. A change was coming in our ministry, and the enemy was attacking all of us in hopes to stop that change. (By the way, He wasn't able to stop it.) This

situation came up, and the enemy fought to put a fear against me using that situation. I would just be sitting there and get a terrible fear that would come against me. Finally, I realized that the enemy was causing that fear (that is a good lesson to learn-I had learned it, but I got so caught up in it that I forgot it).

I soaked up God's Word during that week. He would minister to my spirit, strengthening me, and encouraging me, reminding me that I definitely was not the only one to go through such a thing, and reminding me how He had brought others through. Finally, trust, and peace started reaching through that spirit of fear that the enemy had put around me. Then the Holy Ghost started quickening me. I would just be walking along, and the Holy Ghost would hit me so hard He seemed like He would nearly drive me into the floor. Then I started praying in the Holy Ghost, binding up that spirit of fear, and binding up the enemy who was using the people who had purposed in their hearts to do me damage. Then, day by day, I began to learn a lesson, or I received a new strength, and purpose, that came because of that battle.

My faith and trust in the Lord was strengthened. My knowledge of my authority to bind the enemy was increased. By the end of it, God had not only overcome the situation, and helped me to do so, but I

was thankful because of all that I had gained from it. “And we know that **all** things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.” Not just the good times, but ALL things. I have learned that the greater the battle, the greater the good that came from it.

One thing that I went through during that time, and through different times, was that the devil attacked my faith and trust by bringing a spirit of fear against me. It even made the scriptures I read a blur. Stress from it all stopped me from being able to concentrate on what God was saying. Fear is one of the biggest tools that the enemy uses against us. It stops up our peace of mind. It stops us from thinking clearly. And if we react to this fear, it can cause us to mess up big time by jumping ahead of God, or jumping right into a trap that the enemy has set for us. When you feel this fear, realize that it is not of God, and therefore it is of the enemy. Bind it. Be mindful of walking in the Spirit so that you do what God leads you. Let the Holy Ghost rise up in you and rebuke that fear. Pray in tongues. Fear is the opposite of faith and trust. Don't let fear win.

One really dark time I went through I refer to as being the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Our pastor's wife died unexpectedly. She was a good friend. A few months later, my sister found out that she had a brain

tumor. Three days later my mother just fell down dead. About 9 months later, my sister died. Just a few months later, and another good friend who had founded our college, and had served as a chancellor for the college, and had helped us through the years, he passed away.

There was so much death around me that I actually got something that was like post-traumatic stress. Every time I would hear a siren, I would freak out inside thinking that someone else I knew had passed away. It took a while to get over that. At first, I couldn't get up after all that. It seemed like the waters had covered over my soul, as the verse in Psalms 24:4-8 says, "Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul." We may be going through a bad time, but then is when we need to keep this news in our mind and heart. Hear the rest of that section of scripture. "Blessed *be* the LORD, who hath not given us *as* a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help *is* in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth."

We have help. And **all** those things that we have to go through, God is already at work working them all out for our good. When I finally got my head above

that rough water, in that rough sea, God showed me the plan that He had, and how He had worked these things-all of them-out for the good of those concerned. I saw His hand and His mercy working in every one of those situations for each one of His children that I mentioned. I saw how He had honored the desires of those-His dear children. It certainly wasn't my plan, but His plan was so much better. It had been hard on the living left behind, but precious to the Lord is the death of His saints. He will strengthen and comfort the living, but the time and circumstances of the death of His saints is planned and structured for their good, not for all of our good. God again had worked out all things for the good of those who love Him.

When I started out this devotion, I mentioned that girl at school who had gone through such a terrible time. Was this God's will that this happened? Did He cause this situation so that good could come from it? I think we all know the answer to that one. We live in an evil world full of evil people. We live in a fallen world full of sickness and disease, full of things that can cause us harm. Matthew 5:45 tells us, "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The rain falls on us all. But when the floods seem to overcome us, and the fire seems way too hot,

and the trials and battles seem to destroy us, there is One who through thousands of years has seen His people through the floods and fires, through the trials and battles, and He will see you through yours. And even while you are going through it, He will be working it all out for your good. And I do mean ALL.

Devotion 8

Who Is the Light?

I was sitting in my living room when out of the corner of my eye I kept seeing brilliant little flashes of light. They were so bright that when I looked directly at them, I couldn't see for a bit. You know how it does when you look at the sun. I started investigating to see what these were coming from. Winding through the hills around my house is a highway, probably a good 2 miles away. Sunlight was glinting off of the car windows as they traveled down that highway. The cars at that distance away looked like little 1 inch miniatures, but that light was really bright. I am sure that these people in those vehicles had no idea that they were casting such a light in my window all that distance away, but they were.

I was reminded about the scripture in John 8:12 that says, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Then I thought about the scripture John 1:9, "*That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." I thought about what a huge light that is that lights up the whole world, and will eventually light up everything in heaven and earth.

John 12:46 says, “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” I am so glad that I have that light with me, and in me to light up the darkness of this old world. I have compassion on those who try to live without it. What a darkness. I do not know how they can make it. These are the ones talked about in II Corinthians 4:4, “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” When you pray for those who are not saved, who haven’t found that light, bind the devil who has blinded them. Pray that God take those blinders off so that they can see that light.

Then I was reminded of the scripture in Matthew 5:14-16, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” I thought about how those people in those cars had no idea that they were lighting up my living room 2 miles away. They had no idea. But they still were. When we have the brilliant light of Jesus shining in our life, people will see, even sometimes when we don’t know that they can. I’ve had days when it seemed like everything went wrong, and I

was definitely not at my best. Then something would happen that made me realize that someone had seen the light of Jesus in me. I would light someone's life up. Or I would realize that I had been a witness to someone, not knowing at the time that I had.

I remember seeing a former student at Walmart. She worked there. I spoke to her, and she gave me a hug. She told me that she saw me all the time, but a lot of times I was too far away for her to say something to me. She said that when she saw me, no matter how bad things were for her, she would be reminded of the Lord in her life, and take heart by remembering that He was her light to light the darkness. I had no idea that my light (Jesus in me) was shining out to her in that way. It made me realize that His light was shining out to others, even when I didn't know it. Just like the light flashing on those car windows shone in my window.

The light we carry is a brilliant light that can light the darkness in other's lives. Even when we don't realize it. But we need to realize the responsibility that comes by carrying that light. We need to always be mindful of obeying God. Sure that light shines out of us, but sometimes we need to do things, or say things, for that light to completely do that work. Obedience is important. I have had a lot of prayer meetings in stores, right in the aisle. I would see someone, and

God would give me a Word for them. Or He would have me pray for them. Sometimes I would know them, and sometimes I wouldn't. But He did, and He knew what they needed. They were brightened up by Jesus, the light in me. Sometimes they were desperately seeking help, and Jesus through me would reach out to them, giving them something to hold on to.

You have a light in you. A brilliant light. When you feel like you are nothing, and that God isn't using you, remember. That light is still shining. We may never know who sees it. Keep it bright. The things of this old world, and unsaved people around us drag that light out of us. Keep it bright by reading the Bible, by praying, by spending time fellowshiping with the Lord, by fellowshiping with others who walk with Him, by letting the Holy Ghost move in you.

Always remember wherever you are, be mindful to listen to that still small voice inside. Obey God. Who knows how He will use you. Someone needs that light to shine in their lives. It doesn't matter what you think you can do. Matter of fact it doesn't matter what you can do at all. That isn't what it is about. What matters is what God can do through you. Let Him use you. The title of this chapter was *Who is the light?* Probably when you read that title before you

read the chapter, you thought that the answer to that question is JESUS. That is so true. But never forget. When you have His light in you shining out—SO ARE YOU.

Devotion 9

Your Choice

I had a major problem with my weight. I actually got up to 255 pound. This was causing all kinds of health problems for me. One of the worst problems was that I couldn't breathe. I was considering going on oxygen it was so bad. I was having all kinds of issues. It had been years since I had tried dieting. Nothing had worked for me. Then I decided to make a healthy lifestyle my choice. Once I made that choice all the way down deep, I started losing weight. I lost 35 pounds in a year. I had to choose between sickness or death, or an abundant healthy life. When I made that choice, I changed my lifestyle, and the change stuck. I had to make that choice one day at a time, one meal at a time, one exercise at a time. I had to choose between what was best for me, and what was not.

Walking with the Lord is also a choice. Just like my lifestyle change, it is something that you have to choose every day. When I wake up in the morning, I can either choose to read my Bible, and have a prayer time, or I can choose something else. The Word of God is our strength. Psalms 119:105 says that it is our light. "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a

light unto my path.” We need to be like Job in Job 23:12, “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.” We know these things. Just like I know that if I gain back the weight that I lost that I will have major health problems, I also know that if I deprive myself of my spiritual food, I will become weak and double minded and an easy target of the enemy. So I choose to read my Bible, and pray.

We have to make a choice when we receive salvation. We have to choose serving God over all the people that are around us. We have to choose to commit and submit our life to God. Salvation is a choice. Walking with the Lord, obeying Him, yielding to Him, all these things are choices. Faith is a choice. We can either choose to walk in fear, or walk in faith. Trusting God is a choice. We can either trust God or trust in the arm of flesh. Walking and fellowshiping with the Lord is a choice. We can either fill our life with so much junk that we fall into life haphazardly so that we don't have time for God, or we can choose to put Him first. We have to make that choice.

I think that the reason many people are weak Christians is because they have not made right choices. When I am ministering to people, I ask them if they pray and read their Bible daily, they answer

that they don't have time. I ask them if they fellowship with the Lord, or if they obey Him daily, and they look at me as if I am crazy, and extreme. Again they say that they don't have time. I ask them if they let the Holy Ghost move in their life, Again, they don't have time. Then I begin to listen to them. I hear them talk about all the stuff they do, and most of it is junk. I watch them, and they can't stay off their smart phone enough to hold a conversation with me, let alone with God. They often neglect their children because their life is so full of junk. They have time to facebook with "friends", but no time to pray. They have time to run here and there mindlessly, but no time to obey the Lord.

If you are saying to yourself that you don't have time for the things of the Lord, and you are wishing that you did, then start writing down everything that you do in a day's time. Put down an estimate of how much time you spent on each thing. For this to work, you can't consciously change your schedule, and do things differently because you know that you are going to do this exercise. You have to be honest. Then after you have written it down, at the end of the day, go back and look at it. Then go back and cut out the junk out of your life. Make up your mind that you are going to choose to put God first. Cut out the things that are meaningless. Then choose to put back God's things.

For years I hadn't had time to change my life to a healthier lifestyle. I didn't have time to eat a healthy breakfast, or exercise, or read my Bible and pray in the mornings. I didn't have time to take a healthy lunch to work. I didn't have time to eat at work. I didn't have time to exercise in the evening after work. I didn't have time to fix a healthy supper. I just didn't have time. Then I chose to do those things. When I put a priority on these things, it was amazing how I found time. I had the same number of hours in the day, had the same schedule, but I had time for everything. Put a priority on the important things, cut out the junk, and you will be surprised how much time you have.

We have to make a choice. Matter of fact, we have to make many choices in a day's time. I am reminded of Joshua in Joshua 24:15, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." We may not have other gods that we have to choose like the ones Joshua had to choose not to serve, but there are many things that can become gods in our life. It may be people who aren't saved who dominate our life. It may be things like the smart phone, facebook,

texting, or the many other things that the enemy uses to crowd up our lives so that there is no time for God. It may be drama that keeps us so torn up that we have no peace, and no time for the Peacemaker. It may be extra things that we get involved in. The enemy is a master at filling up our time with junk so that we forget the priorities.

Take a look at your life. Are you choosing life, or death? Are you choosing to serve God or the enemy who has filled your life with junk? Then, each day and every day, choose this day whom you will serve.

Devotion 10

Broken But Blessed

One morning I was listening to a song on the radio by Daryl Williams called *I've Been Broken But I've Been Blessed*. It is one of my favorite songs. The Lord has really used this song in my life many times. Here are the lyrics.

The blessing of a broken heart is what God chose to use.

He never had His eye off you though His hedge had been reduced

And like Job, He let my faith be tried even though He knew the cost

But my victory would be so much more than anything I'd lost

I've been broken but I've been blessed

I've been down yet I have found His peace and rest

I've known the emptiness of failure when there was nothing left

I've been broken but I've been blessed

If you don't see the reason for the trial you're walking through

Just let your faith stay established on the Word of Living Truth

*'Cause our God is faithful to the end and He will
never, never, never change
He knows when it's all over that you can join with me
and say*

*I've been broken but I've been blessed
I've been down yet I have found Sweet peace and rest
I've known the emptiness of failure when there was
nothing left
Oh I've been broken but I've been blessed*

*God let me know the emptiness of failure when there
was nothing left
I've been broken. Oh but I've been blessed
Yes I was broken but thank God I'm richly,
abundantly blessed*

There is so much truth in that song. Back to that morning when I was listening to that song. I was doing a project that involved having to go back through my Google history. When I went through my history, I started seeing some things that I had looked up through recent years. I had looked up mrsa. I had looked up oxygen machines when I couldn't breathe and thought I was going to have to be permanently on oxygen. I had looked up treatments for yeast when my body had gotten an overabundance of yeast. I had looked up lymes disease because I had it twice, and the second time over a year went by before I found it.

Believe it or not there was more. Looking back through my history of what I had looked up was like a diary of all the health problems I'd had. Some of the history that I saw reminded me of the deaths of 5 people that year who had been very close to me. I don't mind telling you, while searching through all that, I was more than just a little overwhelmed.

Then is when *Broken But I've Been Blessed* started playing on the radio. God reminded me that the things that I considered terrible trials had been for a purpose. He reminded me of what I had gained through those trials. By the time He finished that, I was praising God for the trials, and the blessings they had brought about in my life. It isn't the mountain top experiences that grow us. It is those times when it seems we have to live on our knees to make it. It isn't the wonderful happy times that cause our faith to grow, but it is those times when it seems our life is likely to fly apart. It isn't the comfortable times that cause us to serve God with all our heart, but it is those times that knock us out of our comfort zone. It isn't those times that we go through when we can hold on to those around us for security, but it is those times when nobody but God can help us.

Often when we go through trials and battles, the enemy whispers that there is something wrong with us, or wrong with our faith, because God loves us,

and why would He let us go through this terrible time. The devil whispers that there has to be something wrong with us if we are facing such trials. During these times, we need to remember that we are going through these times because He does love us. We have to face this battle or trial because He is growing us, building our faith, increasing our trust, and increasing our ability to lean on Him. When you go through the fire, remember there is one walking in it with you. When you seem to be in a flood, remember there is one who will see you safely to dry ground. You can trust Him to see you through. You are going to come out of this growing and glowing.

Devotion 11

Obedience Works

For this devotion, I want to take a few minutes to talk about how important it is to be able to hear God's voice, and obey. In today's world, when we talk about hearing God's voice, they get ready to carry you off to the asylum. Sad to say many of the people who give me that reaction are Christians. John 10:27 tells us, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." When people come in to talk, I find myself led by the Lord to tell them over and over, if you would just listen to God's voice and obey Him, then these things that are going wrong in your life would be fixed.

As time goes on, however, I have realized that most Christians have no idea of how to do this. I am convinced that many Christians don't understand that they can have a personal, real relationship with the Lord. They don't understand that they can get to know God, and that they can walk with Him. They don't understand the importance of yielding to God, and they don't understand what it means to be led by His voice. Because of this, their life is nothing but turmoil. The lives of their loved ones are filled with chaos. The devil is reigning in their lives, and his

reign is cruel. They could overcome this all if they would only listen and obey. They just don't know how. So the devil is winning.

I am convinced that the importance of obedience is not taught in most churches. I am convinced as well, that most pastors and teachers in the church don't know about it themselves, which is even sadder. The blind is leading the blind in a lot of churches. Flesh rules in most churches. Because of this so does back biting, division, and general chaos. There is a lack of vision, a lack of purpose. Church becomes just a social club with no real depth. If you are a pastor, evangelist, missionary, teacher, or a worker of any kind in your church, then if you are not listening, yielding, and submitting to the Spirit of God, then you will not have a fruitful work. God will not bless your work. If you don't feel that you are a pastor, evangelist, missionary, teacher, etc. then you aren't off the hook. You are still called to do a work for the Lord. We are all called. When Jesus said, go ye into all the world, he wasn't just talking about the ministers. He was talking to all of us. Our world starts where we are.

We see people every day that we can minister to, who need a word from the Lord. We may be all of God some of the people around us may ever see. Those we love the most may be influenced by our actions in

a greater way than we realize. We all need to hear the voice of the Lord and obey it. One day in heaven we will see the fruits of our labor.

Whether you are a pastor, evangelist, missionary, teacher, or whether you sit on the pews, a key to unlocking victory in your life is learning to listen to the voice of the Master. The key to unlocking victory in the lives of those you love is learning to hear the voice of the One who can lead you as you lead others. I am convinced that hearing and obeying God is something that few Christians understand. In today's world, if we don't hear and obey, we won't be able to overcome the storms that lay ahead. Not only can we overcome, but we can lead others to victory as well. But we can do this only if we hear the voice of the Master. Obedience is the key to unlock a life of victory.

Not only does obedience unlock being able to help others, but it also unlocks an abundant life. We all know that being at the right place at the right time can change our whole life. Think of the times when being in the right place unlocked tremendous blessings. Think about how being in the wrong place at the wrong time wrecked your life. When you obey God, you will be in the right place at the right time. My husband and I have been through really lean financial times, and we have been through times when we were

hugely blessed. It took obedience for us to make it through the lean times. I can honestly tell you that it took obedience to unlock the times of blessings. Matter of fact, if we hadn't done certain things at certain times, we would not have had the blessing times. Don't leave the important things that need to be done in your life up to chance. Learn to hear and obey the voice of the Lord. Let Him be Lord in your life.

Without a doubt, I can say that I wouldn't be alive today if I hadn't listened to God's voice. I remember when I was young, I had a car wreck. I had fallen asleep at the wheel, and I hit a bank and flipped a little Dodge Colt. The Lord told me to lay down in the seat. If I hadn't obeyed Him I would have been killed. I knew it when I saw the damage to my car. The top of my car was mashed so flat and so low that you could see an impression of the steering wheel bumping up when you looked at the top of the car. As I was standing beside of it, my car was shorter than my waist. If I hadn't laid down, I would have died.

I remember a time that obeying God saved my life. I had washed my car, and had left my floor mats out in my yard to dry. I was on my way to get in my car to leave. The Lord spoke to me to stop and get my floor mats in. I thought to myself, that can't be the Lord,

why would He tell me to get my floor mats in. I got in my car, but that impression was so strong, I got back out. I was standing there with my floor mats in my hands when I heard a bang so loud that it shook the ground. There was a little hairpin, one lane curve, someone had come flying around that curve, had missed it, and had hit the tree in my neighbor's yard. He hit it so hard that the driver was pinned in by the motor. I would have been hit head on.

To sum this up, how important is it to have a walking with, and talking with relationship with the Lord? How important is it that you listen and obey? Some people can hear the voice of the Lord, but more often or not they don't obey it. It is important to do both. Maybe your life is a jumble because you aren't obeying God. Let Him help you change this. Make up your mind that from now on, you will listen and obey.

Devotion 12

God Has Your Future In His Hands

I never will forget the time that one of the students came in and told me about how God had worked out her future, giving a career that was the desire of her heart. She was about ready to graduate and had been worried about what to choose for her career. She was working at a fast food restaurant, and it wasn't the best atmosphere. God had been leading her to stop that job. She had started praying for God to lead her in choosing the right path for her life. She put herself and her will on hold. She yielded her will for God's will. To show Him that she meant business, she quit the other job.

On the way home from that, she stopped at a store. She was standing in line, and the lady behind her started talking to her. It came up in the conversation that she was getting ready to graduate. The lady asked her what she was going to choose as a career. The girl truthfully answered that she was waiting for the Lord to guide her, and she told her that story. The lady got really excited. She told the girl that she had an accounting business, and hired her on the spot. The girl had no specific training for that field, and had no college as of yet, but that didn't matter. The lady

told her that she was willing to train her for the job herself. The neatest thing about this was that the girl's favorite subject through school had been math. Not only had God chosen a career that was a prime career, but He had also given her the desire of her heart.

God has your future in His hands. If you will put Him first, and you will listen and obey, He can lead you into a career that is your heart's desire. I am writing this devotion mostly for young people who are getting ready to graduate, but I am also writing it for us older folks too. I have worked at a Christian school for over 30 years. One of the hardest times that many young people go through is graduating and turning 18. I have watched kids go through a terrible time with this. I have watched kids that have never drunk or done drugs fall into both. They allowed fear to get hold of them, and the only way they thought they could deal with it is to party. That only made things worse.

Somehow when young people turn 18, it is such a crisis. I think that they think that their whole life is coming to an end as they know it, and some huge change is coming. They don't realize that, just like they made it to that point in their life by taking one step at a time, it will be the same way after turning 18. Just like they had gotten through the steps of their

life by trusting God, and obeying Him, their future would be the same, going one step at a time, listening to God, and trusting Him to lead them.

This is the same for older folks as well. Maybe you have come to the realization that you didn't let the Lord lead you when you got your job, and you hate it. If He is leading you to greener pastures, don't be afraid to follow Him. Be sure that it is God leading you. Pray through, and be sure that you have that deep settled peace about doing what you are hearing Him lead you to do. Then don't be afraid to seek Him for a new thing. Let Him lead you.

He has set a path before you. Proverbs 4:26 says, "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Let God establish the way that you take. Isaiah 45:2 says, "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:" He will lead you through the crooked places. He will make a way for you. Find out what that way is and walk in it. He has a place for you in His plan.

Devotion 13

Go To Damascus

In today's devotion, I am going to share with you about Paul. He tells his story in Acts 11:1-10, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tarsus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou

persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

Saul was on his way to deliver Christians up to be killed. He was thoroughly and completely convinced that this was the thing that he was supposed to do, and he was convinced that he was serving God by doing this. He was zealous in this mission. We all know that this was not what he was supposed to do. How in the world could he think it was? Well, Saul wasn't walking in the Spirit, he was walking in the flesh. And it is really an enemy with God. Our mind can come up with all kinds of things that we think God wants us to do.

Why do we listen to the wrong things sometimes? It may be because we aren't yielded to God, doing His thing. We are just doing our thing. It may be because we have sin in our life, and we aren't letting God lead us because we don't want to get rid of our sin. It may be because we don't want to yield to anybody or anything including God. When we read Saul's story, we can see how far wrong we can be.

I thank God that going on the way to Damascus wasn't the end of Saul. It was the beginning of Paul. God changed his name on the spot. God spoke to him and blinded him. I imagine that really got his attention. He found there a new way, a better way. When he stopped and yielded, God started his life over. When I get to heaven, one of the first people I want to thank is Paul for all that he did to help me. His words time after time have kept me, guided me, and encouraged me. I am sure that all of us can say that. Wonder how many people have set that as a goal of things to accomplish in heaven. It would be a really huge number. God really used him.

What if Paul had never had his Damascus? I have had several Damascuses in my life. There have been some times when I was sure that I was doing what God wanted me to do. I was doing it so hard that I didn't have time for God. I was really busy doing what I thought that God wanted me to do. I was just messing things up instead of fixing things. I was all in the flesh, all in myself, working with all my might. I was sending up hay and stubble that would get burned up instead of gold and precious stones. There were several times that the damage that I did to people's lives were severe. Then I learned to yield to the Spirit of God and let Him use me. When I did, God used me in a mighty way.

Don't ask God to bless what you are doing. Ask Him to lead you to do what He wants you to do, then He will bless and anoint it. Let God lead you to Damascus. Let Him break you and mold you into a vessel fit for His use. Jeremiah 18 tells us how God sent Jeremiah to the Potter's house. Verses 1-5 tells us, "The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*. Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD." If you are willing, God can put you on the potter's wheel and make you into a vessel that He can use, one that is yielded into His hands. Ask God for your Damascus.

Devotion 14

The Lord Is With Thee

One of my favorite accounts in the Bible is the story of the children of Israel and King Hezekiah. King Hezekiah had become king after idol worshipping kings had turned the hearts of the people away from God. Who the leaders of a country are, and their attitude toward God, matters a lot in how the hearts of the people will be. My favorite part of Hezekiah's story comes when King Sennacherib came to take over Israel. You can read about this account in 2 Chronicles 32. Please get your Bible and read this chapter. It will really bless you. I am just going to sum it up here.

To find out about King Sennacherib, I did some research. He was known in historical accounts as a mighty king who set out to control most of his world. In this section of scripture we read that he had come to take over Israel. We read about what he has to say about himself in this section of scripture. "Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of *other* lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand? Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that

could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand? Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand? And his servants spake yet *more* against the LORD God, and against his servant Hezekiah. He wrote also letters to rail on the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand.” He really thought he was something. But he underestimated Hezekiah and his people because he underestimated the God that they served.

We read at the first part of the chapter that Hezekiah did everything he could do in the natural to fortify against the enemy. Then he gave the people these words, “Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that *is* with him: for *there be* more with us than with him: With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.” Hezekiah knew that they would win, not because of what they had

done in the natural, but he knew that they would win because of God who stood with them to fight their battles.

So how did this account end? It came out exactly like Hezekiah said. God fought their battle. They didn't even have to fight. " And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword. Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *other*, and guided them on every side. And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth."

When you think that you are going to be gobbled up whole by the devil, remember Hezekiah. When it seems that there is no way to win the battle, because the enemy is so huge and powerful, remember Hezekiah. When you feel like the people around you who hate the Lord outnumber you 10 to 1, remember Hezekiah. God will not only bring you victory, but he will also lift you up in their midst. God knows

where you are, and what you need, just like He knew where Hezekiah was, and what he needed. Just like He made a way for Hezekiah, He will make a way for you. You will be victorious over the enemy.

One thing to remember though when you are going through the battle is that you need to obey God. Some battles are won because we obey God, and do what He tells us to do. In some, like this battle, the enemy is so huge that there is nothing that we can do. Then is when we need to stand and see the salvation of the Lord. He will fight our battle. Just like He did for Hezekiah.

Devotion 15

At Thy Word

In today's devotion, I want to talk about the biggest fishermen's story I have ever heard. Only, unlike most of the fishermen's stories I've heard, this one is totally true. We know because it is a fishermen's story right out of the Bible. This one changed the course of history, and has influenced lives through time. It is found in Luke 5. The principal characters in this account are Jesus, Simon Peter, James, and John. How did it change history? Peter, James, and John were influenced that day to follow Jesus. Their lives, and the words that each wrote that make up books of the Bible, and their dedication to minister to others all their lives, have made a huge difference. I am going to put the whole story here.

Luke 5: 1-7

“And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing *their* nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now

when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. And so *was* also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.”

Wow, what a fish story. I am sure that seeing this miracle influenced their lives in a huge way. All of them didn't hesitate to give their lives to Jesus and follow Him. Jesus certainly kept His promise. All of their whole lives, they dedicated themselves to “catch men”. They caught more men for Jesus after they died than they did during their lives. And they are still catching them, and will be until the Lord comes back.

The story starts out with them washing their nets. They had spent the night fishing, and had caught absolutely nothing. They had given it up, and were going home defeated. Jesus asked them to let Him

preach from their boat. It made a great platform. They were out in the water a little ways, and Jesus was in the boat speaking to the crowd on the shoreline. Then after He finished, He told them to let down their nets once more. Peter told Him that they had been fishing all night, and they hadn't caught anything. But the next thing out of his mouth was, "At thy Word I will let down the net." He didn't hesitate. He let down the net. They caught so many fish that their nets broke. They had to call to their buddies in another ship to help them. They both filled their nets so full that their boats started to sink.

For today's devotion, I want to talk about the words, "At Thy Word". The Word of God has power. God's Word gives us the power to overcome, gives us strength, gives the power to believe, the power to stand against the enemy. Isaiah 55:11 says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it." God's Word has power to create. He spoke and created the world. God's Word creates a new creature in us.

There are 2 parts to God's Word-2 ways that God's Word comes to us. It comes to us through the scripture. It also comes to us through His Word that He speaks to our hearts. When God says to do

something-just do it. Jesus spoke to the fishermen to let down their nets. At His Word they did, and they caught a miracle. When Jesus spoke to Peter to come, he didn't hesitate. He jumped out and walked on the water. Jesus said it, it was settled, and it was so.

When God tells us to do something, when He speaks in our heart what to do, we need to do it. We need to be like Peter, and take Him at His Word. We don't need to consider our weaknesses. We don't need to think that it may not work. We don't need to think, what if the people don't receive it. We don't need to think about anything, but the Word that was given to us, and that Word will have power to enable us to do what God has told us to do. It will enable us with the ability to do it. It will provide all that is needed. Sure we will have a battle, especially when we do the things that God tells us to do, but His Word given to us in our hearts will have the power to help us to overcome. Isaiah 55:11 says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it." If God says do it, do it. And His Word will make sure that you can.

I remember when the Lord told us to start a Christian school. I told Him that I couldn't do that. I knew that I couldn't. Or at least I thought that I couldn't. I

never will forget what He told me. I don't remember Him speaking so forcefully to me any other time. That has been over 30 years ago, and I still remember it like it was yesterday. He told me, "I created the heavens and the earth. How dare you tell me that you cannot do what I have ordained and anointed you to do". Wow. I jumped out of the boat and have been walking on the water ever since then. Guess what? I was able to do what He said. Trust in the Word of God. Trust in His written Word. Trust in the Word that He has spoken to you. You can overcome. You will be able to do what He tells you to do. Be obedient. You can, if you just will.

Devotion 16

Daniel Prayed Anyway

Today's devotion is focused on Daniel. Daniel had some enemies who were jealous of him. They came up with a plan to have him killed. They coerced the king into signing a decree stating that no one could ask a petition (pray) to anyone but the king. They knew that Daniel prayed 3 times a day without fail, and they knew that if they did this decree, that he would still pray. Isn't it something that his enemies knew his stand with God? Do you enemies know your stand with God?

Daniel still prayed. Matter of fact, he prayed just exactly like he had done before the decree. He opened up his windows and prayed. He didn't hide away. He didn't say a "headache" prayer like some people do in restaurants. They are convicted about not praying, but aren't willing to openly do it, so they hide their head in their hands like they have a headache so people watching can't tell they are praying. No, Daniel prayed openly just like his enemies knew he would.

We are coming into a time where Christians are fast losing their rights. The Koran is openly taught in the

public schools, but children can't read their Bibles in study hall. We can't say anything against the rights of the gays and homosexuals, but we can't publicly display the 10 commandments which is a moral code to live by. We aren't to speak against anyone who has a different lifestyle than ours, even to the point that many preachers have stopped preaching God's Word, and what they preach is a watered down message that has no anointing, and no ability to set the people free. We have given in to those who try to control us, and we need to wake up and realize that the one trying to control us is satan.

All over the world, Christians are being killed for their stand for God. They risk being stabbed on the way to church, but they still go. They risk being attacked for preaching and ministering, but still they minister. I work with New Life Bible College and Seminary. We have several extension colleges around the world. We have some of them in countries where there are 3% Christians, and 97% Moslems. Still they have a college where they are training and sending out workers for Christ. You can imagine what they go through every day. Still they teach, still they go out.

I want to leave you with this message. Daniel prayed anyway. The devil who used those people to come against him in the way that they did thought that he

could stop Daniel. The devil knew that he couldn't stop Daniel from praying, so he used that to be the very thing to try to kill him. What happened in that part of the story? Well, we all know the story of Daniel in the lion's den. He laid down and rested with the lions. They all had a nap.

I love this part. Now King Darius wasn't a bad sort of fellow. He had gotten tricked by the devil and his crew. Verse 18 tells us that he couldn't sleep or eat that night, and the first thing in the morning he ran to check on Daniel. Verse 20 says, "And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: *and* the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" Daniel answered him and said, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." What did the king do then?

We read about it in verses 23-27, "Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast forever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.”

Wow, what a testimony. Sometimes we are made to feel like those who are against the Word of God, His Spirit, and His people, are winning. I am sure that Daniel felt like that. He stayed true, and look how God moved. Darius decreed that everywhere in his dominion of his kingdom, God would be recognized. I did some research and I found out that this was his dominion. He ruled the empire at its peak, when it included much of West Asia, the Caucasus, parts of the Balkans, most of the Black Sea coastal regions, parts of the North Caucasus, Central Asia as far as the Indus Valley in the far east and portions of north and

northeast Africa including Egypt (Mudrâya), eastern Libya and coastal Sudan. It is estimated that over 50 million people lived under his reign. All of them recognized the God of Daniel as the one true God. Why? Because of his testimony to one man-the king.

Don't underestimate your testimony to those around you. Stand true, no matter what everyone else is doing. Be the light that shines in the darkness. You don't know who is watching, and the effect that it will have on many. Just like Daniel---pray anyway!!!!

Devotion 17

Forget Those Things That are Behind You

In today's devotion, I want to talk to you a bit about how we can forget the things that are behind us. One of the things that the devil likes to keep us doing is looking behind us. He does this for all kinds of reasons. He will get you to look behind you at the things that you did in the past so that he can bring condemnation against you. He will use the things behind you to make you feel so discouraged, that it clouds your future. If we constantly look behind us, we won't have a future that is full of faith. One of the things that he does, too, is uses our past failures to stop us from overcoming. We get stuck in looking behind us so much that it blinds us from seeing how God is going to use us to accomplish wonderful things in the future. We have to learn to forget those things that are behind us.

My granddad used to use horses to plow the fields. I can remember watching him. The horses knew a lot about what to do. He would walk along with the reins kind of draped around him. The only trouble would come in when he had to turn around to look behind him. When he did that, the reins would pull those horses to the side, and those rows would get really

crooked. I am always reminded of that when I read about the scripture in Luke 9:62, “And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” I am not saying that my granddad wasn’t fit, because he looked back behind him when plowing, but I am using it as an illustration for this scripture. If we are constantly looking back behind us at what has been, it will affect the rows that we are plowing. It will affect the work that we do for the Lord.

What is the answer to this? How can we keep the enemy from bringing all this against us? Philippians 3:13 says, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” One of the keys is found in Psalms 103:3, “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.”

When the Holy Ghost convicts you of your sin, and you repent, the next step is forgiveness. When God forgives you, then the enemy has nothing to use against you. When you feel the enemy condemning you for things you have done in your past, remind him of this scripture that says, you are forgiven. Ephesians 1:7 says, “In whom we have redemption

through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;” If Jesus died to forgive you of your sins, is He going to continue to condemn you? If He died to forgive you, is He going to forgive you, or hold it against you for eternity? We have forgiveness. I John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” When our past sins, failures, battles, issues, are in the nail scarred hands of Jesus, then why do you look back? Let them rest there.

Here are the words to a song that the Lord gave me a few years back. It is titled:

Paint My Memories With Calvary’s Blood

Chorus

Lord, paint my memories with Calvary’s blood.

Take everything I am and all I’ve been, and make it yours.

So many things behind me, I’d like to forget.

Take it all away touch me with Your love.

Lord paint my memories with Calvary’s blood.

Verse 1

Take my past and all its sorrow,

Take my pain, make it Your joy.

Take my sin and cast it where You won’t remember.

Take my heart and make it softer.

Take my mind and make it yours.

Paint my memories with Calvary's blood.

Verse 2

Give me the oil of joy for moaning, beauty for ashes.

Let me know Your every promise that You give.

*Let me know Your Word will keep me if I only will
surrender.*

Lord paint my memories with Calvary's blood.

Chorus

Lord, paint my memories with Calvary's blood.

*Take everything I am and all I've been, and make it
yours.*

So many things behind me, I'd like to forget.

Take it all away touch me with Your love.

Lord paint my memories with Calvary's blood.

Let Jesus paint those memories, those past sins, those
past regrets with His precious blood. Then look
ahead, and plow with all your heart, nice straight
rows, that are led by God's hand.

Devotion 18

The Joy of Our Salvation

Today's devotion is about joy. There is so little joy today, even in the church. Seems like there is a lot of hardship and heartache going on. People are struggling. I think this is a symptom of the last days. If we ever need to hold onto joy, it is now. I was going through a hard time, when it seemed like I would get my head up above the flood, just to watch a higher wave coming in. I got negative in my thinking. The devil was stealing my joy.

God spoke to me and put a scripture in my heart that just kept playing over and over, "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isaiah 12:3. He showed me just a little bit of how deep the wells of salvation are. Wow. I felt like some of the patriarchs of the Old Testament who had wandered through those deserts there for days, maybe finding wells that had run dry, then finding this well that sprang up with living water. I was refreshed and renewed.

When I think of wells, I automatically think of the woman at the well that Jesus ministered to. I won't put that whole story here, but even if you know the

story, get out your Bible and read it. It will renew you and bless you. You can read her story in John 4. Jesus told her, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” The wells of salvation. She found something in that one conversation with Him that changed her whole life. She went running through the town crying out, “Come see a man---is not this the Christ.” She knew. She didn’t need to have anyone tell her that He was the son of God. He had given her life out of the wells of salvation.

John 15:11 says, “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” Not only does God tell us that we can draw life out of the wells of salvation, but He tells us that we can **with joy** draw water out of those wells. This world doesn’t have much to give us joy, but His joy will never end. When we walk with Him, keeping our eyes on Him, when we rejoice in His salvation, that joy isn’t dependent on what is going on around us. It isn’t dependent on the mess that is going in the world. It isn’t dependent on circumstances that we see. It is dependent on Him. John 17:13 says, “And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in

themselves.” I love how He says MY joy. That we can have His joy fulfilled in us. That is a promise.

Psalms 16:11 gives us a key as to how we can find His joy. “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.” In His presence is the fulness of joy. If we let Him show us His path of life, and we walk with Him, we will have joy.

We all know that we will have to go through times when it seems like joy is far away. When we go through those times we need to remember to seek His face, and walk with Him. We need to remember that like Psalms 30:5 says, “... weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.” That is His promise. Psalms 126:5 promises us that, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” Hold up your head. There is joy in those wells of salvation.

Devotion 19

When I Am Weak

Today's devotion is about one of my favorite verses. II Corinthians 12:9 says, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." This is one of the last red letter words that are found in the Bible (before Revelations). This is Paul talking about something Jesus told him. Look at all Paul accomplished. He did some great things. But in this verse Jesus isn't congratulating him for all the great things that he did. He is reminding him of how he did those things. He reminded Paul that he didn't do those things because he was strong. He reminded Paul that he did them because he was weak.

What kinds of people is God looking for to use? I know that there may be many of you who God has led to do something, and you are shutting up your ears, because you are thinking to yourself—I can't. Then you follow that thought up with the list of the many weaknesses that you have that prevent you from doing what God has told you to do.

Now I am not just talking to pastors, teachers, missionaries, and singers here, but I am talking to every child of God, and that means you. We are all of us called to obey God. What about that person at work that needs to hear a word from the Lord, and you are the one to carry it to them. What about that family member God has led you to witness to. What about that child that needs something from God, and you know that God can use you to speak the right words that will unlock them from the rebellious spirit they are caught up in. We are all called to minister. This world is too dark for us to take the light of the Lord and shut it up inside of us, and not obey God. We all need to be like a city on a hill. Don't hide your light under a bushel. This isn't the time for that.

Back to the question that I asked at the beginning of that last paragraph, what kinds of people are God looking to use. This might mess up your conception of what you think you need to be so that God can use you. Take a minute and make a list of the qualifications that you think someone needs to be someone that God would choose to use. Take a minute and do that. Then I will give you a scripture where God actually lists the qualifications of those He is looking for to use. OK. Now compare your list with God's.

This is what is on His list of qualifications that He is looking for. God says this is the list of qualifications that He has chosen to use):

1. The foolish.
2. The weak.
3. The base
4. The despised
5. The things that are not

Wow. Did your list have those things on it? Sounds crazy doesn't it. But that is what God says. We read about it in I Corinthians 1:27. This scripture says, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

I have a Thompson Chain reference Bible. This Bible has topics for Bible studies given in the back of the Bible. This scripture is listed under a Bible study called "God's Treasure Chest". I guess that the feeling that the devil tries to give us that we aren't worthy enough for God to use us goes out the window when you read this scripture.

What is this scripture saying? I can remember when God first told me to help start our Christian academy. I just told Him that I couldn't. I knew I couldn't. This wasn't a guess. I never will forget what He told me. He said, "I created the heavens and the earth. How dare you tell me that you cannot do something that I have called and anointed you to do?" Wow. That was 30 years ago. I know, because this year we celebrate our 30th year. We have helped thousands of young people find new life, a new start, over those 30 years. The first young people who graduated from the school are now 48 years old. Many of them have enrolled their children in our school, and they graduated.

How was I able to do this? I was able to do this because I knew that I couldn't-- but I knew that He could. There were many times when all I could see was my weaknesses. There were many times when all I could see was the battle of the enemy. All I could see was impossibilities. Then was when I remembered that God didn't choose me because He knew I could, He chose me because He knew I couldn't. But He knew He could. He knew that I wouldn't rely on my own strength. He knew that I would start my day on my knees by my desk praying, "God you know I can't handle this situation. But I trust that you can. Just guide me what I need to do". He knew that when the enemy came in like a flood

that I wouldn't be doing my own little thing in my own strength, but I would be listening and obeying, and trusting Him, yielding to Him. He knew that I would remember that I was base and despised when He found me, and it was because of His grace that I was able to live and do. It was because I had found my being in Him. It was because of this that He knew that I would reach out to all those young people with the love and grace that He had given me, and when I tell them my story, they know that no matter how far down they feel like they are, they know they aren't beyond His reach.

So let me ask you. What about you? Are you able to do what God tells you daily to do? Are you able to answer His calling? Do you have the qualifications that put you into God's Treasure Chest?

Devotion 20

Lest We Forget

Today's devotion is about the importance of remembering. I was listening to the local news last night and there was a special on about how so many elderly people with dementia were wandering off and dying in the winter. It was really sad. I think this had happened to 3-4 people in the news coverage area just in a matter of a couple of months. Dementia is such a cruel disease. My father-in-law had it, and I watched what he went through. I want to talk to you, though, about something crueller than dementia. It happens when people forget God.

I talk to so many people that tell me that they used to serve God. They say that they used to go to church. They used to read their Bible. They used to have a relationship with the Lord. They used to have a life that wasn't bound up by sin. When I ask them why they said used to, they really can't answer. They will stop to think seriously about why, but they can't give me an answer. They really don't know. I am reminded of Psalms 103:2 that says, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:"

How important is it to daily remember the things of God? Deuteronomy 6:12 tells us, “*Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” I am one person that God brought out of bondage. He delivered me from drugs, alcohol, and a life full of sin. Before I met God, I had no hope. I had no light in my life. I was on a self-destruct path, and the end had come. I had nowhere to look but up. When I did look up, I found the Lord looking, waiting for me. When I started serving Him, I knew that I had better serve Him with all of my heart because I had a lot of devil’s chasing me.

Every day when I woke up, I sought Him in the joy of that new life He gave me. I rejoiced in His grace and mercy for me. I knew that I was alive because of Him, and that I had a new life, a new start. It was not something that I could forget. That has been 40 years ago, and I still haven’t forgotten. Because I know that if I forget God, I will slowly fall back into the things that are behind me. That is just what happens. Deuteronomy 8:11 says, “Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:” Psalms 78:7 says, “That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:” God is our hope. When we forget His mighty works,

when we forget his commandments, then we forget our hope.

How can we forget God? How can we forget our hope, our life, our joy, our peace, our strength that we find in Him? How can we forget His Word that brings us a new life everyday? How can we forget His Spirit that keeps us? I know that people do, because I hear it all the time. I also know that people do this because it is something the Bible warns us not to do. How in the world can people do that? Here are some ways that they do.

One of the things that I see people do is to let the enemy clutter up their lives. He sends things into their life like drama, facebook, texting, people who aren't centered in God, addictions (small and big), TV. He brings crisis of some kind into their lives. All of these things clutter up their lives so that they have no time for God. They have no time to read their Bible, no time to praise Him, no time to pray. No time to center their life in Him. The enemy is a master at doing this sort of thing. He can do it, and we aren't even aware that he is doing so. Then one day, when someone asks us if we serve God, we will look at them absently, and say, "I used to".

Another thing that causes us to forget the blessings of God is when we allow sin to sneak into our life. It

isn't the "big sins" that steal our relationship with God, it is the small things that the enemy sends. It is the little rebellions that keep us from obeying God daily. It is the little choices that we make, when we choose someone or something over God. It is the little foxes that spoil the vines. The devil specializes in sneaking little things in that we don't notice. He may send someone into our lives that actually on the surface looks good, but before the relationship is over we are far from good. He will cause us to get a rebellious spirit, and we won't want anyone to tell us what to do. Then before long, we don't want to hear sound counsel from anyone, not even God, and then our life is headed into disaster.

How can we guard against such things? If you knew that there was someone who was trying to steal away your relationship with your husband or wife, and you loved them with all of your heart, how hard would you fight to keep that relationship? How much time would you spend working on that relationship, cherishing it with all your heart? Sometimes we forget the Lord is as real to us as the people that we love who are around us. We need to work on our relationship with Him. When you wake up in the morning, love Him enough to start your day with Him. Let Him love you. Love Him. Stay in the Word of God. Don't let your life get so cluttered that you forget to eat your daily bread. If you do, you will

die. Yield to His Spirit. He brings you living water to refresh you. Walk with Him, and obey Him. Listen to that still small voice. When you hear it say, “leave that alone because that will draw you away from Me”, then leave it alone. He will keep you. You are engraved in the palms of His hands. He is the one who paid the price for you. Don’t let anyone or anything come first. He is Lord of your life, and anything that comes first can steal you away.

I think about those poor people with dementia who get lost wandering away, and died out in the cold. But even sadder, and even crueler are those who forget God, wander away, and die eternally. In hell they spend eternity. How important is it that you forget not God? You decide.

Devotion 21

They Have Said It For Years

I grew up near a town called Saltville. It had a little different history. It got its name from the salt mines that were under the town. Saltville was built on a huge deposit of salt. This was so huge that even before the Civil War, they were mining salt out, and when I was a kid, they were still mining it out. They would pump in huge amounts of hot water that would dissolve the salt. They would then pump out that salt filled water, and pump it into huge flat fields. Then the water would evaporate out leaving behind the salt.

Well for years I heard people say that the town would fall in because of all this. Salt was hard like a rock. When it was dissolved out, it left behind a honey comb effect. Huge gaps were left in the structure of the earth under the town. Guess what? When I was a kid I remember stories of what was going on there. The town was falling in. I remember when a football size hole fell out of a stretch of highway. Houses were just falling down into the ground. I remember that there was hole that fell out in the bottom of the river there, and it actually took the river days to fill up that hole. Why did this happen? Because for all the

years that people told them that it was going to happen, nobody listened. Nobody wanted to hear.

I was witnessing to someone the other day. We had been talking about some of the things that were going on in the world and in our area. I made the statement, "You know-this is just more of the signs of the end times. The Bible talks about all of this." He looked at me and said, "But they have been saying that for years. I have heard about it all my life. But it hasn't happened." All I could think of was, "Boy isn't that famous last words. I wonder how many times people have said things like that they regretted." I thought about Saltville. I thought about all the times that I have heard things like that. I thought about how that if I knew that something was coming, that I had heard about it all my life, then I would not be very smart if I took the attitude that I didn't have to look for that thing to come any longer. Especially if that thing involved the end of the world and my eternal soul.

When I hear people make the statement that they have heard about the end of time all their life, and they don't look for it any more, they don't realize it, but they are actually fulfilling prophecy themselves by their very words. Wow. That is something isn't it? It is true. The Bible tells us in several scriptures that one of the signs of the end times coming will be that people will say that very thing. II Timothy 3:1-5 tells

us about how people will be at the end times. See if this sounds familiar. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

So what is our job to do while we are waiting and looking for His coming? Matthew 24:42-46 tells us, “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”

I guess the question to ask is not “Is He Coming?”. It’s not the questions of “When Is He Coming?” that

is important. But the question that we all need to ask, and live by is this one. “Are You Ready??”

Devotion 22

The Battle Between Fear and Faith

This devotion talks about one of my favorite stories in the Bible. The story of David and Goliath. This story is in I Samuel 17. When I think of this story, I think about the battle between fear and faith. One of the main things that plagues us today is fear. Fear is causing so many problems. Stress and worry are killing people and destroying their quality of life. Every day I see this. This is a problem for adults, but it is also major problem for young people. Luke 21:26 tells us how this is a sign of the end times. “Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

When we are facing a world that is causing people to shake in fear we need to remember the little shepherd boy who faced a giant. David was a teenager when he stood there in that valley facing Goliath. Most Bible translations place Goliath as being between 8 and 9 feet tall. What gave David the drive to be able to stand there? What gave him the drive that he needed to answer that call that day?

If you remember, the whole thing started with Goliath standing up on the hill defying God. He more or less was mocking the Israelites for serving God. He also told them that if he won the one-on-one combat with their champion, that he would win the whole battle. He told them that if their representative who dared to fight him won, then Israel would win the battle.

David turned to those around him and said, “Is there not a cause?” God’s cause fired up his spirit. Then he remembered all those times that God had taken his side. When King Saul told David that he would give him his own armor David answered, “David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.” David remembered what God had done for him, and he was encouraged. He knew that he could trust God to help him.

I think one of the keys that led to the victory for David too, was that he didn’t trust in anything but God. He didn’t trust in himself. Sometimes we get cocky, and we think that we can do it. Well David knew he couldn’t. So he knew that he had better yield to God, and listen, and obey. That is the key to overcoming fear. In any war, the natural battles are won or lost because the soldiers didn’t follow their

captain. They failed to take orders. The captain had a over-all view of the situation, and the soldiers only saw the one part of the battle that was in front of their face. We can lose so easily if we don't yield to the One with the master plan, and listen and do what He says to do. If you want to overcome fear, learn to yield to God, and obey Him. That is the only way that you will get out of the valley that you are in. Why fear the battle? Why go over and over the problem in your mind which only makes the giant you are facing look bigger? Do what David did. Find out from God how to overcome it.

When I think about David's battle being a battle between fear and faith, I think about King Saul and the rest of his army there. I don't know how long this situation had been going on, but I have a feeling that it had been going on for some time. One guy had them stopped. He was saying that if someone could beat him, they would win the battle. Wow. And there was no one, not even the king, who would stand up to him. They were all running scared. Fear will cause you to not think clear. Fear will cause you to jump and do things that you shouldn't do, and that will cause you to lose the war. Fear will stop you.

Terrorists control the world through fear. Think about how they have influenced you, and they don't even know you. You don't even know them. They

mess up everybody's world with fear. The devil is like a terrorist. He can control you using fear. Just like he stopped them that day. Think about little old David. All he had was a slingshot and a bunch of rocks. That was all they could see when he walked out there to face that giant. They all laughed at him. Little did they know that he was their salvation that day. Because what they didn't see was the thing that brought him victory. God was with him. He is with you. He will help you to face those giants. You have no need to fear. Over 366 times in the Bible the words "fear not" are used. Guess God really means you don't have to be afraid. You can face your giants in Him. And you can win. Why be afraid?

Deuteronomy 31:6, Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Isaiah 41:13, "For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." God is there for you.

Devotion 23

The Man in the Mirror

Today's devotion is about a strange man. He looks in the mirror. He carefully notices all of the things that is wrong with him. Maybe he sees that his hair is a mess, standing straight up all over his head. Maybe he sees the big gob of food on his chin. Or he sees the grease streaked across his forehead. He notices all this carefully. Then he walks away without fixing a thing. Now we all know that isn't how someone is supposed to use a mirror. What about this guy? What is his problem?

We learn more about this dude in James 1:24-25. In this scripture we also find an important guideline to being able to have a victorious life. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

Wow. Did you think that maybe the man in the mirror might be you? Do you want to be blessed in your deed? What a promise. This is definitely something to strive for. How do we do get that in our lives? We look in the mirror of God's Word, and we do what it says.

I have known many people who had a real gift for memorizing scripture. They could quote whole sections of scripture, and know exactly where in the Bible these things were, giving references for scripture after scripture. But their lives were a total disaster. How was this so? It happened this way because they were just reading and memorizing it, and they weren't doing it. They weren't putting it to practice in their life.

The Bible is our daily bread, our daily food to sustain us. Picture this for a minute. What if you were at Golden Corral (you can tell my favorite place to eat). Let's say you were watching this guy that went over and picked up a plate. Then you watched him go by salad bar, and he didn't put a thing on his plate. Then you watched him go by all the other food bars. He went by the steak, the ham, the green beans, all that delicious food, and he didn't put a thing on his plate. Then he travels by the dessert bar with that delicious banana pudding, and cheesecake and all that stuff. He doesn't put a thing on his plate. Then he takes his

empty plate and sits down at his seat. Waits there a minute. Then he heads out the door. How crazy would you think that he was? But I know people who do that all the time. They look at the word of God, but they never take it to heart. They never digest it in their spirit. They never obey it. So it does them absolutely no good. Just like that empty plate.

Why do people do that sort of thing? It may be because they haven't realized how important it is to read and to do what the Bible says. Maybe they haven't realized that they are like the man in the mirror, and the man at the Golden Corral.

Another reason why I think that people do this is because they don't want to let God be the Lord of their life. They don't want to obey. Isaiah 1:16-18 tells us a condition that God requires. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well." For the man in the mirror to be able to clean up his act, he has to admit that he has dirt on his face. He has to admit a lot. In general, he has to admit that he is a mess. When he does admit it, then how can he start to get clean? In the rest of this scripture God tells us how. He gives us an invitation. He says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they

shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land”.

II Timothy 2:21 tells us, “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, *and* prepared unto every good work.” James 4:8-10 says, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” Sure it won't feel very pleasant to admit to all the mess on your face. Your joy will turn to heaviness for a season. But boy won't it feel great when you are through with that, and the mess is cleaned up, and God is lifting you up.

God loves us. That is why He convicts us and shows us the dirt on our face, the things that we need to fix. Then when we repent of these things, and want to change, His Spirit inside of us helps us to change. Reading His Word helps us to change. We don't have to stay a mess. God can help us to straighten things out. We can change. We can find a new life, and become a new person in Him. I am so glad that He can help us to change. Aren't you?

About the Devotions Coming Up in the Next Section

For the next devotions, I am including chapters from some of the books that I have written. I will write at the beginning of each devotion the name of the book that I have taken the devotion from. You can read and download all of my books on this website at www.freechristianonlinebooks.com. Or you can find them on www.amazon.com in both hard copy and kindle versions.

Devotion 24

The Closest Thing to the Heart of God

Today's devotion is part of a chapter from my book titled, *You Are Beloved and Longed For*. The name of the chapter is *The Closest Thing To the Heart of God*.

Matthew 3:17 and many other verses tell us about the closeness of God and His Son, Jesus. "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Luke 20: 13 says, "Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be they will reverence him when they see him." Jesus was very close to the heart of God. He was not born in a little manger on Christmas, but He dwelled in eternity with God from the beginning of time. He is so close to God that He is a part of God.

The Bible tells us in John 1:1-2 and 14, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the

glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." There is a great love between the Father and His Son. John 17:21 tells us in Jesus' Words, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This is a wonderful love. They exist as one in complete harmony and fellowship with one another. Love is a powerful force when it unites in this way.

This kind of love can only come from God. When Jesus hung on the cross, God could not stand to look on our sins that His Son took on Himself to die for and turned away. Matthew 27:46 tells us that Jesus cried out, "...My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?" We can barely comprehend how great and wonderful God's love is for His Son. This book was written to remind you that there is one thing that is closer to the heart of God than His Son, Jesus. That one thing prompted Him to sacrifice His Son on the cross.

That greater love is the love He has for you, for us, for all of His children who are born again into His kingdom, who obey and cherish His Word, who love His fellowship and praise,

those that will one day be His eternal bride. We look at our failures, our fears, our past, our struggles, our imperfections and weaknesses, and we more often than not fail to see ourselves as we are in the eyes of God. *We are His beloved. You are His beloved. You are precious to God.*

Why did He send His Son that He loves so dearly to suffer like He did. John 17:22-23 says it so well. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one..." He wanted you to share in that love that He has with His Son. He wanted to adopt you to be an heir to His kingdom. (Romans 8:17: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him that we may be also glorified together.") He wanted to draw you to Himself and pour out His riches on you (Deuteronomy 7:13-14: "And He will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee...Thou shalt be blessed above all people....")

We see our imperfections and pull away because we think He can't love us. Oh, but He does. He wants us to forget our own opinions of who we think we are, and become wrapped up in who He thinks we are. If we would just run to His love and not away from it. Who does He call to Himself? Proverbs 8:17 tells us, "I love them that love me: and those that seek me early shall find me." How long will He love us? Jeremiah 31:3 tells us, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea I have loved thee with an ever lasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

We will fail. God knows this better than we do. We will have many imperfections. But when we seek Him with all our heart, and with all our heart desire to serve Him, His love will be there for us. He will call us His Sons (I John 3:1: Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...). He will call us His beloved. (Romans 9:25: "As He saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved which was not beloved.") (Psalm 60:5 "That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand..."), (Romans 11:28- "...they are

beloved for the Father's sake.") (II Thessalonians 2:13- "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord...."), (I John 3:2- "Beloved now are we the sons of God...."). *You are Beloved.*

Devotion—Day 25

Spiritual Victories

Today's devotion is from my book *The Enemies' Camp*.

Few victories can ever be as great as spiritual victories. Think of some of the victories in the flesh that you have won in your life. These may have been the physical challenges that you overcame, or the prizes and awards that you gained, or the advances that you have made in the natural. These might have made you feel good about yourself, but none are as life changing as the spiritual victories that you win. None could actually determine your eternal salvation. The spoils of spiritual victories are everlasting. The spoils that we gain when we come against the enemies' camp in the Spirit are eternal.

When we walk in the Spirit, we recognize the enemy, the battleground, and his camp, and we submit these to God. Then we are ready for His victory. When God works His victory in us and through us, what greater victory can we have. Here are some wonderful verses

about the victory that is promised us: Romans 8:35-39, Psalms 23, Psalms 46, and I John 5:4-5. These are only a few of the victory verses in the Bible.

It is our right as children of God not only to be able to endure the enemy, but to overcome the enemy as well. We have been given the right to walk right into his camp and take back what is stolen. Victory belongs to the children of God. All too often we fail because we don't even see the battle let alone the victory. Both must be seen in the Spirit. Instead of rising up to be overcomers, victorious in our walk with God, we settle for mediocrity. Instead of facing the enemy in his own camp, we allow him to rock us to sleep. Or we allow him to cause our battle to be so great that we lack the strength to go from day to day, let alone having the strength to storm his camp. We grow far from Calvary and the price that was paid for us, and we compromise and become so much like the enemy that many can't tell that we aren't one of them because of our lack of victory. Or our priorities get so out of line that we don't even have time to recognize our battle let alone win it. Or we may judge others for the things that we fail to do ourselves, and we fail to get in reality with what is going on in our own lives.

A victorious life in Christ has been paid for with the precious price of His own blood. Jesus didn't die so that we could become compromisers, weak and double minded, and afraid of the enemy. He died to make us Sons of God. He died to give us all the rights that we are entitled to as being Sons of God. He died to give us authority over the enemy through His precious blood that He shed there on the cross. He died to be able to send us His Spirit to fill us so that we could not only overcome, but conquer and recover all as well. The enemies' camp is ours if we will walk in all the victory that God has given us by His Word, the blood of Jesus, the name of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Ghost in us.

Where are your enemies' camps? What territory has God promised you through His written Word, and through His Word that He has spoken into your heart? What God has spoken into your heart is as binding and it is as settled as His written Word. It may be conditional on your obedience and the obedience of others, but it is a promise from God Himself. At the time that it was given, the promise that God gave Abraham was just a spoken promise. The nation of Israel stands today as a tribute to the power of God's

spoken Word, His promise made to Abraham. Is God less faithful to you?

I can be weak or I can rise up in all that God has promised me. I can inherit the land. I can overcome and the enemies' camp is mine. Notice one thing. There would never be a victory unless we had a battle. If there would be no enemies' camp, then there would be no victory. If we never had anything to overcome, then we would never know what it was like to be an overcomer. When we learn to praise God for the battle, no matter how bad it hurts, we are close to the victory. When we can see how blessed we are in the trials and in the midst of the battle, then we will be encouraged in our heart, and in our faith. Then we will be ready to go into the enemies' camp. We will be able to go in by faith. And we will overcome.

Devotion 26

Salvation That Sticks

Today's devotion is from my book *Salvation That Sticks*.

That salvation that sticks is that relationship with God that lasts. It is the salvation that has been through the fire. You know that when the storms come, you will last through them as well. You know He's been there, so you know He'll be there to hold you through tomorrow. It isn't that your salvation will stick because everything will be perfect from there on out. That isn't what salvation is all about. Some people teach that because we are children of God, we have a right to have a perfect life. One day in heaven that might be true. Down here though, if you are having a perfect life, I might go so far as to doubt your salvation experience. Why? Because you are a child of God, you have a ready-made enemy who hates you because he hates God. The devil is out to get God's children. If you don't have any battles, there must not be enough evidence in your life to show him that you are a child of God.

Sure you will have battles even if you are saved. You will have to live in this world that is definitely far from perfect, right in the middle of people who mostly aren't saved, and don't care about doing anything good. You will have battles. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love you. It does mean, praise the Lord, that you will have someone to hold you and keep you through whatever this old world and the devil that is its prince brings against you. It does mean that you can find victory. Without God, all you would find would be sure defeat. He loves you even though He has seen your ugliest. He has waited when you had your priorities all out of whack until you got it together enough to focus on Him. He has been the anchor that held you even when you sailed way off course. He loves you. He will keep you. My how He loves you.

John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through Him might be saved." Jeremiah 31:3 says, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea,

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

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

creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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

Devotion 27

The Power of God's Word

Today's devotion is from my book *The Power of God's Word*.

The greatest proof that the Bible is God's Word is Jesus' death and resurrection. It is the greatest proof of the Bible as being God's inspired Word. What other religion claims to have a risen Savior? If the Buddhists could get by with claiming that Buddha rose from the dead, they would. Why haven't they? Because he didn't. It was proven in history by many, many eyewitness accounts that Jesus rose from the dead. If that wouldn't have been so, then we couldn't claim it today. You couldn't just go around saying that somebody came back from the dead and have everybody believe it the way they believed that Jesus came back from the dead if it hadn't been proven to be true. Where do we find the account of this miracle? In the inspired Word of God.

These are only just a few of the reasons why we know the Bible is God's inspired Word. Do some research

on your own. Matter of fact, if you are a student looking for a thesis or dissertation topic, this would be a really good one. Now you know more about how to give an answer for the faith that is in you concerning the Word of God.

As an added note, let's talk a minute about God's Word in different ways than the Bible. There are three different aspects of God's Word. One is His written Word found in the Bible. Another is His spoken Word. The Words that He speaks to you in your heart, mind, and spirit. The "logos" Word is the Bible, the written Word. The "rhema" Word is what Jesus spoke. These are Greek words. When they were translated in the Bible, both were translated into English as being the word "word". But when scholars look at the original Greek they see clearly there are two types of the Word of God, the Words that were written in the scriptures, and the Words that Jesus or God spoke. Both are just as powerful. Jesus, God, and the Holy Ghost are still speaking today, and their words are just as powerful.

When we think of the power of the spoken Word, we right away think of Peter walking on the water. What made Peter able to walk on the water? We read about

this in Matthew 14:28 and 29. *And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.* When Jesus said come, He spoke to Peter. That one Word enabled him to be able to walk on the water. What about all those Words that God has spoken into your heart.

I have found through 35+ years of working in New Life Church and Ministries that the Word of God that He speaks in your heart has the same power to create as it did when God spoke and made the world. How do we have a school program that has spread around the US? God spoke and told us to do it. Through all the battles that we have endured, we still stand after over 35 years. How do we have a college extension program that spread around the world seemingly in a very short time, that still exists today even through all the battles of the enemy? God spoke and told us to do that. We accepted Him at His Word, and obeyed where He led. That power of His Word spoken to our spirits, and our faith and obedience to that Word enabled this to come about.

Our three radio stations are fought the hardest. Why are they still here? God spoke and told us to do this, and we obeyed His Word spoken to us. Our ministry is very nearly debt free even though at the time our home church is very small. How? Not because we compromise to be able to get money to survive, not because we weekly beg for money, but because we walk in the truth, in obedience to God's Word, and His Spirit, and we trusted in the power of His Word when He told us that we would have a nearly debt free ministry.

We are getting ready to start an extension school program where we help ministries to be able to start Christian schools. This program will spread just like our college extension program did. How do I know? God has spoken to us telling us to do this, and I know the power of God's Word. Our ministry as a whole is getting ready to grow in a greater way than it has ever before. Why? Because we believe that Word that God has spoken to us. Does His Word just work for us at New Life Church and Ministries? NO. Does His Word that He has spoken have power to enable preachers, or ministers, singers alone, or does that power to enable you to do something God has told

you to do work for you as well? You know the answer to that. Is that power limited by what we think we can do? Only if we let it be.

Devotion 28**The Importance of Obedience**

The devotion for today is from my book A Guide to Obedience.

Many times it is easy to answer God with an “I can’t. I’m not big enough, strong enough in God, wise enough, perfect enough, holy enough, righteous enough, smart enough, or educated enough to obey You, God.” We forget that when God asks us to do something, no matter how small or great, He does so knowing that we can do it, either because we already have the abilities we need, or because He is getting ready to give them to us. God knows us better than we do ourselves. He knows our innermost weaknesses and strengths. He will not require us to do something we would only fail at. Why would He do that? As a teacher, I would never give one of the Kindergartners Algebra tests and fail them because they couldn’t do it.

God is wiser than we are. He would never require you to do something you can’t do. He will push you to

your limits to cause you to grow. He will add talents and gifts so that you can do far more than you would naturally. He will give you the ability to do what He asks. But He would never, never ask you to do something you can't do, just to see you fail. He loves you. It is wonderful to be able to trust this great love that He has for you. Many times people hurt us, and the devil sees to it that we are hurt. If we allow it to, these hurts cause us to have things inside of us that separate us from trusting God's love. Also many times, because we have failed to obey God, there is a barrier that causes us to be separated from Him.

I can remember many times as a child, we would do something wrong. We would cover it all up carefully hoping no one would find out so that we wouldn't get in trouble. But then that guilt came. It was worse than a punishment. Punishments just lasted for a short time then they were over. This guilt went on until we were found out and forgiven and everything was made right. What a relief it was when we were found out. Sin and disobedience can cause these kinds of barriers to separate us from being able to know God's love.

We need to ask Him to tear away anything in our life that stops us from being able to receive His love.

When we do receive it, and we understand its depths we will know that nothing can separate us from His love. Romans 8:38 tells us, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Only our own sin and desires of our heart can separate us. When we know this for sure, we can then begin to trust Him. That trust allows us to know that whatever He asks us to do, we can do, if we try with all our hearts.

Some of my best spiritual teachers have pushed me to every ounce of my strength. They always had new things for me to try, new heights to climb in God. I would have never have been able to reach for those heights if I had never trusted their guidance and their knowledge that I would be able to do what they asked. I knew when they asked me to do something, that even though it would be a great challenge, they were asking me to do something they knew ultimately that I could do. I could trust them in that. We can trust God in that, also. He doesn't put on us more than we can bear or handle. He is wise. He loves us. We can

trust Him with our very soul's salvation. Don't hesitate to do what He asks you to do. Never say God, I can't. Never come up with excuses with why you can't. If He asks you to, you can, and you will, if you try with all your might. He already knew the outcome before He asked you. He will answer a multitude of excuses with just a few words. He will simply say, "I am with Thee."

Devotion 29

The Greatest Lie Ever Told

Today's devotion is from my book *The Greatest Lie Ever Told*.

One of the greatest sermons that I have heard preached about “the greatest lie” was one of the shortest sermons I ever heard. This little sermonette came from a highly unlikely source. But this little sermon gave me an illustration that I have used for years to open up people's eyes. It was actually told to me by an alcoholic who came to our food bank for a box of food. Here it is in his words. “I have had to come to the food bank for a box of food because I am an alcoholic. I know that God can help me to be delivered from this. I have gone to most of the churches in this area to find God's help, and to find their help. I know that if I can get in a church that has the Spirit of God moving in it and His Word preached, I can get delivered. But the churches that I have been in tell me this. They say that they love me

like I am. They tell me that God loves me like I am. They tell me that I am welcome to come there and be like I am. I don't want to be like I am. I want them to tell me how to change, how to be set free from this. I want to be in services where God's Spirit can deliver me, but they don't have God's Spirit in there. I want to hear God's Word preached to give me strength to overcome this. They have some kind of teaching, but it isn't God's Word. I have tried most of the churches around here, and they don't have any of this. They want to counsel me and tell me what the world tells me about how to deal with this, but I don't want to deal with this. I want to be set free from this."

Wow. That really opened my eyes to what was going on in the church world in our little community. I work with churches around the world. Sad to say, I hear this report world over. What has happened to the church? How many people have given up coming to the church to get set free because all we have to offer them are watered down truths, and we might as well call it as it is, they are lies. How many people have given up coming to the church to get help because God no longer is there, His presence, His Spirit, no longer comes? Why does His Spirit no longer come?

Sure, in some churches you have an emotional high that gets pumped up by those who are in the flesh working up a buzz to entice people to their services. This isn't the Spirit of God that delivers, strengthens, saves, and heals. Instead, it is a cheap imitation. We don't preach God's Word. Sad to say, it is because we were told that we don't want to offend anyone. So we stopped telling people that sin was wrong, and how to be delivered from it. I believe that all of this has come about because of the greatest lie ever told.

I was talking to a lady one day. I had known her daughter years before that. I asked her how her daughter was. She told me this. This is her words. "She is doing really great. She has become a man. She/He has a significant other in her life. She/He is going to a church here in the area. They have accepted them like they are. They have welcomed them like they are. She/He is doing well." What a mixed up world we live in! What a mixed up church world! What hope does this couple have of being set free from the mess they are in, if the church doesn't tell them the truth. You can bet that this particular church doesn't tell them. It is one of the biggest churches in the area.

People flock to this kind of stuff, because they are taught that they can do anything that they want to, and still get to go to heaven, according to their teaching. They are taught that they can have whatever life style they want, and God is pleased with that. They are told that God wants them to be free to choose whatever lifestyle they want, and He loves them and supports them in that decision. This church's pastor, teachers, and deacons, aren't going to tell the truth, even if they know it, because they like the crowds, and the money that the crowds generate. The people want to believe that God loves them like they are and leaves them that way, because they don't want to change. But this isn't what God's Word says. This isn't what the truth says.

We had better find out the truth, and walk and talk it, because a lie will only send us to hell. And yes there is a hell and the wages of sin is death. You can pretend that this couple in this illustration will have a well adjusted, peaceful, emotionally sound life because this is the life style that God has ordained for His people to have and it will work out for their best, but is that the truth? Can you tell me that the wages of sin is not death? Who is there to tell them that this

disaster in their life is not what God wants? Who is there to tell them that there is hope for them? Who is there to present the truth to them? Who is there to tell the world that this is wrong, and there is a better way? Who is there to tell them that God's Spirit can deliver them, that there is hope for them to be free? It takes the Spirit of God and the preaching of the whole truth of God's Word to open our eyes. Who is there to allow God's Spirit to come in the midst to convict them, to show them their needs, and to deliver them?

What does God say about these churches that we have talked about in this chapter. We read about it in Ezekiel 13:22-23, "Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life: Therefore ye shall see no more vanity, nor divine divinations: for I will deliver my people out of your hand: and ye shall know that I am the Lord." These churches may seem to grow because so many people go there. This verse tells us though why God's Spirit isn't there. It also tells us why the people who are sincere in heart toward Him won't stay there. He will deliver them out. He will set His people free from

this sort of church. Do you really want to go to a church or have a church that would cause God to say this about you and yours???

Devotion 30

Go and Possess Your Land

Today's devotion is from my book *Go Possess Your Land*.

God uses people to get His message to us. God reveals His Word to us through anointed people. But it is very important that we not rely totally on others. Hear me out here. God reveals His Word first into our own hearts and minds through His Spirit. Then He uses others to confirm what He has spoken personally to us. There is a balance. We can't just depend on others for our spiritual diet. If we do, they might just be feeding us junk food, and we won't even know it. We won't know it until the enemy comes and sweeps us away because we didn't have the strength to stand against him. That sweet manna that comes right from God's throne personally to us sugared with the Holy Ghost will strengthen our soul and change our lives like no other.

On the other hand, I have known people who took an attitude like this. They'd say, "God didn't speak that

directly to me. So that can't be right at all." They would strain out all the good nutrients from what others spoke and throw them away. They would take an attitude like this. "If God has any truth to tell, then He will personally reveal everything to me, and I can't trust what anyone else has to say. No one else has the full truth like I do." When we take this attitude, then we are in danger of being deceived. When we think that we have a revelation of the truth that no one else can have, then we are in danger. When we think that we are more special than millions of God's children that in itself is contrary to God's Word.

Yes, there is a famine in the land of God's Word. That is scriptural as to what will happen in the last days. The full counsel of the truth of God's Word is hard to find. However, the Holy Ghost reveals His truth to the hungry. Never think that you are better than anyone who is hungry. If you do, God will turn around and teach you a lesson by revealing something to them that you have sought to understand for years. God will feed the hungry with His anointed Word. If you think that you have all the truth that there is, and you are no longer hungry for more, then He won't

give you more. You'll be stuck starving right on the edge of a banquet table that the hungry will feast at. Whatever you need, you have God's promise that it will be fulfilled. We just have to dig into God's Word and find it.

Another thing that causes us to be able to identify our promised lands is this. Sometimes we have to have ingrained down deep in our spirit the notion that there are certain places where we just aren't going. That there are certain things that we just aren't going to settle for. That there are certain things that we, as children of God, refuse. These children of God, the second time around, were tired of the desert. A whole generation had passed since that first time around. This crowd was not going to turn around. There was no mention of that at all.

Remember all the complaining that we read about the first time around. Just hearing about the giants in the land was enough to turn them around. I'm sure that this new generation had heard all about those same giants. I'm almost just as sure, knowing human nature, that those giants had grown over the years of telling the story. When you read the account in Joshua of the second time around, there was no

mention of giants at all. Just God's directions on how to overcome them. This generation refused to let giants turn them around. They simply refused to consider that they would have any more of that desert. They weren't going there any more. To get to your promised lands, you have to come to the place where you say, "Enough is enough." Where you say, "I am not going back into that desert. I am not going in that direction any more with my life." You have to get your head up, grit your teeth, set your backbone like a crow bar, and your forehead like a flint rock, and say, "NO MORE".

Why do some people stay sick and never see God's healing even though they believe in it? Because they accept sickness as a way of life. Why do some people stay financially broke? Because they accept financial poverty as a way of life. Why do some people have constant strife and turmoil in their lives? Because they accept it as a way of life. Come to that place where you recognize God's promised lands as promised to you in His Word. Then come to the place where you refuse to accept anything less than what He has promised you.

So what do we do now after having read this? How do you keep from becoming like the person the Bible talks about who is just a hearer and not a doer? A good place to start to put this to use in your life would be to get out your Bible again. Do a search of God's promises. A good concordance helps. If you don't have a Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, I recommend one. It has every word in the Bible and gives the references where each can be found. There are also good little books that you can find that are called *Promise Books*. These have a list of verses that can be found for several promises. There are several of these out.

Write down the promises that the Lord speaks to your heart as the answer to some of the problems that you are having. Then make a list of the things that you refuse to accept because they aren't in your list of promises. Make a list of the directions that you are not going to go in. Then don't go there. Go to your knees instead. Pray and seek the Lord. Ask Him to give you the strength to walk in your promised land.

You have promised lands that you have not even begun to understand. We serve a mighty, mighty, mighty big God. His Word is full of promises for His

children. We are precious to Him. Often we don't even realize the depth of that love that He has for us. When we do, it makes His promises all the more real. It also makes it easier to claim them for our own.

The Curse and the Promises

Today's devotion is from my book *The Curse and the Promises*.

Let's look at the curse of Adam. Even the ground was cursed. Adam and Eve were driven out of that perfect world where they shared that perfect walk with God. Sin now separated them from Him. What hope did they have? I have known God for most of my life. I can tell you this about Him that He is always a God of hope. Even when He is telling you the worst thing imaginable, He will always tell you this with a glimpse of hope. The devil will bring feelings of despair when he is putting his lies into your head. When God is telling you that you are about to face a great problem or battle, He will always include hope for overcoming.

In the middle of this curse, we see hope. We see a glimpse in verse 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." It is fitting that the serpent got the first curse. He also got a promise that Eve's seed would bruise

his head. Now this means that we have authority over satan and he is under our feet. That is true. This also gave us that hope that I mentioned earlier. This is the first glimpse of Jesus and the victory over satan that He would bring.

Notice that this didn't say anything here about Adam's seed. Just Eve's. Jesus was born of woman, not of a man. Here in this curse we see a glimpse of hope. We see a glimpse of Jesus. The Bible doesn't tell in verse 21 what kind of skins that God used to cover Adam and Eve. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." It did say that He covered them. In the next chapter though we get a glimpse of another covering. We see a glimpse of a lamb that was to be slain to cover our nakedness and our sin. God required an offering of a lamb. Cain, who wanted to do his own thing and have God bless it, didn't get what was going on at all. One day though he did. The day when he met the Lamb.

That is the hope of the world. That was the breaking of the curse. The Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. Romans 5:12 and 15-19 and 21 tells us our hope. "Wherefore, as by one man sin

entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." That is our hope. One sinned bringing a curse on us all. One then came and died to shed His blood to deliver us from that curse.

Still the world isn't perfect like it once was. It is a wicked place over run by those who don't serve God. Our only hope to overcome in this cursed world is to accept salvation and let the blood of Jesus erase Adam's curse. Our hope is to fill up with God's Word and His Spirit. God makes us a way to strengthen us to overcome the curse. He puts His Holy Ghost in our hearts so that He can help us overcome. He helps us from the inside out. There is a little song we used to sing in church, "Jesus on the inside, working on the outside, bringing forth a change in our lives." The only reason why we stay in our sin, in our junk, in our mess, is if we choose to do so. God will lift us out of it through the power of His Holy Ghost if we will let Him fill our lives up He will do so, He will fill us up with Himself. He will break those curses.

No, the world isn't perfect. It is a cursed world. Even though it isn't perfect, I have the strength to overcome. I am not walking alone, but with His precious nail scarred hand holding me, guiding me. His Holy Spirit in me helps me even to overcome my own flesh that I inherited from Adam and Eve's curse. God has made a way for us to overcome.

Through Him, YOU are an overcomer, even when you feel like it, even when you don't. Lift up your head. Praise Him. He has broken the curse. Get out your Bible. Read about the promises that He gives us. Take Him at His Word.

The Wonder of Conviction

Today's devotion is from my book *Conviction, Repentance, Forgiveness, and the Power to Change*. This is from the chapter about conviction.

Human nature is to hide your head in a hole and think that there is nothing wrong. We won't know what is wrong in our own human flesh unless God shows us what is wrong in our life. Conviction is what He uses to show us. Conviction isn't just what He uses to lead us to Him before we are saved. Yes, that is part of the Holy Ghost's job. But He also convicts us of our sin every day. I praise God for that. Not only does He convict us, but He also brings us to repentance, and He empowers us to overcome that sin. Conviction is where the process starts. We'll talk more coming up about repentance, and the power God gives us to overcome in the chapters coming up. Conviction is step one.

I just want to mention a little more about conviction. What does it feel like? How should we react to it when it comes? God was convicting me of a rotten attitude that I had picked up a while back. It could have caused a lot of problems in my life if I had let it

continue. The devil had set me up for that reason. He had caused a situation, and had used it against me to create that bad attitude. God began to convict me of that attitude. At first I just rebelled against that conviction. If we aren't careful, we can do that. I was tired of putting up with all that junk, and I wasn't going to repent of my attitude, when what was going on was bad and needed to change. That was my excuse. I was going to have my little attitude no matter how bad God convicted me of it. I had just had my limit of the whole situation.

Because of that little attitude, I ignored God's conviction. I didn't want to deal with it. That is another mistake that we make. That won't fix things. Hiding your head in the sand makes you like an ostrich. When he hides his head in the sand the biggest part of him is sticking up like a target. I felt really bad. I have had God's conviction be so strong that I felt it physically. I knew that I knew that He was convicting me. When God convicts you, you will know. You will feel this tugging at your heart, and this feeling like a weight that won't go away until you repent.

Well, if I had kept that attitude, it would have snowballed and gotten worse. Isn't that what attitudes do? So God kept on dealing with my heart. Isn't it wonderful that He doesn't give up on us? There is a little song that we used to sing in Sunday school that says, "Jesus on the inside, working on the outside, bringing forth a change in my life". He will keep dealing with us and dealing with our hearts, talking to us, explaining things to us, until we give in, yield, and repent.

That is what He did with me. He explained the situation to me so that I got a clear head about it. He showed me that He was God, and He was in control, not the situation. He brought me to repentance. I repented, and the load was lifted. He renewed my confidence and trust. The Holy Ghost lifted me up above the situation, and gave me victory over it. I was able to bind it up by praying in the Holy Ghost. Then I was no longer under the pile, but on top of it all. But it all started with my recognizing and responding to God's wonderful conviction. It didn't feel wonderful at the time, but it was wonderful because it was the key that led me out of that prison.

Here is a little note that I want to add here. If we aren't careful, we can start thinking that sin is just things like drinking, taking drugs, adultery. We can think of it as being just big things. Sin is every thing that separates us from God. One of the biggest sins that can destroy us is bad attitudes. My attitude was wrong. If I had allowed it to stew, it would eventually have separated me from God, and others that I was serving God with. It would have caused me to lose my victory in God. Attitudes such as bitterness, fear, rebellion, jealousy, and more are sins that can separate us from God. How do we know? When God convicts us of them, we will know.

Thank God for conviction. Whatever you do, don't make excuses for what you do wrong. That will only dull conviction. Don't play ostrich, and put your head under the sand. If you do that long, the devil will paint a target on your hind end and use you for target practice. And whatever you do, don't put off fixing things. That will just wear you out in the long run. And it is especially important not to rebel against God's conviction. Rebellion against God is a serious thing. The Bible compares that to the sin of witchcraft. I Samuel 15:23 says, "For rebellion is as

the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”

When you know that God is convicting you, (and He will definitely let you know- you don't have to worry about that) then the key word to remember is YIELD. Matter of fact, that is a key word for a lot of things in God. Don't run, don't procrastinate, don't rebel, don't do all those other things, but yield. Stop. Put it in neutral. Yield to God's Spirit. Hear His voice. And repent. That is the next step.

Devotion 33

Finding the Better Way

Today's devotion is from my book titled *A Better Way*.

I had a young person say to me one day, I just feel like nothing but dirt. Nothing is going right in my life. I can't do anything right. Every time I try, I just mess it up. I'm almost ready to quit trying" I answered them and said, "Good. You are just now in the right place for God to use you. Feeling like dirt is a good place to be." Let me explain.

In the book of Jeremiah in the Bible, God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house in Jeremiah 18. While he was there he watched the potter at work. (A potter is someone who makes pottery out of clay.) The potter took a hunk of dirt, clay, and put it up on the potter's wheel. He worked it, punched it, and beat it until it was soft. If you've ever made anything with clay, you know what I'm talking about. Then when it was malleable, soft, and able to be molded, the potter began to turn the wheel. While it turned, he shaped the clay and molded it. He worked with it until it became something beautiful. Instead of just being a clump of dirt, it became something that the potter

could use. It had a purpose. It was just right for what it was made for.

Sometimes we are just like a lump of clay. We are all just dirt. If you remember Genesis 2:7 tells us that God took dust and made man. The best that we can be on our own is just dust. When God gets done with shaping and molding us though we can be something beautiful. Just like the potter, He will work to get us to the place where He can shape us. We have to yield to him. We can't be hard headed and refuse to listen to Him. We can't tell Him how to do it, and insist on getting our own way. We have to come to the place that we realize that we are just dirt, and we are willing to let Him have His way with our lives. Then He can shape us into a vessel that is beautiful with a God given purpose and a plan for our life.

A lot of people never let this happen. They put limits on what they let God do. He puts them on the wheel and begins to beat them to make them soft so that He can begin to shape them. They jump off the wheel and refuse to let Him finish. They go around all lopsided and ugly because God isn't done. That is why there are so many ugly, lopsided Christians. They won't let God finish what He started.

So the next time that you feel just like dirt, remember that isn't a bad place to be in. It may be just the right place to be where God can work on you. When you feel that way, just ask Him to finish that work in you that He has started. Admit that your way isn't working. Let Him have His way in your life. Ask Him to be Lord of who you are. When you come to that place, it is easier to yield. Human nature doesn't like to yield. Yield to Him. Like that lump of clay laying on the potter's wheel, you will become a vessel of honor.

Devotion 34

There Is Hope Part 1

Today's devotion is from my book titled, *There Is Hope*.

I am writing this book in the middle of what is being called the worst economic time since the depression. Every time you turn on the news it is full of nothing but bad news, world over. Our eyes and ears seemingly hear only bad reports with promises of worse coming. When you ask people even in casual conversation how they are doing, it takes a while to hear their replies. They answer with telling about their financial woes and go from there to tell about all the sickness that is happening in their families. There is so much sickness. People are dying with heart attacks. So many people have cancers of all sorts. We hear of new diseases that seem like the plagues out of the Bible.

On the International scene, violence is destroying cities. The Terrorists cause the fear that they use to control others. They use it to grip our hearts in fear in the safety of our own homeland. World over, their terror shakes hearts. If we aren't careful and on guard even our faith in God can crumble and that is what

these terrorists want. That is one of their main goals. You see, they hate Christians and hate our nation because in their minds we are a Christian nation. They want to destroy our faith using fear.

When I start to write a book I always pray and ask God to show me who I am writing the book for. I have written books for adults, and I have written a series of books for young people. This book is for both. Both young and old are fighting fear. Both young and old are fighting the feeling that there is no hope. The suicide rate among both adults and teens is at an all time high. I believe it is because we are losing our hope. The sea of bad news that is all around us is drowning us in despair. I see so many young people who are sick and when doctors tell them what is wrong, they sum up the diagnosis in one word. "Stress."

Now when you read this you are probably thinking what a disastrous way to start writing a book about hope. But isn't it during times of darkness that we need to hear more about hope than ever before? Isn't during times like this that we need to hold on to hope because it is more important than it has ever been?

I went through a time in my life when all I heard was bad news. On top of this something happened that caused me and my husband to find ourselves in the middle of what was one of the worst financial times that we'd seen in our 20+ years of marriage. Because of a situation and an illness we nearly lost everything we owned. Right in the middle of that, the world got even darker. I know what it is like to lose hope because I nearly did. It's like settling down into mud along the river and when you try to get out it sucks you down like quick sand. Everybody around me tried to help pull me out, but it took God to give me the life rope that I needed. He was the only One who had the strength to pull me out and the only One who had the ability to fix the situation that I was in.

That was when I first started thinking about writing this book. That is when I realized how powerful a force hope is and what it means to lose it. Never before has the message of hope been more needed. Without hope, it is easy to drown and to be pulled down to the place that you just don't care anymore. Hope changes our focus and lets us realize that all is not lost. Hope causes us to remember that there is a God and He is still able to keep us.

There is hope. I don't care how bad things look. There is hope. There is something that we can hold onto that will keep us through the bad times that will anchor us through the storm. You don't have to lose hope just because other people around you are losing hope. You don't have to lose hope just because there is bad news. There is also good news and that good news has held people down through time and kept them when things looked bad. Keep reading this book. I have put a lot of God's Word into the book. Read it and take it into your heart and into your mind. God's Word has helped millions and billions of people through time to be able to overcome. Not only can you have hope, but you can also rise up and bring hope to those around you. God is real and He can be there for you. He has given us treasures to help us to be able to be over comers. One of these treasures is hope.

Devotion 35

There Is Hope Part 2

Today's devotion is another chapter from my book, *There is Hope*.

We are surrounded with bad news. More than ever before it is important that we keep our eyes on some good news. If we aren't careful we can get so caught up in bad news that we can't see the hope of ever hearing good news. It is easy to lose hope when everywhere we go somebody is telling us about something bad that is going on. There is good news. Matter of fact, there is lots of good news. There is a reason, as the old saying goes, to get your hopes up. There is something to hope in, even when it seems there is no hope.

In John Chapter 11 we can read the story of Lazarus. Lazarus had two sisters, Mary and Martha. They were all Jesus' good friends. Lazarus got very sick. We are not sure how long he was sick. We do know that Mary and Martha tried to find Jesus, but couldn't. They knew that He would be able to help Lazarus. Watching people get sick and die is a hard thing. Not being able to find help for them makes it even harder.

I had an aunt that had lymph cancer. I stayed with her for a month while she was dying. Nobody could help her. Doctors told me just to make her comfortable until she died. There was nothing else anybody could do. That was a really hard time. I know what Mary and Martha went through. Bad news. When they couldn't find Jesus there wasn't any hope of any good news.

Lazarus died. In those days, in that place, they buried people in caves hewn out of rock with huge stones to seal it up like a door. The ground was so hard and rocky in this part of the world that they couldn't dig graves the way we do here. Lazarus was sealed in the tomb for 4 days. Bad news altogether.

We don't know exactly how old Lazarus was, but you get the feeling from the story that this was not an expected thing. We get a feeling that it was sudden and devastating to his family. Just like cancer is to families today. When my aunt died, it wasn't easy. It isn't ever easy to lose people that way. There wasn't much hope during the last part of her sickness and during her death. We may go through times like this that seem really dark with little hope. We just have to hold on and keep on going. Things will get better.

They certainly did for Mary and Martha. How could that be? Lazarus had died. How can you find hope after something as bad as this? They hadn't forgotten their best friend. I'm sure Jesus was in their thoughts during this time.

There was something though that puzzled them. They had sent a messenger to Jesus telling Him how sick Lazarus was. I'm sure that the messenger told Jesus the bad news just as it was. Jesus did something that puzzled them all. Even though He knew that Lazarus was dying, instead of going right away, Jesus stayed where He was for two more days. Then He told His disciples that they were going to Bethany because Lazarus was dead. Then He made the statement that He was glad for their sakes that it was so. Wow. You might think, with friends like this, who needs enemies.

Nobody had a clue of what was going on, but God had a plan. God was getting ready to turn some really bad news into good news. When Jesus got to Bethany, which was Lazarus' home town, first Mary and then Martha ran to Him and they both said the same thing. "Jesus if you would have been here my

brother wouldn't have died." Jesus had been their last hope, but Lazarus had still died.

When my aunt was sick with lymph cancer, a lot of people prayed that God would touch her and make her well. That wasn't hard for us to believe because our family knew what God could do. God had healed my mother from the same kind of cancer several years before that. With Jesus, there is always hope. My Mom was healed and from that time on has been cancer free. She was totally and completely healed. God is good. That has been many, many years ago.

Mary and Martha knew that Jesus could make a difference. I think too that they knew for some reason Jesus had purposefully not come back in time to help Lazarus. They had to know that the messenger they had sent had found Jesus and delivered the message to Him.

I'm sure nobody understood why Jesus did what He did, but you could tell from their conversation that they still trusted and believed in Him and what He could do. We see this in John 11:21-27. "Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now,

whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou are the Christ, the Son of God which should come into the world.” Even though she had some bad news, she still trusted in Jesus. That is a key. When the news is bad, it doesn’t change the fact that we can still trust in the Lord.

What about my aunt? It was really hard to watch her die and not be able to do anything about it. We couldn’t understand why God hadn’t healed her like He had healed my Mom. Her pain wasn’t so bad that she couldn’t bear it. Usually cancer patients with this kind of cancer suffer a lot worse than she did. God gave her strength and peace until the day that He took her and gathered her up in His arms to be with Him. It was hard to let her go. It was a bad news time all around. Or was it?

You’ve got to agree with me. This chapter has been filled with bad news up to this point. I guess I named it right. So, why start a book about hope with a chapter that is filled with bad news? We talked about how we are living during a time when bad news is all around. We are living during a time when it is easy to lose hope. Mary and Martha did too, but they knew

something. Or rather I could say that they knew Someone. Thank God that during the time when my aunt died, I knew someone too. That someone was the same someone that they knew. Isn't that cool. The same one that comforted them that day was the same one that comforted me. The same words that they heard at Lazarus tomb were the same words that I heard at my aunt's funeral. John 11:25-26 tells us how Jesus answered Martha. "Jesus saith unto her; Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Jesus went to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. He didn't even have to go in. He just stood at the entrance and cried out, "Lazarus, come forth." And Lazarus did. Plainly and simply put, Lazarus just got up and walked right out. Can you imagine all that rejoicing that went on. Even though things looked bad, they kept their hope. When Jesus came on the scene, things got better. The Bible defines faith in Hebrews 11:1 as being, "The substance of things

hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Looking at Lazarus’ tomb, Mary and Martha didn’t have much hope. But when Jesus got there, they saw something to hope for. They saw evidence of God who they couldn’t see. They knew that some how things would get better. When Lazarus walked out of that tomb, it wasn’t just something that they hoped for. It became something that was real, something that they could see. That is what faith is. It is faith that gives us hope. Faith means that we believe and trust in God through the bad news knowing that it is going to get better.

What about my aunt? Did God bring her back from the dead like He did Lazarus? In a way no, in a way yes. There was a reason why the preachers at her funeral quoted the same words that Jesus told Mary that day. “I am the resurrection and the life: He that believeth in me, though He were dead, yet shall He live.” Those words weren’t spoken just to comfort Lazarus’ family, but they have also been a comfort to God’s people down through time as they stood at the gravesides of their loved ones. Jesus is still the resurrection. Not even death is final. If you could ask my aunt today, she could tell you Lazarus’ side of

the story. She was dead, but now she lives. She could tell you how wonderful heaven is, everyday spent in a perfect place with Jesus, the One who met her when she died. The One who cried out, “Come Forth”. The One who took her by the hand and led her to her promised land. Dying and death is some of the worst news you can hear about. But even death isn’t the final bad news. As long as we keep our eyes on Jesus, our hand in His hand, and our faith in Him, we have hope.

Devotion 36

Do You Have Holes in Your Armor

Today's devotion is from my book *Holes in Our Armor*.

Often is it our lack of knowledge that destroys us and makes us easy prey for the enemy. The Bible is the source of our knowledge. We as Christians often face the same problem in spiritual warfare. We look at ourselves in the natural. We see our weaknesses and failures. We fail to see ourselves in the way that God's Word tells us that we are. We fail to see our position in God according to His Word, and we fail to walk in the authority that is given to us because of that position. We also fail to recognize the devil's position. We fail to realize that according to God's Word, the devil's position is planted squarely underneath our heel. (Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.") Often we lose in our spiritual warfare because of our ignorance of God's Word.

This may come because we have not been taught these things.

God's Word is filled with scriptures that tell us both our position in God and the devil's position as well. Here are some things that God tells us about who we are in Him. We have to learn to see ourselves according to God's Word. If we are committed, submitted, and obedient children of God, then these things are true. Read these things over again in a personal way putting your name in the verses. **I** (your name) am a Son of God. Read them all this way and believe them, because they are the Word of God and the Word of God cannot lie. Read them everyday. Read them when the devil brings doubt, confusion, and self doubt. Read them to him. God's Word has a way of doing away with the devil's lies.

We can spend all day looking at our weaknesses, our failures, our past, our sicknesses, our problems, and our flesh. It would be much better if we spend our time with our mind submitted in the Word of God remembering the verses that declare our victory and our rights as the children of God. We can spend all day looking at our weaknesses, or we can remember to submit these to Him so that He becomes our

strength. (We have said this verse over and over, but here it is again. It is important enough to drill it into our spirits. II Corinthians 12:9-10 “And He (Jesus) said unto me, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.... for when I am weak, then am I strong.”) If we concentrate on our flesh and our weaknesses, we deny the power of the Word of God to work in us. We deny the Holy Ghost Who is inside us. We deny Jesus Christ, Who is our only hope of glory. (Galatians 2:20, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”) We need to stop seeing our flesh, and start seeing Jesus in us. We need to stop concentrating on our weaknesses and begin to see the promises of God’s Word. We need to know who we are in Him and stand up and claim our God given authority.

These things are not things that we can see in the natural. To accept the work of God’s Word, and the things that it promises, we have to walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. These are not things that are based on who and what we are in the natural, but who

we are in the Spirit of God. They have little to do with who we are in the natural. We are required to be committed and submitted. We may be very imperfect. We may be just rising up from being the biggest failure in the world. That doesn't matter. If we are God's children, then we have a position in His great love. We have a position in His kingdom. This position comes with authority. Read this section of scripture found in Ephesians 1:17-23. Verses 22-23 summarize the section. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Condemnation and discouragement are two tools the devil often uses to come against us to cause us to lose authority. When we walk in the Spirit and we realize that our position and authority is based on who God is, not on who we are, then we move to a place where the devil can't control us with these.

The devil recognizes whether or not we are obedient or disobedient. To walk in authority, we have to have a sound relationship with God, so that we are absolutely sure of our authority, and we have to have an obedient relationship with God so that the devil is

absolutely sure of our authority. We have to know our position and our authority according to God's Word. We have to know the limitation that God has put on our enemy. We have to be sure that we don't fear our enemy. We have to put on our armor. And when all that is done, when we say devil you have to flee, then he has to flee.

Devotion 37

Praise the Lord

Today's devotion is from my book *Let All God's People Praise the Lord*.

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

The whole atmosphere changed. They asked us to keep on coming. I had found a salvation that stuck and boy had it stuck this time around. It was so rich and real and full of love and joy that I wanted to share it with everyone. We never had a thought like, “What if someone rejects this? What if they make fun of us? What if it takes up a lot of my time? I have such a busy schedule. What if we run into an uncomfortable situation? What if it takes time away from some of my other activities? What if it costs me something?”

We didn't even think any of that. We had no thought of not having time to do this. It was the joy of our lives and the focus of our being, to be able to reach out for the One Who had reached out to us. Remember those days. If when I said this you sadly shook your head and agreed that you remember those days, then here is something to think about? Why is this just a memory and not a reality? Has something happened to your first love? Has Jesus changed any from the first time that you met Him? Is He less wonderful than He was then? Does He love you any less than He did when you first found out about His love for you? What has changed? Have you lost your first love? Isn't salvation just the same then as it is

now? Has something changed with your experience with the Lord?

Remember those sweetheart days with your honey, your husband or your wife? Praise God for those who still have them after years of marriage. Never lose those sweetheart days. Those google-eyed-red-faced-hungry just for the sight of that sweet lover feelings. In over 30 years of marriage, there have been times when I took my husband for granted. There have been times when I did my own thing and he did his own thing. There have been times when situations such as financial problems and health problems put a strain on our marriage. There have been times when personality differences and misunderstandings drove wedges between us. There have been times when we'd say or do things that we would have to make right. But we are still sweethearts after nearly 30 years.

I love him more than I did when we first had our first set of starry eyes for each other. We've been through a lot together. We are growing old together and believe me as you do that you know it isn't all based on our looks or what is on the outside. I know he will be there for me no matter what we have to go through

because he has been there for me through what we've already overcome. I know he is the one that sees me at my ugliest outside and inside, but still loves me. He will be there when I need him, because he has always been there. I can trust in his love for me. The love that has been through the fire is the love that will last. Amen? Isn't God the same way? But because I know that my husband will be there for me through it all, I have to remind myself that I don't need to take him for granted. Isn't that how we do if we aren't careful? We don't care about how we act, or look because we don't have to. That isn't fair. If we aren't careful we become less for those who mean the most to us. More importantly we don't need to take God for granted or do Him the same way.

Praise is based on a relationship with God. It is the relationship that has been through the fire. You know that when the storms come, you will last through them as well. You know He's been there, so you know He'll be there to hold you through tomorrow. It isn't that your relationship with God will last because you know that everything will be perfect from there on out. That isn't what this is all about. Some people teach that because we are children of God, we have a

right to have a perfect life. One day in heaven that might be true. Down here though, if you are having a perfect life, I might go so far as to doubt your salvation experience. Why? Because if you are a child of God, you have a ready-made enemy who hates you because he hates God. The devil is out to get God's children. If you don't have any battles, there must not be enough evidence in your life to show him that you are a child of God.

Sure you will have battles even if you are saved. You will have to live in this world that is definitely far from perfect, right in the middle of people who mostly aren't saved, and don't care about doing anything good. You will have battles. That doesn't mean that God doesn't love you. It does mean, praise the Lord, that you will have someone to hold you and keep you through whatever this old world and the devil that is its prince brings against you. It does mean that you can find victory. Without God, all you would find would be sure defeat.

God loves you even though He has seen your ugliest. He has waited when you had your priorities all out of whack until you got it together enough to focus on Him. He has been the anchor that held you even

when you sailed way off course. He loves you. He will keep you. My how He loves you.

John 3:16-17 says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world through Him might be saved.” Jeremiah 31:3 says, “The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” I John 3:1 tells us, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.”

You are Beloved. You are beloved and longed for. Here is a prayer that we all need to pray. It is found in Ephesians 3:17-19, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.” How big is His love? What can separate you from it?

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

God loves you. God loves you. God loves you. That is the key to understanding what praise is all about. We need to wrap ourselves in that great big love, and fellowship with the One who created us to love. Get all the junk out that separates us from God and gets us tied up and tangled up in other things and bound from His love. What does God expect from us in return for that love? Deuteronomy 6:5 tells us, “ And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.” Deuteronomy 10:12 tells us, “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy

soul.” Fall in love with the One who loves you so much. Get google eyed over Jesus again. Go back to your first love.

Devotion 38**Taking Authority**

From my book titled *Your Authority as a Child of God*.

One of the best illustrations that I can give to explain what it means to take authority comes from my years of being a teacher/principal in both the public and private schools. One of the lessons that I had to learn early in my teaching years was how to take authority. I learned it in a small public school that actually had grades K-12 in one building. All teachers were required to take turns doing hall duty after school, monitoring the halls while the buses were loading. I was new at teaching, and I was totally new at having to deal with teenagers. I was new to them, and I was an elementary school teacher, which made things harder. It was beneath them to listen to me. I was nervous at having to tell them what to do, and I was a soft-spoken, mild mannered person. Often that doesn't mix with teaching older students. I had not learned to take authority.

I barely had learned how to take authority in my classroom, but my hall duty time was a nightmare. Nobody listened. I was too unsure to take the author-

ity that was mine as a teacher. Some of the teachers who had been there for years had no problem with their authority. They knew their place. They knew their rank and they knew how to pull it. Most importantly the kids knew, too. When they walked into the hall, the place would grow quiet. If there was something going on that wasn't supposed to, it stopped when they showed up. These older teachers walked in their authority. They were sure in that authority.

Later on as I grew in understanding my place and how to take the authority that was mine, when I walked in I had the same affect. It took some time. It also took a little help from God. One day I noticed a remarkable change in the respect that the older students had for me. I started asking around to find out what the change was. Now this was back in the days before teachers got too educated to use corporal punishment. We were allowed to paddle. I had paddled several of my second grade students. They were an unusual group. It was a group that had been hand-picked out of that class with the most discipline problems. When I asked about the change in attitude of the older students, one of the students told me that it was because they had heard about how I had taken authority over my own class and it had made an impression. When the teenagers saw that I had started taking authority, they listened when I told them what to do. It

wasn't long before my presence had the same affect on these kids that the older teachers had.

Now you may ask what does this have to do with taking authority over the devil. The devil is just like an unruly teenager. You can talk to him all you want to, you can even quote scripture all you want to, it will have little affect until you take authority over him. This comes from knowing your place as a child of God and walking in it. As you grow in your relationship with God, and you grow in understanding of who you are according to God's Word, you will grow in the authority that you have over satan. Just as I grew in my authority with the teenagers on hall duty, you have to grow in your authority over the devil. You might say you are on permanent hall duty. It is your job to monitor the devil's behavior and see to it that he does not get into things that he isn't supposed to.

Now when I started teaching, one of the main problems that I had as a newcomer to the school was that I didn't actually know what all the kids were supposed to be doing, and what they were not allowed to do. I didn't know their restrictions. It didn't help that they knew their restrictions, and they knew that I didn't. They were some of the best little con artists. They could talk me right into my giving them permission to do what they knew they weren't supposed to do. They could get by with doing things in front of me to break

the rules, because they knew I didn't know the rules. As children of God, we face this same thing with the devil. We often don't know his limits. God has put strict limits on what he can and cannot get by with. For example, if you read the story of Job, you will find out in chapter 1 that for the devil to try Job, he had to get permission from God. Read the whole first chapter. Then reread Job 1:10-12. In this section of scripture the devil tells God that because of His protection, he can't touch Job. The devil knows the limitations that God has put on his work. The problem is that often we do not. The Bible is filled with teaching about our position as children of God and our spiritual authority in that position. That is why it is so important to know the Word of God.

Besides knowing what the rules are, to be able to take authority, you have to learn who you are and what rights and privileges you have as a child of God. This doesn't mean that these rights and privileges are based on who you are in the flesh. Many times we get this confused. We think that because we aren't perfect, or super-spiritual, or giant Christians, we don't have any rights as children of God. Now if we are not committed and submitted to God we lose many of our rights. For example, the Bible tells us that if we are double-minded, we won't receive anything from God (James 1:8). It tells us that if we are not obedient to God then we lose our authority over the devil. It tells

us that if we submit to God, then we can resist the devil and he has to flee (James 4:7). Therefore we know that if we are not submitted then we cannot resist him and have him flee. There are certain conditions of heart and life that we have to have to be able to take the authority that God has given us, and to take our position as children of God. But many people are walking so far in condemnation of the flesh, that they can't see that their rights as children of God are not dependant in their strengths or weaknesses.

As a teacher on hall duty, I was a lousy teacher, because I had not learned to take authority. However, my rights and the position I held as a teacher with all the authority that came along with it did not change just because I was a lousy teacher. I was still a teacher, and I had authority, even though I had not learned how to take it. That is the same way with you as a child of God. You just have to learn your position and walk in it. Then when you square your shoulders back and tell the devil to get off your premises, he has to listen.

Now the true test of my hall duty came one day when one of the teenagers had gotten hold of some bad drugs. He meant to do harm to teachers and students alike. I was able to take authority over him. He left the premises. That is how it is with the devil. He will come with the sole purpose of doing harm to you and

those you love, and those you serve God with. When you know the rules and you know who you are, you can take authority, and the devil has to leave the premises. It is my prayer that through these pages, you learn that you can put him to flight.

Now before I go on in this book further, I want to take time to talk about casting out devils. This is our right as children of God to cast out devils. When people hear this they think of only one thing. They think of casting demons out of demon filled people. This is a genuine and very real ministry. I have seen this in our own ministry. There are people who come to the Lord as new Christians after a life filled with the occult and drugs, and they are possessed. I have seen these people delivered through the power of God. I want to say carefully though that this is not all there is to taking spiritual authority.

Every day I have to take authority over the powers of hell who are trying to gain control of my life or the ministry that God has given me, especially in the ministry of working with young people. Especially if you are in some sort of ministry, you should know what I am talking about. We are in a spiritual battle and we had better learn how to take spiritual authority to be able to win this battle. The weapons that we have are not carnal, and we had better learn what they are and how to use them. If we never learn these things it will

be easier for the devil to steal our day-to-day victory, and if we never learn them, he can eventually steal our soul. If we are in a ministry, that battle is compounded by the fact that not only will the devil come against us personally, but he will also come against the ministry that the Lord has given us. He means to keep us from doing that which God intends for us to do. If you think that you are not in a spiritual warfare and you think that you don't really need all this, then you really need to beware.

There is an old saying, "If the devil isn't fighting you, then he may already have you." The devil won't fight you if you are living a compromised life. He will blind you into thinking that there really is no warfare in your life. Look out. All of us are in this spiritual warfare, if we are children of God. Ephesians 6:12 tells us, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

I pray that you learn to identify the battle, and you learn how victorious you are. Ephesians 1:18-23, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the work-

ing of His mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” Amen Amen Amen Amen.

Devotion 39

The One Who Died

From my book titled *The Power of Calvary*. This chapter is titled *The One Who Died*.

John 1:1-5 and 9-14 tells us this about the One who died at Calvary. "In the Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

This is the best verse I know to start a chapter about Jesus. We have to start with Jesus to really start a book about Calvary. Without Jesus there would have been no Calvary. In a way, Calvary started when Jesus left heaven to be born as a baby. Talk about submission. The Lord of all things once had to have His

diaper changed just like we did when we were babies. I don't mean this in any way to be disrespectful. I am just saying to picture this. Jesus submitted to the place where He left a perfect heaven for a very imperfect world. Not only this but he also submitted himself to be humbled to be born as a baby. He grew up in this imperfect world so that He would know what it was like to be human flesh.

Hebrews 2:17 tells us, "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Hebrews 4:15-16 tells us, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Jesus even knows what it's like to be a baby, or a teenager. He knows what it's like to be human and he is in touch with our human frailties and infirmities. He knew we had to have a Calvary. He knew before He came to earth, but He certainly knew more after He came. He walked among us and look what He suffered from the time of His ministry. We didn't deserve a savior but we certainly needed one. In His love, He submitted to this flesh and lived here on earth. Then He submitted to the cross. Philippians 2:8, "And be-

ing found in fashion, as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Why? Because He loved us. What a great love. Is there a greater love that you can find than the love of this One who died for you at Calvary?

Sometimes when the devil is beating me up with a battle of condemnation I pick up the Bible and I turn to the story of the crucifixion. I turn to Calvary. There I get reconnected with God's love and the love of His Son. From the kiss of Judas on, I can see pictures of my Savior. In Matthew 26:50 I see how He handled the worst rejection that He faced. "And Jesus said unto him, **Friend**, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took Him." I remember Zechariah 13:6, "And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." When those who love me have betrayed me, I know He walked there too. I see His compassion even for the enemy when He reached out and healed the high priest's ear. I find there the strength to forgive my own enemies. In Matthew 26:63, ("But Jesus held His peace...") When He held His peace I find the strength I need to stand and be still when my mouth needs to be shut. When in verse 67, they mocked and spit on him and buffeted Him, I remember that being a Christian isn't for the weak, but for those who are strong.

I remember that following Jesus takes guts and backbone. I also remember the place where I can receive my strength to make that stand. When they put on Him that robe and crown and mocked Him beating Him with those 39 stripes, I remember the healing there that He purchased for me. As He hung there on the cross, forgiving those who crucified Him, I know that when the devil condemns me I can put this in his face. I surely have a Savior who forgives. I know that He will forgive me as well. As He hung between the two thieves and the one was given the promise that he would see Him this day in paradise, I can take faith that those loved ones that I have watched being laid in a grave were only there for a very temporary residence until that same One received them in glory with Him.

When He cried, "My God, my God. Why hast thou forsaken me?" because of the sins that He bore, I know that my sins were there too. I know that I too have a right to be a Son of God. I have a right because of that cry and the blood that was shed there to wash away my sin. When I read in John 19:28 how He waited to die until all the scripture concerning His death was fulfilled, I know without a doubt that He will keep His word for me. (28. "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." 30. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He

said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.") I know that there won't fail one "jot or tittle" of His Word. I know He keeps His promises. Not only will He keep His Word that He has written, but He will also keep every promise that He has ever personally spoken to my heart. When the earth shook and the temple curtain rent in two from top to bottom, I know that the veil that separates me from His love and from being whole in Him was rent in two as well. When the graves opened and the Saints rose, I know my victory over death is as sure as His was on that third day.

What about Calvary? It was certainly more than just a cross, a tragedy, and a loss. It was a victory, a power, a triumph that can scarcely be told. We know Who Calvary was about. Who was Calvary for? For you. For your victory. For your hope. For your life everlasting and eternal, beginning new every day.

We've talked about Jesus from the beginning. We've talked about Jesus at Calvary. What about Jesus today? I remember when I first got saved I was very young. I didn't know much about finding a relationship with God or with Jesus. I asked Jesus to come into my heart, but I didn't give him the whole thing. I followed him from far off. When I went away to college, my relationship with Jesus was not strong enough to hold me through all I had to face there. I

tried everything that the college scene had to offer me and it was a lot. I wasn't a very good sinner. I really suppose no one is, but I was even dumber in the ways of the world, and it didn't take long for me to totally wreck my life. I wrecked my brain on alcohol and drugs. It might sound strange, but I rededicated my life to God the night I tried to kill myself. I knew that my life was such a mess that unless God was real and He helped me, I had no hope. I tried to take my life and told God that if He was real and He could help me then He would have to stop me. I told Him if He wasn't real that I wanted to die because I knew I had no hope. I knew that I was tempting God. He overlooked my foolishness and saved my life. He saved my soul as well.

Still it took a while after that for my mind to clear. I remember in my rough times that I would fling myself down and I would cry my eyes out. Then I would feel His sweet love just wrap me up and hold me. That's how I knew Jesus was real. I knew He was there for me. As I grew in the Lord, I grew in understanding what that meant. I learned more about His Word, and I received the power of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Soon I could walk where before it seemed that all I could do was crawl. Do you remember those days? Then I began to run a little. Before long He strengthened me like Isaiah's eagle in Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall

renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." I knew more about my Savior then. It wasn't like it had been before I fell away from Him. My hand was in His hand. His steps led me. Do you remember walking in the snow in the footprints that your dad made? I was obeying Jesus and walking in the footsteps of my heavenly Father. That's where Jesus is now. Through the power of the Holy Ghost He is close up and personal. That Savior who loved me from the cross is there by my side to help me today.

He is also seated at the right hand of the Father and making intercession for me-for us all. Romans 8:34, "Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us." Jesus is praying for you. When you feel like you are all alone and there is no one who knows where you are, Jesus is praying for you. When it feels like your prayers are bouncing off a brick wall and getting nowhere, Jesus is praying for you. When you feel like you are hanging on to the knot at the end of the rope, Jesus is praying for you. Be encouraged. He is there with you. He knows where you are. He knows what you're going through. He also knows how to get the victory through to you.

He is also exalted and lifted up above all. Colossians 3:1 tells us, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." He is high and lifted up. He is the Lord of all. One day all things will have to bow at His feet. He is almighty and everlasting. He is a Savior that is mighty and worthy not only to serve, but also to worship eternally. We have a wonderful Savior.

Draw close to him. The closer you get, the more you will want to get to know Him. His love will turn your world around. What was the motive for what He did on Calvary? Love. Pure love. Only love would have been strong enough to hold Him on the cross. In Gethsemane when He prayed there, He agonized so much over what He was getting ready to face that He sweated drops of blood. "And being in agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." He knew Calvary wasn't going to be easy. He knew all about that before He left heaven to be born as a baby. He could have refused to come. He could have refused there in the garden, but instead He prayed the prayer that's found in Luke 22:42. "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." He could have called angels to deliver Him from the cross. Matthew 26:53 tells us, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my

Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" He submitted to the cross. He submitted to death so that we could find a victorious, eternal life in Him. I praise God for sending us such a wonderful Savior.

So when your battle gets weary, go to Calvary. Remember these things. Hebrews 12:2 tells us, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Colossians 1:11-14 tells us that we can be "Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." To find even more about the power of Calvary, read the rest of that chapter in Colossians 1.

Devotion 40

Why Listen

From my book *Hearing the Masters Voice* from the chapter titled *Why Listen?*

Let's talk a little more about why it is important to learn to hear and obey the voice of the Master. When I started praying about writing this book, this scripture kept coming to my mind. Romans 8:14 says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." I guess you could turn that around to say, if the Spirit of God doesn't lead you, you aren't a son of God. If you haven't gotten a relationship with the Lord in which you can hear His voice and obey Him, are you a son? I think that it is very important to hear and obey the voice of God. Here are some more reasons.

I was talking with someone who had to have emergency medical treatment. If she didn't have this treatment she could die, if she did have this treatment she could die. She was really concerned, as we all would be in this circumstance. She asked me what I thought. Well, I am not a doctor. (Sad to say, you really can't trust most doctors because the main motive behind what many of them do is greed. They want your money so they recommend the most expensive treatment regardless of your best interest.) I couldn't give her an answer. I had no idea of how to lead her. This person asked everyone, and was listening to her doctor. I cautioned her and told her

that when I had circumstances like that, I listened to the Lord. I have had times when if I did what the doctor said, I would have died. I also have had times when if I had listened to what others said and I had done that, I would have died. But I had listened to what the Lord told me to do, and obviously I am alive because you are reading what I have written since then.

So when people are in this kind of circumstance, I understand how they are torn, because I had been there several times. If you have been in circumstances where the wrong choice can cause you to die, then you understand what I am saying. I have also had many circumstances where if I had made a different choice, or had done something differently than what I did, I would not be here today. I'll talk more about these circumstances later. I am very, very glad that I could hear the voice of the Lord and that I listened to it instead of the voices of those around me.

So how did it turn out for this person who asked me what I thought? When I shared with her how important it was to hear and obey God that made her stop and think. She realized that this was a part of her relationship with the Lord that she lacked. She thought prayer was just asking God for help. She had prayed and asked God for help. She had even prayed and asked God for healing. She had not stopped to

listen. Prayer was a one sided relationship. She just talked. She never listened. She wasn't even sure how to hear the voice of the Lord. Going through this circumstance changed her relationship with God, and it changed her life. She had been saved for most of her life. For the first time, she realized that she didn't have an obedient, listening relationship with the Lord. She realized that I couldn't tell her what God wanted her to do. She realized that no one else could tell her what God wanted her to do. She had to go to Him.

We could only confirm what God wanted her to do. We could only reinforce the thought, but the guidance for that life saving decision had to come from God. She was never the same after that. When she got hold of this knowledge of having a listening, obedient relationship with God, it changed her life. She was more victorious. Her life stopped being so chaotic and it began to have the kind of order in it that only can come when we start obeying God. This influenced her whole family.

We all know that obedience is important. The Bible has many scriptures about obedience. Here are some:

Deuteronomy 26:16, "This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul."

Deuteronomy 11:26-27, “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day.”

Joshua 1:8, “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”

Matthew 7:21, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

We know the importance of obedience, but sometimes we don't know how to obey. We worry about doing the right things, but other than hearing God's Word, we don't know how to be able to tell the right things that we need to do when it comes to everyday decisions. We want to be able to advise those we love (our spouses, our children, our friends) who come to us who are facing life-changing decisions, and we don't know how to advise them. We want to be able to have the strength to do what is right, but sometimes we aren't even sure what is right, so we are double minded and that makes us waver,

that makes us weak. All these are times when we need to know how to hear the voice of the Lord. When we have that obedient relationship with the Lord, our walk with Him is strengthened. We are strengthened in our life with Him. It is my prayer that through reading this book you see that you are able to obey God. That knowing how to do this stops being such a mystery. You may have given up on the thought of walking in obedience because you tried it so many times, and you failed. You may have even given up on trying to do it before you got started.

Some people have the idea that this kind of obedience is just necessary for pastors, and preachers. After all they are the ones who have to guide people. Ordinary people in the pews aren't spiritual enough to make this kind of decisions. So when something life threatening happens, and they have to make a decision, they go to their pastor who they assume since he is a pastor, has all the answers from the Lord. Wow. If my life is hanging in the balance I want to be sure that the one I go to is perfect. I want to know that He has all the answers, not just part of them, or not just his perception of them. I want to know that He is perfect in His answers. I don't want to take a man's opinion. You may not even really know your pastor. Even if you do, he definitely isn't perfect, even though you may have a high opinion of him. He is open to make mistakes. Why? Because he is human.

Go to God for your answers. Get a relationship with the Lord. Do you know why so many pastors fail and fall? They have people in their congregation who go to them constantly instead of going to God. They have to carry the load of all that. They have to be God for those people in their congregation who refuse to get a relationship with God instead of with them. By the way, if you are a pastor, or worker in the church, don't let people do this to you. It not only destroys you, but it can destroy them. Guide people to find a relationship with God, so that you don't have to play God. Playing God is dangerous to both them and you. You don't have all the answers. Don't let them put you in the place where you feel like you have to. It can lift up our ego when people do this. Many pastors have fallen because they became God to their congregation instead of leading them to have a relationship with Him.

I could go on here with lots more testimonies of people who heard and obeyed God's voice and how their lives were saved, or changed dramatically, or the lives of people around them were changed forever. I am not just talking about people in the Bible. I am talking about ordinary people that I have known. I am not talking about super spiritual, perfect people who never make mistakes. I am talking about ordinary people like you who dared to listen and obey. You can do this. Matter of fact, listening to the voice of

God and obeying is a lot easier than not hearing it and trying to do it on your own. That is the impossible way.

Like I said, I could go on in this chapter with many, many more examples, but I won't. I do want to give you one more example. This was someone that I knew. They were given the option to go through more treatment for their cancer. The same kind of cancer, matter of fact that the person I mentioned earlier in the chapter had. He didn't ask God what he should do. He listened to the doctor and he listened to his family. He took the treatment. He died a slow and painful death. Do you know what was the saddest thing about that? God had healed him. That's right. God had healed him, and there was no more cancer showing up in his tests. He was better, and physically well. The doctors convinced him that he needed to go ahead and have the treatments because that kind of cancer doesn't go into remission, and God doesn't heal. His family members were convinced that God doesn't heal. So they all came together and convinced this man that he needed to have treatments. He heard all those voices and agreed. He didn't have a listening, obedient relationship with his Master. He paid a terrible price.

I know that the examples I used in this chapter are just examples of people who were facing health

decisions. You may not be going through that. But everyday there are things that we face that when we need to seek God's direction, and obey him, or we will mess up our lives, or mess up the lives of those we love. Listen to the Master's Voice.

Devotion 41

Such Were Some of You

From my book titled *Such were Some of You*.

In I Corinthians 6:11, we read "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but

ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” It may be hard to believe that you could write a book using one verse as the main text, but that is what the Lord has impressed me to do. Wow. The Bible is so cool. It is that full of things that can change our lives. It is meat for our lives. I am convinced that it can even save on our grocery bill.

That may be an odd thing to say, but hear me out. People run here and there trying to fill up on things that give them some sort of satisfaction. They shop here and there trying to buy something that fills up a longing or emptiness in their lives. They eat trying to fill themselves up from a hunger that can't be filled with food. They obsess in all kinds of activities trying to give themselves meaning for why they are here, trying to fill up their time with something that gives them a purpose. Still they stay empty, hungry, and searching. I am not just talking about sinners here. This is also true for a lot of Christians. How many people do you know who fill up on everything but God's Word and they stay empty inside. They spend thousands of dollars a year, and still stay empty. They pick up habits that cost them thousands of dollars a year, which can eventually cost them their lives. If they would only fill themselves up with God's Word, they would find a purpose, meaning for their lives, peace, security, deliverance, and freedom from worry

and fear. And they would through that save thousands of dollars.

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

Let's start with a little bit of background. Any time that you are studying God's Word you need to do some background work. You need to study the whole part. A lot of people confuse themselves with the Bible because they pick out only one verse, only one part and get their whole idea of what is being said from that one part. To really understand the Bible, you have to see it as a whole. It is one book from start to finish written by one author. Now you might argue with me here that this isn't so, but it is. The Holy Ghost of God inspired the Bible. Even though He used many human hands to write it, He inspired what was written. To really understand a particular verse, you have to research out other verses in the Bible that have to do with this subject. You have to search the other verses in the area of that particular text that you are studying. If you just grab the Bible, read a verse

or two without taking time to study it out, you can easily misinterpret what it is saying. Also, if you don't allow the author to explain His book to you, you can get it all wrong. Flesh can't interpret the Word of God. People can't understand it unless the Holy Ghost interprets it. If they haven't been saved, if they aren't willing to lay sin down and walk in obedience to the Lord, if they aren't submitting to the Spirit of God and daily listening to His voice, they won't hear His voice when He open up the scriptures to them.

So to start our background study we need to go to verse 9 which says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Boy what a list. This really shoots down the idea that a lot of so called modern churches have that it doesn't matter what you do, you can still enter in God's heaven. I saw a sign on a church that said, "Not your mother's church." I guess that the idea behind what they were trying to say is that they weren't old fashioned in their ideas of what they accept as being sin. Matter of fact, a lot of churches have taken the word sin out of their vocabulary. You hear preachers and churches say, "Now we don't want

to make anyone feel uncomfortable. They won't want to come if they do. We don't want anyone to feel like we regret their choice of life style. What may be right for them might not be right for you. Everyone has a choice." They take the altar out, and they take the words "repentance" and "conviction" out of their vocabulary. They become a social club far removed from God's Word and His Spirit is not welcome, because His Spirit brings about conviction. Then they watch their members reap the sorrow of their sin and they watch their children mourn because of their sin, and they justify what they have done. They justify how they have become as a church.

Romans talks a lot about sin and what it does to people. Romans 7:11 says, "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." How many people do you know that sin slew them, sin destroyed them, sin destroyed the lives of those they loved. Until the church gets real about sin they will suffer the consequences of sin. There is an old saying that says, "Sin will take you further than you ever want to go. Sin will keep you longer than you ever want to stay. Sin will cost you more than you ever want to pay." Why is the church so powerless today? Why does the world look at the church and turn around like they have smelled something bad? Why are we not drawing the world to the church? Because the world has drawn the church to it, and it has won.

Until we come out from our sin, and call sin sin, and let the Holy Ghost come back into our midst to convict and change, then what do we have to give the world that is any different than what it has? It has sorrow, it reaps the wages of sin. It wants to know how to be set free.

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

come to our school office who are not ready to be mothers. Ask someone who has aides. Sin has consequences whether we want to admit it or not. Stay away from sin, and you will stay away from the consequences. Ask someone who has suffered the consequences of drug addiction, or alcoholism. Ask people who have been caught up in a gay lifestyle and even though they have a big smiling front they put on to the world, their lives are a mess of controversy, trouble, heartaches, and gut wrenching agony. Ask someone who has allowed their life to be filled with addictions, whether legal or illegal. Ask someone who is walking a tight rope of depression or anxiety, filled with fear. Ask someone who is tormented with sexual addictions that tear their family a part.

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

God to give them strength to stay away from sin. They definitely didn't start out by allowing God's Spirit to help them.

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

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

Let's go back and read our verse again. In I Corinthians 6:11, we read "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." You know what I think is the most powerful word in that verse. It is the word "were". It says such **were some of you**. I love that word **were**. Not only did He deliver me, but He has kept me. I am not what I was. A lot of people try to walk as a Christian. Things get hard. They look at all the lists of *don'ts* and get so tangled up in them that they think there is no way to do what is required of them. They read about the things they aren't supposed to be and give up before they get to the list of things they can be. Keep reading and find out how you can get to the place where you can say, "That is something that I was."

Devotion 42

The Inlet

From my book *Water that Doesn't Run* from the chapter titled The Inlet.

The most important thing to consider when investigating any body of water is the source-where the water comes from. Where the water comes from is extremely important in how clean, pure, and refreshing the water itself is. If you remember our farm pond had no free flowing source. Either it had been pumped in from some outside source, or it had just been allowed to collect rainwater.

Sometimes we as Christians can become like the pond. We can cut off our source of fresh water. We let our inlet get stopped up. Our water no longer runs. We can do this by forgetting Who our source is. We become stagnant because we lose contact with the one Who supplies us with that free flowing water of life. It stops being a priority to spend time with Him. We draw away from Him and let the cares of this life cause us to become so encased that the water no longer flows. We get so carried away in the things of this world that our pipeline to heaven gets all clogged up. Or maybe we have one foot in the world and one foot in God, and when we do this we become double minded. (James 1:8, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Verse 7, "For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." If you are being double minded in your relationship with the Lord, go on home. Part way home is only pure misery.) Maybe we start to dabble in sin and we stop wanting to hear God's voice gently reminding us

to turn around. Maybe we've let attitudes creep in and we drown out that inlet of fresh clear water with all those muddy things that aren't so clean.

Remember those pigs and cows in the pond. They sure made things messy. If we aren't careful, all those things can stop up an inlet and we no longer have fresh clean water flowing in. Then the things that drain it out continuously drain us day to day of our strength. We gradually lose our victory and wonder where it has gone. We lose our strength and our joy in the Lord. We may not even realize why.

The devil doesn't pre-announce what his plans are before He does his thing. He creeps in unawares. I have known many people who lost their relationship with the Lord and their victory in Him. These people seldom did this all in one instance. This is never a sudden thing. It is a process that happens slowly through time. They don't realize it until it is already done. We need to guard this inlet as being precious. In ancient times the source of water in the desert was a strategic spot. Many a battle was fought to guard a well. Those who gained control over the source of water controlled many a town or a people. Isn't this the same for our inlet? Isn't our inlet much more precious and life giving? After all, our inlet is a source of eternal life. How much more should we guard this inlet of living water that refreshes our very soul?

We have talked about some of the things that can stop our inlet as individuals. What are some things that can stop up our inlet as a church? I think that the number one cause for churches failing to allow the “water of life” to flow would be not recognizing what it means and how important it is to allow these sources of water to run free. I don’t care what denomination, doctrine, or belief you have, it is the Word of God to let the Holy Ghost have His way in your congregation. It is God’s Word for you to allow Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your midst. It is God’s Word for the whole truth and nothing but the truth to be preached and taught from your pulpit and the classroom lecterns. It is God’s Word that the Word of God be lived from the pews. If these things aren’t the main focus of your church, then what is the point in having a church at all? That may seem harsh, but isn’t it true? Without the Spirit of God, the presence of God in your midst and without the full truth of God’s Word, then all you have is a social gathering and the world has enough of those. Let the world do the social scene. Church, let’s get back to God. Matter of fact, if you only let God’s Spirit move as you will and not as He wills, and if you only have a little bit of the truth, then you are doing more damage than good. We need to get real about what the church is all about. I know that this is uncomfortable to talk about. But if we don’t get out of our comfort zone, we may be guilty of allowing those who sit on our pews to face the discomfort of

hell's eternal flames. Bear with me and hear me out. After all what I am presenting to you is the Word of God.

There were many churches in Revelations that received the blessings of the Lord. There were many that received the judgment of the Lord. Let's read about some of them. Let's study it out, so that we can receive those blessings. In Revelations 2, in the church of Ephesus, verses 1-3 tell of a church that received high marks. It received high marks for its works, its labor, and its patience. It had high marks for how it had separated itself from those who were evil. It had high marks for laboring for the Lord's namesake. All these things are lights to our churches today. Verse 4 though talks about the thing that was about to cause their candlestick to be removed.

They had lost their first love. They had lost that spark. Do you remember how it was the first time that you fell in love, or when you first fell in love with that husband or wife. Remember how, if they were gone, you would sit and listen for their footsteps. Remember how it was your delight to be with them. You could call and talk for hours on end. You delighted in their company. You would give everything to be with them just for a little while. Jesus died to love you. How much more so should we fall in love with Him?

We need to go back to our first love. We need to do so as individuals and as a church.

If you are a church leader, then you can't present this to your church, until it is true in your own relationship. Sometimes it is easy to serve God with all your strength, and be so weary of the battles and the challenges of the people that you serve, that you forget why you are doing all this to start with. If you lose your love, you will be in danger of eventually losing your drive to go on in your service for the Lord. Church congregation, for you to go back to that first love, you have to renew your love with those around you, for after all, aren't they the body of Christ? Let's get back to that first love. Of all the things that we can do to unstop our inlet, this is one of the first.

Now let's look at the church at Pergamos in verses 12-17. It had high marks in holding fast the faith, even though there was a group that allowed satan to sit in their midst. This church's epitaph starts with the Lord's sword. There are some in the church in verse 13 that "holdest fast my name", but there was also a seat of satan in the church. I have recently heard something that was disturbing. It wouldn't have been so disturbing if I hadn't heard it from many people spread out over the US. There are churches in the US who practice witchcraft, who teach "wikka" which is supposed to be harmless witchcraft. Go back to the

Word of God and find out what it says about witchcraft and witches. There were some that God instructed to be put to death because it is such a wicked thing. This is not of God. It is right straight out of the pits of hell. This is such a sad thing. Has the church become so far removed from the truth that it can't see that this is a bad thing.

I think this has happened because we have walked slowly away from the truth because we wanted to hold on to our sin. Let's get back to God. Be a lighthouse in this world. It surely needs one. Also, I think that there is another way that we can have a seat of satan. Sometimes if people fail to let their flesh be controlled by the Spirit of God, then they allow satan to control them, even though they don't see that this is happening. Have you ever watched what God was trying to do be stopped by someone who was walking in the flesh? Then you know what I mean. Many times the church can be controlled by someone or something that is not God. We have a lot of family churches in our area. One family controls the church. A large part of this family is in the church, and maybe they are even the ones who founded the church. God can move only if He gets their permission first. Since the Holy Ghost doesn't operate that way, usually these churches are empty of the presence of God. There are many pastors who let other things beside God control them so that this seat of satan stays in

their midst. Instead of being the shepherd of the sheep, under the leading of that great Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep, they compromise to keep their pay check, keep the people there, or even just trying to keep the peace. They wind up keeping nothing. If you have been given a calling, a mandate from God to preach the truth, and you fail to present it in all of its entirety to your congregation, then that Word, that sword will be what will judge you. I would much rather face the wrath of the people than I would that sword.

The church of Thyatira in Revelations 21:18-29 had received many high marks. Some of them were: works, charity, service, and faith. They also received high marks for their patience, and there again their works were mentioned. However its weaknesses reminds me of a lot of our modern churches. Many churches today have adopted the attitude that whatever we do, it's OK. God won't judge our sin. He is a God of mercy. Some teach that we can purposefully continuously sin and still get to heaven. Some even teach that what is right for you may not be right for me and what is wrong for me might not be wrong for you. Where is the truth in all that? Where is the Word of God? We need to get back to the truth no matter what our doctrine is. Only the truth will set us free. (John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.") We cannot use the grace

of God as an excuse to do what we want. (I Peter 2:15-16, "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.") Let's read the parable of the wise and foolish virgins found in Matthew 25:1-13. In this parable we read about 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins. The 5 foolish virgins let their lamp run out of oil. It was time for the bridegroom to come. The feast was ready, but the bridegroom wasn't there in the expected time. (The Bible bears out that the Lord, our bridegroom won't be in an expected time. It says that many will grow weary of waiting for Him and return to the world.) While these foolish virgins were away getting the oil they needed, the bridegroom came. When they returned they found the door shut and they couldn't get in. Let's not be foolish in our relationship with the Lord. Jesus is coming for a bride without spot or blemish. He is definitely not coming for a people who have so little love for Him that they take an attitude that they can do as they please. His blood is precious to me. I honor this sacrifice He paid to forgive me of my sin. I certainly won't be caught in sin with an attitude that it doesn't matter what I do because He will forgive me. Matter of fact I do what I do because He loves me and I love Him. I want to be ready for Him when He comes. I keep my lamp trimmed and burning, because He may come today.

We need to make sure all our inlets are open and the water is flowing in free and life giving. One of the ways to make sure that the water is flowing into our churches free is to praise the Lord. The Bible says that He inhabits our praises. If we praise Him from a heart that is in love with Him and thankful to the brim for His goodness, He will be sure to show up and join in.

After I wrote this chapter, I worried that I had preached a little hard here. But then I know that someone might just hear that truth and be changed in the direction of their life. When I wrote that last sentence, I thought of all the pastors who have stood up and declared the truth in the face of opposition. If you have done, or are doing that, stand firm. Declare the truth in love for the people, in a humbleness of spirit, but declare it nonetheless. Hang in there and stand for the truth. When you do, you'll find that the Truth will stand for you.

Keep your inlet flowing free. God is easily reachable. When He feels out of reach, something is getting in the way. When it is out of the way, oh how joyful that restoration will be.

Devotion 43

Proving Us Wrong

From my book *Walking in the Spirit* from the chapter titled *Proving Us Wrong*.

One of the hardest things I think for Christians to realize is that one of the main jobs of the Holy Ghost is to prove us wrong. To get anywhere with God, we

have to face who we are, and our weaknesses. We have to face our weaknesses and give them to God, for Him to be able to fix them. One of the greatest hindrances we can have is not facing them. We have to allow God to convict us. Today's church world has left the power of conviction out of their midst. The Spirit of God is no longer there to bring conviction to the hearts of the church, let alone to the hearts of the sinners. We don't want to be made to feel uncomfortable.

Conviction is not comfortable. We have to realize that no matter how uncomfortable it is, we cannot live upright before God without it. We have to see ourselves as we are, and that is not comfortable. We are in sad need of letting God rule our lives, every last one of us. I don't care how good we think we are, day to day, we are in need of change. We are as filthy rags in the eyes of a very perfect, righteous, and holy God. (Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags....") We can't do it right on our own. I don't care how wonderful we think we are, or how bad we think we are, we can neither deserve, or not deserve God's love and His grace. That's why it is grace. Romans 3:23-25, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare

His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

You see, we have all sinned. The very nature of our flesh that we inherited from Adam and Eve is sin. But God didn't stop with things being that way. He made a way that we could be forgiven. God's grace is a marvelous thing. We have to believe in His grace. We have to see ourselves as we are, then we have to accept His grace. That is the beauty of conviction. Without conviction, we can never see our need to be forgiven. We would never repent, and we would never be forgiven to be able to find His marvelous grace. We'll talk more in a later chapter about the how wonderful conviction is.

We have to realize that we are wrong, not most of the time, but all of the time, in our flesh. Day to day we struggle with ourselves, with the people around us, and with our circumstances and eventually all we can do on our own is fail. Still we want to prove that we are right and our way is the way it should be. We don't want to give up control. We even try to control those around us in some way so that they can't break up our little world and cause us hurt. Out of this need to control comes the jealousies and bitterness that destroy churches and ministries. If we can't do it any other way, we puff up ourselves and put everybody else at our feet so that they can't get to us. Out of that

is born self-righteousness that makes us untouchable by anyone, and if God doesn't deliver us from that, even untouchable by the Spirit of God and His love.

We live in thousands of little prisons that keep us defeated daily, by how we think and how we feel. We can't give God those circumstances and people because down in our hearts we haven't come to the place where we can trust Him and get out of our flesh enough to. Surrendering someone to God has to be done in the Spirit, not in the flesh. We struggle in our relationships with others, because we aren't letting God be Lord of these. We become bitter because they are not being like what we think they should be like.

We never realize that if we would just release our own heart to God and let Him control our thoughts and feelings, we could release these people to God. Then He could be Lord in their lives as well as be Lord in ours. That is walking in the Spirit. But we won't let go of the flesh. The flesh is so full of negative feelings and thoughts. We can think anything that we want or choose to, but that does not make it the truth. We can feel anything about anyone or any thing any way that we want to, but that doesn't mean that is the healthy and victorious way to feel.

Our emotions are so bound by our flesh, and so easily accessed by the devil. He delights in attacking our

minds and hearts and bombarding them with anything that he chooses to put in them so that we become bound. Only by walking in the Spirit can we be set free. We have to choose. Do we want our minds, our emotions to rule us, or do we want the truth of the Spirit of God to control us. Our flesh with its emotions and thoughts and the devil are all our enemies. We become bound by all these things. We can't see God or His Word and love full of power for our lives. And there we sit. That is walking in the flesh. Then the Holy Spirit comes on the scene and begins to prove how wrong we are. That is the beginning of walking in the Spirit. Then the Spirit of God begins to break us.

I have had more than a few battles in my life. In some of them I despaired of losing my life. When I was going through them, I was constantly rebuking the devil, who I knew just had to be behind what was going on. Or so I thought. When I was on the ground, flat on my back, and looking up, God would step in. I knew that He had been behind it all the time. I knew that the devil was only able to take the liberties in my life that God had given him (unless I myself had given the devil control). I knew that God was at work in me, putting me through the fire, testing and proving my heart, trying my faith. Here is another section of scripture to read, I Peter 1:3-7. I am putting here verse 7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more pre-

ciuous than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

He also breaks our self-will by bringing us to a place where we have nothing left but Him. Then, and only then, can we see what it means to give Him total control in our lives. He tries our heart to see that we really mean business, and then He brings us to that place where He is Lord.

I was blessed not long ago to spend a month taking care of someone I loved very much who was dying with cancer. I can without a doubt say that was one of the worst times of my life. I can also say that during that time I received more from God, and grew more than at any time I have ever been through. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything in my life, even the best of times when everything was great. Now you may be thinking that this was one of the best times in my life because God won the victory over cancer and she was healed. No, this may sound strange but hear me out, I really don't think that would have changed my life as much as what happened. We serve a mighty powerful God who has promised us that even our worst times can turn into miracles. (Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”) I know without a shadow of

doubt that this verse is true. Why? Because I have been through the fire. I have been through fires that literally broke my flesh, so that I had nothing left but God. I have been in places where only God could fix the battle, and when He moved, I knew that it was Him and only Him. I have walked with Him, and I know what He will do for me tomorrow, because yesterday, He was there with me.

In this very difficult time in my life, I again learned what this means. One of the blessings that came out of the fire with me was this. When my aunt lay dying, for days all she could do was swallow water dripped out of the end of a straw. She had no strength left. She praised the Lord for each sip of water that she took. When all she had was strength to move her little hand that was just skin and bones up and wave it in praise, that was what she did. She did it until she went into the sleep when she died. I learned something that changed my life forever. We serve a mighty big and wonderful God. We don't have to be afraid of anything the devil or this world has. ***When we as children of God can lay in the chains of cancer, dying, and still find the victory in God to praise Him, what in this world do we have to fear.*** What can defeat us, other than we ourselves.

I also learned that death is a precious thing. It is hard to watch someone grow helpless inch by inch and

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

You can want it your way if you want to. You can go on proving that you belong and that you are right.

You can go on with a contentious fighting spirit fighting against giving into God's love and His Word. You can go on struggling to prove you can handle it. As for me, leave me in peace, resting in my Father's arms. Leave me trusting in Him to take care of it all, submitted to Him, letting Him control my life and me. When I face death and that last struggle, I know that it will be with the same victory that He has kept me in all through my life.

It is human nature to lie to ourselves about our shortcomings, our sin, who we are. You may think to yourself, I don't lie to myself. What about when we make excuses? This all is so wrong. If we do this we will never let God fix the things in us that are wrong. It is so much easier to talk ourselves out of thinking that we are doing wrong. That is why so often people around us can see what is wrong with us before we can. We don't want to see. Thank God that the conviction power of God won't let us stay that way.

Thank God that the Holy Ghost knows how to prove us wrong, and knows how to bring us to the place of surrender to Him. My prayer is this. "God, prove me wrong in You. Love away my struggle to control. Let me roll on the ground in defeat if that is what it takes to bring me to the place of surrender, so that I can find what it means to find victory in YOU. Put me on the potter's wheel. Break me and make me into some-

thing that you can use. I'm tired of my old flesh and its natural ways, and I am ready for the supernatural. God, I am starting to surrender. Finish that work in me. I can't wait to see what I will then be."

Closing

I hope that these little bits and bites from God's Word have built you up and drew you closer to God.

For more information, for more books to download, for music to play, and for slideshows with scriptures and music, and for even more you can go to my website at www.freechristianonlinebooks.com.

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